THE FORMULATION OF THE *MANUAL ON FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES* IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE EXPERIENCES OF SOCIAL WORKERS REGARDING THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION THEREOF

by

Zodwa Mosoma

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ABSTRACT

The formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*
in South Africa and the experiences of social workers
regarding the formulation and implementation thereof

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Zodwa Mosoma

Promoter: Prof. G.M. Spies

Department: Social Work and Criminology
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Worldwide, changes in the family have become more evident. Many of the traditional roles that families used to play are now performed by other institutions, such as schools, churches, a variety of welfare agencies and non-governmental organizations. Families in South Africa are no exception, as many South African families are faced with challenges that have a negative impact on their ability to sustain themselves and their members.

The previous Minister of Social Development, Doctor Zola Skweyiya, rightly acknowledged that, in order to address the needs of vulnerable groups in our communities effectively, we need a particular focus on the role of the family, both as a developmental and as a supporting institution. In responding to these challenges, the Department of Social Development developed a new *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b), with the aim of training social service professionals to deliver family preservation services. In order for the programme envisaged by the developers of the *Manual* to be implemented efficiently, the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* (Department of Social Development, 2007a:52-57) mandates the roll-out of the training and education by all provinces. Thus all social service professionals are mandated to implement family preservation services as stipulated by the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* (Department of Social Development,

2007a) and the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a).

In her role as one of the trainers on family preservation services who was also responsible for monitoring and evaluating these services in the provinces, the researcher observed the inadequacy and inconsistency of the concept of family preservation services in reporting among social service professionals despite the training and capacity-building carried out by the Department of Social Development.

The researcher therefore investigated, first, whether the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* lacks clarity relating to the theoretical framework and operational definition of key concepts which are supposed to assist social service professionals in rendering effective family preservation services. Second, she interviewed 20 social workers regarding their experiences on the formulation and implementation of the *Manual.* This is a small sample in terms of representing social workers in the country. In total, 37 social workers were originally interviewed, but, because it transpired that they had never attended any training on the *Manual for Family Preservation Services*, their data were excluded from the empirical study, even though they are implementing these services. The researcher was therefore interested in analysing the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and also analysed the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual*, with the aim of identifying gaps and improving service delivery to families.

The researcher reviewed prior literature on systems theory, which is fundamental in addressing family dynamics, the family life cycle and its stages. She also considered literature on family preservation services on four levels of service delivery, the stages of the policy cycle and the overview of the *Draft National Family Policy*, as well as the *Manual of Family Preservation Services.*

In this study, the researcher adopted an explanatory design, which is a form of mixed methods research. The overall purpose of an explanatory design is to gather qualitative data that help to explain or build upon initial quantitative results from the first phase of the study. In order to collect quantitative data, the researcher used a checklist for a content analysis of the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.* She then conducted semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data about social workers' experiences regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in eight provinces.

The researcher did a pilot test of the semi-structured interview schedule, which helped her to refine two questions that were understood differently by the two social workers who participated in the pilot test. After latent coding, the quantitative data were analysed manually, while the qualitative data were coded according to Creswell's model for qualitative data analysis.

The quantitative empirical results revealed some limitations in the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. Such limitations include an unclear definition of the concept of family preservation services, the omission of objectives from the *Manual*, confusion with regard to the theoretical frameworks applied, a lack of clarity on the role of volunteers, the process of providing training and capacity-building to social service professionals, monitoring and evaluation plan. These findings were confirmed by the social workers who were interviewed. They exposed the confusion that exists on the definition of family preservation services, the objectives, the theoretical frameworks, the role of volunteers, high case-loads, which they linked to a shortage of social workers and the fact that resources, training and capacity-building on family preservation services are not prioritized.

It was therefore recommended that the issues highlighted above be addressed and be included in a revised *Manual*, and that relevant material also be provided to social service professionals who need to implement family preservation services.

Key words:

Family preservation services

Families

Manual on Family Preservation Services

Draft National Family Policy

Department of Social Development

Social workers

Social service professionals

Implementation

Levels of service delivery

South Africa

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The South African Department of Social Development produced the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a) and accordingly developed the 2008 *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b)[1] with the aim of training social service professionals to deliver services to families from a family preservation perspective. In order for the programme envisaged by the developers of the *Manual* to be implemented efficiently, the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* (Department of Social Development, 2007a:52-57) mandates the roll-out of the training and education by all provinces. Thus all social service professionals are mandated to implement family preservation services as stipulated by the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* and the *Draft National Family Policy*.[2]

Family preservation is defined in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b) as a strategy, an approach or a philosophy based on the belief that family members need their family in order to develop to their full potential. It promotes the perspective that the best way of achieving permanency in the lives of family members is to allow them to be with their families and to work with them in preventing out-of-home placement (Department of Social Development, 2008b).

According to Helton and Jackson (1997:142), family preservation services are services that aim to preserve families over time, regardless of any disruption.

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[1] This *Manual* was preceded by a 1997 version, but that is not considered in this study. Except where indicated otherwise, all references to the *Manual* are to the 2008 version.
[2] This *Draft National Family Policy* has recently been replaced by the *White Paper on Families, 2013* (Department of Social Development, 2013b), but the *Manual* is based on the *Draft National Family Policy*, which is therefore the policy document that was relevant to this study.

They also empower family members to maintain mutual support for one another. The authors explain that these services are tailored to keep children within their own families, as opposed to removing them by foster placement or other arrangements, such as juvenile detention or residential placements.

However, it is important to note that family preservation services are not a panacea for all the problematic issues that many families are faced with. Hence, they should not be used when a child's physical or emotional well-being cannot be maintained safely while family preservation services are in place. In some cases, it may be necessary to place a child in foster care, but this does not necessarily mean that the service model has failed (Cash, 2001:51).

Worldwide, changes in the family as a social institution are becoming increasingly evident. Many of the traditional roles that families used to play are now performed by other institutions, such as schools, churches, a variety of welfare agencies and non-governmental organizations (Human Sciences Research Council, 2004). McCroskey and Meezan (1998:54) note that reports on the conditions of families show that an increasing number of families with children live in poverty, amid violence, racism and substance abuse, in communities that provide too few resources to support these families, or to help them to solve complicated problems.

South Africa is no exception to this global trend, and many South African families are faced with challenges that have a negative impact on their ability to sustain themselves and their members. Some of the challenges are related to poverty, unemployment, the HIV and AIDS pandemic, a lack of basic services and poor infrastructure, particularly in rural areas (Department of Social Development, 2008a). Such challenges have the potential to disturb a family's equilibrium and hinder its optimal functioning.

1.2   RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The researcher was responsible for monitoring the implementation of family preservation services in all provinces as one of her key performance areas in the Department of Social Development. Through her interactions with social service professionals in the provinces, the researcher observed the inadequacy and inconsistency of the interpretations of the concept of family preservation services in reporting among social service professionals in the provinces.

The researcher therefore consulted with two experts who are coordinating the implementation of family preservation services in the South African provinces, Ms L. Khwinana and Ms L. Mpongoshe.

Ms L. Khwinana, a Programme Manager in the North West Province, confirmed that social service professionals have different interpretations of family preservation services, which are reflected even in their non-financial data reports on services rendered to families (Khwinana, 2010:pers.comm.). She highlighted a number of factors that contribute to this confusion, including poor conceptualization of family preservation services, ineffective training on such services, and high case-loads that leave very little time for the effective implementation of individual family preservation services (Khwinana, 2010:pers.comm.).

Ms L. Mpongoshe, a Programme Manager in the Eastern Cape Province, indicated that the concept of family preservation is an overarching service for families, and that it therefore needs to be implemented effectively (Mpongoshe, 2010:pers.comm). She pointed out that there is much uncertainty among social service professionals about what the concept of family preservation actually entails. This uncertainty has a considerable effect on the implementation of services (Mpongoshe, 2010:pers.comm.).

The sentiments of these two coordinators were confirmed by the *Annual Report* for the 2012/13 financial year of the Department of Social Development (2013a). The *Annual Report* reflected an increase to 31% (157 024) in the number of

children accessing foster care services during the financial year 2012 /13 from 4.7% (23 873) during the 2011/12 financial year (Department of Social Development, 2013a:71).

The researcher therefore decided to investigate the question of whether the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b) gave clarity or failed to provide clarity regarding the theoretical framework and operational definition of key concepts in the *Manual* which were supposed to assist social service professionals in rendering effective family preservation services. The next logical question (if the *Manual* does indeed lack clarity) was what the experiences of social workers were regarding the formulation and the implementation of the *Manual* – if discrepancies exist, this could have a negative impact on families, as then family preservation services might not produce the desired results.

These observations prompted the researcher to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding its formulation and implementation through this study, because inconsistent interpretations that could be linked to a lack of training could in turn affect the provision of services to families negatively.

1.3   PROBLEM FORMULATION

The formulation of a research problem is a crucial aspect of any research journey, and the quality of the entire project depends on this step (Kumar, 2005:44). According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:29), a well-formulated problem is already a half-solved problem. However, Grinnell (1997:55) warns that no final decision can be made about the problem to be studied until a researcher has determined that the prospective problem meets four criteria, namely that the research problem is relevant, researchable, feasible and ethically acceptable.

In giving effect to the operation of the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a), the National Department of Social Development embarked on the process of developing a second manual relating to family

preservation services, which is called the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b). This *Manual* outlines the best approach for delivering such services for social service professionals. This *Manual* replaces the 1997 version, and the newer version of 2008 was informed mainly by the *Draft National Family Policy*. The 1997 *Manual* (cited by Moss, 2009:pers.comm.) focused exclusively on intensive family preservation services, while the newly developed *Manual* (Department of Social Development, 2008b) focuses on family preservation services on four levels of service delivery, namely prevention, early intervention, statutory intervention, and reunification and aftercare. (Throughout this study, only the 2008 *Manual* is discussed, so all references to the *Manual* refer to this new manual.) The researcher maintains that the 2008 *Manual* intends not only to prevent out-of-home placement, but also to assist families presenting with various types of problems.

Gockel, Russell and Harris (2008:91) acknowledge that, although existing research on family preservation services has focused on identifying the components of effective treatment, we are still far from fully developing empirically supported interventions, and should therefore broaden our focus to consider the equally important role of service processes and relationships in building effective services.

The problem for this study can therefore be formulated as follows: despite the training and education sessions that were mandated by the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* (Department of Social Development, 2007a:52-57) and that were conducted with social workers in the nine South African provinces on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b), social workers who must implement family preservation services still appear to experience difficulty in understanding the concept of family preservation services, even assigning different interpretations to the concept. Such a lack of proper conceptualization of family preservation services could have a negative impact on families and their members as the intended beneficiaries of these services. It was therefore crucial to analyse the formulation of the 2008 *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and

implementation of the *Manual* in order to improve the quality of services to families.

1.4 GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Goal of the study

Babbie and Mouton (2001:79) set out three of the most common and useful purposes or goals of social research, namely exploration, description and explanation. A goal can be defined as the end toward which effort or ambition is directed to achieve a dream (Fouché & De Vos, 2005:105).

The goal of this study was **to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and the implementation thereof.**

The outcome of this study is improved service delivery to families, by ensuring that recommendations are made regarding the formulation and the implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.*

1.4.2 Objectives of the study

Objectives are the steps taken, one by one, realistically, at grassroots level, within a certain time span, in order to attain an aim (Fouché & De Vos, 2005:107). Roux (2000:117) describes an objective as a short-term goal that can be deduced from an organization's mission and that can be stated by means of a process of negotiation. In order to ensure that the abovementioned research goal was reached, the following concrete steps were taken:

- theoretically conceptualising the following aspects which are central to family preservation services:
  - o systems theory, which regards the family as a functioning unit in which members solve their problems, make their own decisions and achieve collective goals;

- o the family life cycle model, as a way to understand the different challenges that families encounter in their lifetime;
- o the conceptualisation of family preservation services as used in different ways in various programmes;
- o the stages of the policy cycle and situating the *Manual on Family Preservation Services;* and
- o an overview of the *Draft National Family Policy* and the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* as fundamental documents in the study;

- analysing the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services;*
- analysing the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*; and
- formulating conclusions and making recommendations regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in order to enhance service delivery to families.

1.5   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study's analysis of the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of the social workers regarding the formulation and implementation thereof is the first research that attempts to focus on the effectiveness of this practice *Manual*. This undertaking is in line with Babbie and Mouton's (2011:75) explanation that an empirical question usually addresses a problem in a real life situation. Fouché and De Vos (2005:91) also indicate that one of the most salient sources of research questions in the social sciences is daily practice of a caring profession. The researcher shares these sentiments – hence, the research questions of this study emerged from the observations that the researcher made regarding clients she served in her place of employment.

For researchers who conduct mixed methods research, Delport and Fouché (2011:447) suggest using at least two research questions. This implies that one question is usually quantitative, and the other qualitative in nature.

In this study, the researcher used two research questions instead of hypotheses.

The following research questions were formulated for the study:

- **How does the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* adhere to the requirements of a policy document?**
- **What are the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*?**

1.6   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The terms "research design", "strategies" and "methods" are used interchangeably by various authors (Fouché & Delport, 2002:271). Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:29) define a research design as the planning of any scientific research from the first to the last step – thus the term implies a programme to guide a researcher in collecting, analysing and interpreting observed facts.

Kumar (2005:8) lists three types of research, namely an application, objectives and an inquiry mode. Moreover, if a researcher examines a research endeavour from the perspective of its application, two broad categories are involved, **pure and applied research**. Applied research was used in this study, because the researcher was concerned with practical results that will contribute to the improvement of social services. In order to achieve this aim, the researcher analysed the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation thereof, in order to improve the services provided to families.

This study involved **mixed methods research**. A number of authors have developed typologies of mixed methods research. These are also referred to as the four main mixed methods design types, namely an exploratory design, an explanatory design, a triangulation design and an embedded design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007:62-79; Ivankova, Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007:264-270).

In this study, an **explanatory mixed methods research design** was the most appropriate design, because the researcher began by collecting and analysing quantitative data on the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, using a checklist. The researcher then collected and analysed

qualitative data by also analysing the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.* Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the qualitative data, because this method does extremely well at bringing a researcher to an understanding of complex issues and is particularly useful for examining contemporary, real-life situations (Soy, 2006:1).

In this study, the researcher used two types of **population,** namely, first, the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, and, second, social workers who are involved in the implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, specifically in the Social Development sector in all provinces. A population is referred to as the "totality of persons, events, organisations units, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned" (Strydom, 2005a:194).

The researcher regarded the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* as one type of the population because she was interested in analysing its formulation, as it is the only *Manual* focused on family preservation services that is used by social workers in the Department of Social Development. Social workers who were trained on the *Manual* and also implemented family preservation services during the period of data collection in nine provinces were regarded as the other type of the population. The decision to select these social workers was based on the fact that the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* of the Department of Social Development (2007a:52) mandates all social service professionals implementing family preservation services to be trained on the *Manual*. According to its *Annual Report*, the Department of Social Development (2009a) provided training on family preservation services and the training programme was conducted in all provinces, so 40 service providers were trained in each province. The Department of Social Development trained these 40 service providers as Master Trainers to roll out the training in their respective provinces.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:85) interpret a "population" as a "target population", which is seen as a set of elements on which research focuses, and

to which the results obtained by testing the sample can be generalized. A population thus encompasses the total collection of all units of analysis about which a researcher wishes to draw specific conclusions (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell, 2005:52).

According to Mouton (2002:134), a population is a collection of objects, events or individuals with common characteristics that a researcher is interested in studying. This implies that a population does not only imply a number of people, but could also refer to a number of objects and documents. However, it is appropriate to emphasise that these objects become the population of study only if a researcher has an interest in studying them (Mamburu, 2004:309).

Data collection refers to the important process of collecting information for a study, in this case, from the relevant institutions and implementers of social services in order to improve service delivery. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:06), mixed methods research implies collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data. The two methods of data collection implemented in this study involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, namely, content analysis in the form of a checklist (a quantitative method) and semi-structured interviews (a qualitative method).

Quantitative research methodology (first phase) involves collecting data in a numerical form, so that the phenomenon under review can be easily measured. This methodology is preferred in positivist research, which wants to observe a social reality by means of quantification and objectivity (Neuman, 2000:66). Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:06) explain that the collection and analysis of quantitative data consists of statistically analysing scores collected on instruments, checklists or public documents to answer research questions, or to test hypotheses.

With regard to the document sample, the researcher analysed only the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, therefore no sample or sampling method was required, as it was the only document involved.

For this study, the researcher designed a checklist to analyse the formulation of the content of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.* Delport (2005:179) defines a **checklist** as a "type of questionnaire consisting of a series" of statements or themes. In this study, as recommended by Delport (2005:179), the checklist was designed to analyse whether the *Manual* was formulated according to the requirements of a policy document. In order to analyse the processes, influences and outcome of the policy documents, Gray and Sewpaul (1998:12) recommend the use of Gil's (1992) framework as a guide. Furthermore, Babbie and Mouton (2001:388) advise that "in content analysis, as in other research methods, the researchers must refine the conceptual framework and develop specific methods for observing in relation to that framework".

In designing the checklist, the researcher used the *Draft National Family Policy* as a policy document that guided the development of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (refer to Chapter 6 and the literature review, in particular in Chapter 5, which discusses the stages of the policy cycle). Gil's (1992:69-75) framework was also used as a guide in the development of the checklist, as recommended by Gray and Sewpaul (1998:12).

The checklist guided the researcher's interpretation of the text and helped her to determine whether particular items of the *Manual* met the required criteria implied in the research question of the study, in terms of the availability or absence of variables which are characteristic of the policy document, as recommended by the *Draft National Family Policy* and the literature. In the first phase of the data collection, the quantitative data were collected by using a checklist, while the collection of the **qualitative data** through semi-structured interviews formed part of the second phase of the research.

Qualitative research involves collecting data in a subjective form; the data is collected in the form of words, sentences, impressions and phrases (Neuman, 2000:122). Qualitative data consist of open-ended information which a researcher gathers through interviews with participants – the general, open-ended questions asked during such interviews allow participants to supply answers in their own words (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007:06). In this study, the researcher therefore employed a semi-structured interview schedule to analyse the experiences of

social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*.

The researcher used stratified random and simple random sampling, both categorized under probability sampling, to select social workers involved in the implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in nine provinces. Detailed information on the sampling methods is given in Chapter 7 of this report.

Semi-structured interviews are used to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic (Greeff, 2005:296). For Greeff (2005:296), semi-structured interviews rely on a particular set of questions and try to guide a conversation to remain loosely focused on those questions. Semi-structured interviews also allow individual participants some latitude and freedom to talk about what interests them or is important to them (Greeff, 2005:296). In other words, while a researcher does try to ask each participant a certain set of questions, the researcher also allows the conversation to flow more naturally, making room for the conversation to go in new and possibly even unexpected directions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006:125).

In this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews to collect data about social workers' experiences on the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in their respective provinces.

According to Durrheim (1999:52), **data analysis procedures** can be divided into qualitative and quantitative techniques. Quantitative techniques employ a variety of statistical analyses to make sense of data, whereas qualitative techniques begin by identifying themes in the data and relationships between these themes (Durrheim, 1999:52). In the current study, mixed methods research was conducted, therefore, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were employed to analyse the data collected in the study.

Quantitative data analysis refers to the quantified or statistical position of a problem and available mechanisms to address it (Neuman, 2000:293). After using latent coding as recommended by Babbie and Mouton (2011:388) for

content analysis, the researcher therefore employed quantitative data analysis methods to manually assess the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. Characteristics in the checklist were individually explained and interpreted.

In **analysing qualitative data**, the researcher adopted Creswell's model of data analysis. According to De Vos (2005a:334), this model contains a series of steps, of which the following were used:

- data collection;

- data management;

- reading and memoing;

- description, classification and interpretation; and

- representation and visualization.

A detailed description of research methods used in this study is presented in Chapter 7 of this report.

1.7   ETHICAL ISSUES

Strydom (2005b:56) states that the fact that human beings are the objects of study in the social sciences brings unique ethical problems to the fore that would never be relevant in the pure, clinical laboratory settings of the natural sciences. This implies that social science researchers must take great care not to harm their participants. In this regard, the researcher looked at the various issues discussed above, and complied with the ethical requirements applied by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria.

1.7.1   Avoidance of harm

The researcher ensured that participants were protected against any form of harm that could occur during the course of the study. The researcher realizes that emotional harm is often more difficult to predict or determine, and is more likely to occur than physical harm, although physical harm cannot be completely ruled out (Strydom, 2005b:58). Rubin and Babbie (1993:59) emphasise that social work

research should never injure the people being studied, regardless of whether or not they volunteer for a study.

In this study, to prevent harm, participants were informed about what the investigation entailed. The researcher also ensured that participants were not exposed to research questions that might be construed as abusive, or questions on sensitive issues.

1.7.2 Informed consent

Informed consent is one of the most fundamental aspects of social science research. According to Strydom (2005b:59), this implies communicating all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation, the procedures to be followed during the investigation, and the possible advantages and disadvantages of the study to the participants, as well as dangers to which participants may be exposed. There should be an emphasis on accurate and complete information, enabling participants to make a voluntary, thoroughly reasoned decision about their possible participation (Strydom, 2005b:59).

In order to adhere to this ethical guideline, the researcher informed the participants about the purpose, procedure, advantages and disadvantages of the study. The researcher also made it clear in the consent form that participants were free to withdraw from the interview session if they wished to do so, without any negative consequences if they withdrew. The participants were requested to sign voluntary consent forms to participate in the study. These forms were co-signed by the researcher before the data collection process began (an example of the form is appended as Appendix A).

1.7.3 Deception of respondents

According to Neuman (2000:229), deception occurs when a researcher intentionally misleads research subjects by means of written or verbal instructions, the actions of other people, or in certain aspects of the setting. Strydom (2005b:60) holds a similar view, writing that deception involves

deliberately withholding information, or offering incorrect information in order to make sure that the participants participate in the study when they might otherwise have refused.

The researcher did not deceive the respondents, and she made sure that all the relevant information about the following was included in the consent form: the researcher's name, the title of the study, the purpose and procedure of the study, the participant's rights (such as the right to withdraw), the issue of financial compensation (there was no financial compensation) and confidentiality, as well as the use of a tape recorder during interviews (see Appendix A).

1.7.4 Violation of privacy

Strydom (2005b:61) refers to privacy as a research participant's right to self-determination and confidentiality. He adds that privacy implies the element of personal privacy, while confidentiality indicates the handling of information in a confidential manner.

The researcher ensured that the identity of participants was not disclosed. Because anonymity cannot be guaranteed when interviews are conducted with participants, the researcher ensured that the collected data were dealt with in a confidential manner. In order to protect their privacy, participants were not identified by demographic information such as name, age, sex or region.

1.7.5 Actions and competence of a researcher

In order for a research project to run its course in an ethically correct manner, a researcher must be competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation (Strydom, 2005b:63). Moreover, Strydom (2005b:63) points out that even well-intentioned and well-planned research can fail or can produce invalid results if a researcher or fieldworkers are not adequately qualified and equipped, and there is not adequate supervision of the project.

To avoid such negative consequences, the researcher acquired extensive knowledge on the research topic by means of a literature review. The research study was done under supervision, and the researcher was knowledgeable regarding research methodology.

1.8   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher encountered the following limitations and problems during the research study:

- There was limited information about the topic on family preservation and policy cycle in social work literature, particularly in the South African context. As a result, most of the literature used was taken from other fields.

- The researcher intended to interview five social workers in each province, but in the end only interviewed 37 participants in eight provinces. The reason for interviewing participants from only eight of the nine provinces is that saturation point was reached before participants from Gauteng Province were included.

- The *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* (Department of Social Development, 2007a) clearly mandates all provinces to provide capacity building and education on family preservation services and also ensure the implementation thereof. During the data collection phase, the researcher realized that 17 participants out of the 37 who were interviewed never attended any formal training on family preservation, even though they were implementing family preservation services. This limitation proved to be a very serious policy failure in respect of the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* (Department of Social Development, 2007a). As a result of this limitation, the 17 participants were excluded from the analysis of the qualitative findings. It is also important to indicate that when follow-ups were done to include other participants who were originally not selected but who were listed in the sample frame, it became apparent that some of these individuals had also never attended training on family preservation services, and others were no longer working in the Social Development sector. Therefore these participants could not be included in the research study.

- In order to analyse the content of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services,* a checklist was developed based on the *Draft National Family Policy* as a policy document and a literature review – see in particular Chapter 5 on stages of the policy cycle, and Chapter 6, and Gil's (1992:69-75) framework as a guide. Gray and Sewpaul (1998:12) warn that when a researcher uses a framework to analyse a policy document, the interpretations may be subjective and reflect the particular interests of the writer. During the analysis and interpretation of the checklist, however, the researcher took cognisance of the aforementioned limitation and attempted to analyse the *Manual* using scientific principles.

1.9   DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

For this study, four important concepts are defined, namely family preservation services, the family, policy and social service professionals. These concepts are discussed below.

1.9.1   Family preservation services

According to the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b), family preservation services refer to a strategy, an approach or a philosophy that is based on a belief that family members need a family in which to develop to their full potential. It promotes the perspective that the best way to achieve permanency in the lives of family members is to allow each of them to be with his or her family, and to work with the family to prevent out-of-home placement. Strydom (2010:192) explains that "effective family preservation services are aimed at keeping children safe within families by stabilising the crisis situation which could result in the removal of children". Simplifying the definition, Tracy (1995:973) states that family preservation services are intended to "remove the risk of harm to the child instead of removing the child from the home".

In this study, the term "family preservation services" refers to all the services that focus on strengthening families in order to keep them together as far as possible.

1.9.2 Family

The *Strategy for Families, 2009-2013* (Department of Social Development, 2009b) describes a family as a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood, adoption or cohabitation, whether they are characterized by living in a common residence (household) or not, and these people interact and communicate with one another in their respective family roles, maintaining a common culture and governed by family rules. According to Prochaska and Norcross (2003:375), a family system consists of individuals, and also of the interrelationships among these individuals and the entire context and rules of the family. They explain that even the roles individual members have in families, such as parent and child, suggest consistent relationships between individuals.

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:5) acknowledges that today the concept of a "family" is difficult to define, so, according to the *Draft National Family Policy,* family theorists tend to refer to a family as a "social unit governed by family rules" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:11).

For the purposes of this study, families refer to groups of related persons maintaining a common culture and governed by family rules.

1.9.3 Policy

"Policy" is defined as an authoritative allocation, through a political process, of values to groups or individuals in a society (De Coning, 2000:11).

The *Business Dictionary* (2010) defines a policy as basic principles by which a government is guided, or declared objectives which a government seeks to achieve and preserve in the interest of the national community.

For the purposes of this study, a policy refers to a statement of intent by the government to realize societal goals.

1.9.4 Social Service professionals

The *Social Work Amendment Act, No 102 of 1998* (RSA, 1998)*,* refers to social service professionals, which include social workers, social auxiliary workers, student social workers and persons practising other professions in respect of which professional boards have been established. The *White Paper on Social Welfare* (Department of Social Development, 1997b) refers to social workers, child and youth care workers as social development workers. The *Integrated Service Delivery Model* (Department of Social Development, 2005) states that professional personnel include social workers, youth workers, probation officers, community development workers, child and youth care workers.

Based on different references regarding social service professionals, this study refers to social service professionals as including social workers, social auxiliary workers and child and youth care workers. However, it is important to note that social workers are not the only ones implementing family preservation services: youth workers, probation officers, community development workers and child youth care workers are involved in the implementation process. The focus of the research study is only on qualified social workers.

1.9.5 Master trainers

The *Annual Report* of the Department of Social Development (2009a) states that "the Department provided training on family preservation services on all levels of service delivery and the training programme was conducted in all provinces where 40 service providers were trained in each province". The Department of Social Development trained these 40 service providers as Master Trainers to roll out the training in their respective provinces. These master trainers attended five-day training sessions on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and were given some basic information on presentation skills, as they are expected to roll out the training. These master trainers therefore include social service professionals as defined above.

However, the *Annual Report* (Department of Social Development, 2009a) is silent on the actual definition of master trainers, and this has been identified as a gap.

1.10 OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH REPORT

The research report of this study is made up of nine chapters:

- **Chapter 1:**

  This chapter consists of a general introduction and a rationale for the topic of the study. It presents a problem formulation, the goal and objectives of the study, the research questions, the research approach, type of research, research design and methodology, information on the pilot study, a description of the research population, the sample and the sampling method. It also discusses the relevant ethical issues and provides definitions of the key concepts.

- **Chapter 2:**

  This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework, which is systems theory.

- **Chapter 3:**

  This chapter defines and conceptualizes the dynamic nature of the family institution as the central phenomenon in family preservation services. It focuses on the family life cycle and its stages, as well as the advantages and limitations of the family life cycle.

- **Chapter 4:**

  In this chapter, the content of family preservation services is examined on four levels of service delivery, namely prevention, early intervention, statutory intervention and reunification and aftercare. The aims, key elements, beliefs and theories in family preservation are also explored.

- **Chapter 5**

  Chapter 5 defines and conceptualizes the stages of the policy cycle, public policy process, and also briefly situates the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* within the policy cycle.

- **Chapter 6**

  In this chapter, the overviews of the *Draft National Family Policy* and the

Manual on Family Preservation Services are presented, as these are the fundamental documents in this study.

- **Chapter 7:**

  Chapter 7 discusses the research methodology used in this study in detail.

- **Chapter 8:**

  This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first part presents the quantitative empirical findings and the second presents the qualitative empirical findings of the study.

- **Chapter 9:**

  This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2:
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SYSTEMS THEORY

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation thereof. For practitioners to preserve families by rendering family preservation services that address the actual needs of families, a theoretical framework is necessary. Benokraitis (2011:32) describes theory as a "set of statements that explains why a particular phenomenon occurs". For De Vos (2005b:36), a theory is an attempt to explain and/or predict a particular phenomenon. With regard to family preservation services, theory can help practitioners to analyse and interpret family-related issues and enable them to locate these issues in society, according to the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a:9).

Emphasising the importance of a theoretical framework among practitioners, Prochaska and Norcross (2003:5) argue that without a guiding theory or system of psychotherapy, clinicians would be vulnerable, directionless creatures, bombarded with literally hundreds of impressions and pieces of information in a single session, because reality is complex and family issues are diverse. Prochaska and Norcross (2003:6) also indicate that "theories are being adapted for use in a variety of contexts", and that clinicians often borrow "heavily from divergent theories". Benokraitis (2011:32) points out that practitioners often use more than one theoretical framework.

Preservation of families can also be researched from more than one theoretical framework; thus selecting the most relevant theoretical framework(s) is vital for contextual insight into the phenomenon of family preservation. According to Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:132), the systems perspective "attempts to specify the mechanisms by which families adapt to their internal and external conditions by specifying such concepts as communication systems and feedback

processes". The perspective and theoretical framework of systems theory is very valuable for family preservation practitioners, who have to analyse both the external and internal processes of families to achieve preservation. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:24) suggest that systems concepts are a "useful language for conceptualizing a family's interactive processes".

For many years, counsellors' efforts to look at family problems tended to focus on a specific family member with a "problem", who was usually blamed for many of the difficulties the family was going through (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:23). The behaviour of that particular member of the family was often blamed on that person's internal conflict, without any reference to the family system. At a later stage, "around the middle of the 20th century, the horizons were broadened to focus on family relationships, studying recurring patterns within a family system and the impact of these patterns on the behaviour of individual family members" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:23).

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:77) propose "adopting a relationship frame of reference in studying a family's functioning, which involves paying…attention to the family's structure" (in other words, the way in which the family arranges itself, organizes itself, and also maintains itself at a given time). At the same time, attention is paid to the family's processes, with regard to how the family evolves, adapts and changes over time. Such an approach underscores the contextual nature of family functioning, which implies that "not only are the lives of family members interconnected, but the family's structure and processes are themselves embedded in complex extended family, neighbourhood, institutional, class, ethnic, and cultural systems" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:77).

Spronck and Compernolle (1997:147) refer to a system as a "set of interacting units with relationships among them". The word "set" implies that the units have some common properties and that these properties are essential if the units are to interact or have relationships. By contrast, Prochaska and Norcross (2003:375) define a system as a "set of units or elements that stand in some consistent relationship with one another, and it comprises both the separate elements and the relationships among those elements". Bertalanffy (cited in Nichols, 2011:92)

aptly sums up the concept by describing a system as an entity maintained by the mutual interaction of its parts.

Systems theory originated in the 1940s, when theoreticians began to construct models of the structure and functioning of mechanical and biological units (Nichols, 2011:57). Nichols (2011:57) explains that these theorists discovered that "things as diverse as jet engines, amoebas, and the human brain all share the attributes of a system – that is, an organized assemblage of parts forming a complex whole". According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:78), systems theory has "emerged as an overall concept, encompassing both general systems theory and cybernetics, and focusing on the relationship between elements, rather than on the elements themselves". Becvar and Becvar (2006:65) also believe that cybernetics and general systems theory are based on the same fundamental assumptions.

Nichols (2011:57) indicates that, according to systems theory, "the essential properties of living systems arise from the relationships among their parts. These properties are lost when the system is reduced to isolated elements, as the whole is always greater than the sum of its parts". This clearly implies that it would make little sense to interview a family member in order to understand his or her behaviour if the whole family is not involved in the process. This notion is in line with the strategic principles of the *Strategy for Families, 2009-2013* (Department of Social Development, 2009b) with regard to rendering services to families, which should be the focus of any intervention, and should be used as the core for service delivery, rather than focusing only on certain individuals within families.

According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1998:20), a "systems approach has profound implications for the ways in which counsellors view, think about, and ultimately intervene in human social phenomena". Systems thinking is not necessarily "directly translatable into specific counselling techniques – instead, it provides a counsellor with a way of organizing his or her thinking about people and the origins of their dysfunctional behaviour" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1998:20).

Benokraitis (2011:39) refers to systems theory as an "approach that looks at the family as a functioning unit that has the ability to solve its own problems, make decisions, and achieve collective goals". The emphasis is "not on individual family members, but on how the members interact within the family system, how they communicate, how family patterns evolve, and how individual personalities affect family members" (Benokraitis, 2011:39).

According to Prochaska and Norcross (2003:375), a family system "consists not only of individuals, but also of the interrelationships among these individuals, and the entire context and rules of the family". They also explain that even the specific roles that individual members have in families, such as parent and child, suggest consistent relationships between those individuals.

This chapter focuses on the characteristics of a system which include linear and circular causality; organization and wholeness; family homeostasis; feedback, information and control; subsystems; boundaries; open and closed systems; equifinality and equipotentiality. This chapter also briefly examines Bowen's natural systems theory (cited in Becvar & Becavar (2006:65), and finally uses a case study to reflect the importance of using a family diagram or genogram.

2.2   CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAMILY SYSTEM

2.2.1   Linear and circular causality

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1998:21) claim that theories that predate systems theories attempted to explain "complex phenomena by breaking the whole down and analysing the separate, simpler parts, thereby thinking in terms of linear causality".

Highlighting the weakness of a linear causality perspective, Becvar and Becvar (2006:04) state that, in such a perspective, reality is considered to be separate from us, to exist outside our minds – thus, meaning comes from external experience. We are mere recipients who recognise order rather than create it. In contrast to the world of systems theory, the notion of linear causality is not

meaningful; instead, the emphasis is on reciprocity, recursion, and shared responsibilities (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:04). Individual family members are seen as existing in the context of a relationship in which each influences the other and both equally cause and affect each other's behaviour.

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1998:21) indicate that a "systems approach is more holistic and may be better attuned to tangled interpersonal relationships". A linear approach, as Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:26) show, would identify the troublemaker in a family, for example, it would suggest that a mother with emotional problems may cause similar problems with her children, without taking into account the bigger picture of interwoven relationships.

2.2.2 Organization and wholeness

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:79) explain organization and wholeness as follows:

> If a system represents a set of units that stand in some consistent relationship to one another, then we can infer that the system is organized around those relationships. [Similarly] …we can assume that the elements, once combined, produce an entity, a whole which is greater than the sum of its parts. [In other words,] …no system can be adequately understood or fully explained once it has been broken down into its component parts within the system. Therefore it can also never be understood in isolation, since it never functions independently.

Prochaska and Norcross (2003:375) note that the terms "organization" and "system" are virtually synonymous, in that a system is a "set of organized units or elements, and even the principles of organization suggest that when elements are combined in a consistent pattern, an entity is produced that is greater than the additive sum of each of the separate parts" – this is the concept of wholeness.

Understanding the "dynamic relationships among family members is far more illuminating than simply summing up those components, because relationships are complex due to the existence of factions, alliances, coalitions and tensions" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:79). The way a family is organized defines its basic structure, that is, its coherence and fit. According to

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:79), a family can, for example, "be organized around a rigid, dominant male head, his acquiescent wife and rebellious children; whatever the arrangement, the family's organization offers important clues as to its consistent or repetitive interactive patterns".

Regarding the conceptualization of a system, the researcher concurs with Prochaska and Norcross (2003:375), who explain that systems are "mostly conceptualized as hierarchically organized, because they are related to one another according to a series of hierarchic[al] levels". Becvar and Becvar (2006:66) sum up systems theory by stating that we see "every system influencing and being influenced by every other system, and every individual influencing and being influenced by every other individual"; thus we understand ourselves as members of a "world community, and we see patterns of connection at every level of the system". The effectiveness of any intervention targeting individuals within the family without involving the whole family might thus be limited in resolving the challenges of such individuals (and their families).

2.2.3 Family rules

Becvar and Becvar (2006:66) refer to a family as a "cybernetically rule-governed system, and cybernetics is the study of feedback". Some relevant concepts to cybernetics are "communication and control in living organisms, machines and organizations, and cybernetics focuses on how anything (digital, mechanical or biological) processes information, reacts to information and changes, or can be changed to accomplish these tasks better" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:66). Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:81) also explain that a "family's rules, then, reveal its values, help set up family roles consistent with these values, and, in the process, provide dependability and regularity to relationships within the family system". According to Becvar and Becvar (2006:69), the rules according to which a system operates are "made up of the characteristic relationship patterns within the system".

According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:82), "rules may be descriptive (metaphors describing patterns of interchange) or prescriptive (directing what can or cannot occur between members)".

2.2.4 Families and change

In relation to change, Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:84) refer to "homeostasis", which they define as a

> …family's self-regulating efforts to maintain stability and resist change, although the end result is intended to be a steady state, the process is hardly a static one; on the contrary, a constantly fluctuating interaction of equilibrating and disequilibrating forces is in operation.

Prochaska and Norcross (2003:376) indicate that the concept of homeostasis (balance) explains how living systems control or maintain a steady state. These authors describe homeostasis in a family as an organism as resembling a "set of mechanisms within the neuroendocrine system whose function is to maintain consistency in the internal environment of an organism, such as constant blood pressure, temperature, and water content".

In contrast to Prochaska and Norcross (2003), Becvar and Becvar (2006:68) describe a system's ability to remain stable in the context of change and to change in the context of stability by means of concepts known as morphostasis and morphogenesis. Morphostasis is defined as a "system's tendency toward stability, a state of dynamic equilibrium" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:68). Morphogenesis refers to "system-enhancing behaviour that allows for growth, creativity, innovation, and change, all of which are characteristic of functional systems" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:68).

Some theorists agree that family stability is actually rooted in change; in other words, to the degree that a family is functional, it is able to retain sufficient regularity and balance to maintain a degree of adaptability while preserving a sense of order and sameness (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:68; Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:38, 2008:84). At the same time, family stability must subtly promote change and growth within its members and in the family as a whole. For

example, a couple that function well together dealing with parenthood for the first time may strengthen their partnership and grow more intimate as the family expands to accommodate the new arrival. On the other hand, a couple that function less well may grow apart after the birth of the child, with one or the other (or both) feeling that he or she is not attended to or neglected, and may become angry and resentful (Becvar & Becvar 2006:68).

Becvar and Becvar (2006:69) explain that both morphogenesis and morphostasis are necessary. They illustrate this argument by means of the example of a family as it moves through life cycle stages. According to Becvar and Becvar (2006:69), "as each new stage is anticipated and appropriate changes are incorporated into the system, the family's level of functioning is maintained". By contrast, in the case of a "15-year-old whose family does not allow for the necessary changes, an over-emphasis on morphostasis at the expense of morphogenesis threatens the system's well-being" (Becvar & Becvar 2006:69). In the same way, if too much change is permitted, or changes are too frequent, the previously established degree of functioning of the family or system would also be threatened.

2.2.5   Feedback, information and control

Feedback refers to a "process whereby information about past behaviours is fed back into a system in a circular manner" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:66). Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:85) hold a similar view – they indicate that "feedback refers to reinserting into a system the results of its past performance as a method of controlling the system, thereby increasing the system's likelihood of survival".

Becvar and Becvar (2006:67) explain that "at the level of simple cybernetics, there can be both positive and negative feedback". However, they caution that these concepts do not connote value judgements; rather, they refer to the impact of behaviour on the system and the response of the system to that behaviour. Thus, positive feedback acknowledges that change has occurred and has been accepted by the system. By contrast, negative feedback indicates that the status quo is being maintained – from the outside, it can be perceived that the family system reflects some form of resistance to change (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:67).

It is therefore evident that both feedback processes may refer to something that is good and/or to something that is bad, but how good or inadequate a feedback process is can be evaluated only relative to context. According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:85), "feedback loops are circular mechanisms whose purpose is to introduce information about a system's output back to its input, in order to alter, correct, and ultimately govern the system's functioning and ensure its viability."

According to Prochaska and Norcross (2003:376), negative feedback loops establish a balance among the deviations of different events within the loop, they decrease deviations from the system's rules of relating, and they help maintain the stability of a marriage and/or a family. Similarly, Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:85) argue that "when negative feedback (attenuating feedback loops) about the performance of the system is fed back through the system, it triggers those changes necessary to put the system back "on track", and thus guards the system's steady state, and maintains homeostasis in the face of change".

Positive feedback (amplifying feedback loops) has the opposite effect: "…it leads to further change by augmenting or accelerating the initial deviation" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:85). Prochaska and Norcross (2003:376) explain that "in a positive feedback loop, an increase in any component part of the loop will in turn increase the next event in the circular sequence".

Systems require both "positive and negative feedback – they need positive feedback to accommodate new information and changing conditions; they need negative feedback, when appropriate, to maintain the status quo" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:68)). For example, as children in a family grow into adolescence, they are likely to demand greater independence and self-direction, temporarily destabilizing the family system through their insistence on rule changes. Adaptive or enabling families typically attempt to deal with change by renegotiating teenage privileges and responsibilities and receiving feedback information regarding how easily and appropriately the changes are handled. In either case, whether in a functional or dysfunctional manner, the stability of the system is

maintained in the context of both negative and positive feedback processes (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:68).

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:86) acknowledge that "there is no family that passes through its life cycle transitions unscathed in that periodic imbalance is inevitable, and feedback loops are called into play that restore stability or escalate conflict".

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:29) point out that "homeostasis does not mean stasis" – as a marriage or a family grows, in order to maintain stability, change needs to be acknowledged, and "change often comes about in a family through breakthroughs that push the family beyond its previous homeostatic level" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:29). At times it may be necessary to "propel a family with stagnating or otherwise untenable behaviour patterns" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:29) to new levels of functioning. In these cases, a therapist may "seize the opportunity offered by disequilibrium to promote discontinuity and the restoration of family homeostasis at a new, more satisfactory level" for all (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:29).

2.2.6 Subsystems

According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:87), "subsystems are those parts of the overall system assigned to carry out particular functions or processes within the system as a whole and each system exists as part of a larger system and contains smaller subsystems".

According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:87), a family

> …commonly contains a number of coexisting subsystems. The husband and wife dyad constitutes a subsystem, and so do the mother-child, father-child, and child-child dyads. [In a family,] …subsystems can be formed by generation (mother and father), by sex (mothers and daughters, fathers and sons), by interest (intellectual pursuits) or by function (such as parental caretakers).

- 31 -

Challenges within these subsystems may involve "serious intergenerational conflict, [and] rebelliousness, symptomatic children, or runaways, often reflect underlying family instability and disorganization" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:88).

2.2.7 Boundaries

The concept of a boundary implies the notion of a hierarchy of systems, in that it connotes the separateness of a system from a larger system, and yet a belongingness to that suprasystem (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:70). According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:89), "a boundary is an invisible demarcation that separates an individual, a subsystem, or a system from outside surroundings". They explain that "boundaries help define the individual autonomy of a subsystem's separate members, and help to differentiate subsystems from one another" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:89). In this regard, Becvar and Becvar (2006:70) also point out that a "system's boundaries, its rules, act as a gatekeeper for the flow of information into and out of the system"; this implies that maintaining a family's identity involves a process in which the boundary functions as a buffer against information from outside the system, screening it for compatibility with the family's value system.

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:89) point out that "within a family, boundaries distinguish between subsystems, helping define separate subunits of the overall system and the quality of their interactive processes". Sufficiently well-defined divisions are recommended in order to "allow subsystem members to carry out their tasks without undue interference, while at the same time they need to be open enough to permit contact between members of the subsystem and others" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:89).

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:89) emphasise that "an important issue here is the permeability of boundaries, since boundaries vary in how easily they permit information to flow to and from the environment". It is not enough only to draw the boundaries clearly within families. The rules need to be apparent to all (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:89). These authors also conclude that "if

- 32 -

boundaries within families are too blurred or too rigid, they invite confusion or inflexibility, increasing the family's risk of instability and ultimate dysfunction" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:89).

2.2.8 Open and closed systems

According to Becvar and Becvar (2006:70), the extent to which a system screens out or permits the input of new information is referred to as the openness or closedness of that specific system. Similarly, Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:90) explain that "a system with a continuous information flow to and from the outside is considered an open system, while one whose boundaries cannot be easily crossed can be considered a closed system". The point here is the "degree of interaction with, and accessibility to the outside environment" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:90). Open systems "do more than adapt passively to their surroundings, therefore their social transactions are bidirectional" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:90). Thus, beyond simply adjusting, they also "initiate activities that permit an exchange with the community because their boundaries are permeable while closed systems, on the other hand, have impermeable boundaries" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:90). Thus they fail to interact with the outside environment, lack feedback and corrective mechanisms, become isolated, and resist change.

In this regard, Becvar and Becvar (2006:70) state:

> Families that function effectively maintain the system by developing a balance between openness and closeness, and they are tuned to the outside world so that appropriate change and adaptation are accomplished, while they can resist changes that threaten the survival of the system.

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:91) are of the opinion that

> …all families operate as open systems, but some may appear more closed in the sense of being rigid or insular. […] the more open the family system, the more adaptable it is and the more accessible to change it is. Such a system tends not only to survive but to thrive.

Prochaska and Norcross (2003:377) agree that living systems are characterized by being open systems, which means that energy can be freely transported into, within, and out of the system. When information is packaged or programmed efficiently, it has a powerful effect on a system's ability to function in a highly complex and well-organized manner. According to Becvar and Becvar (2006:71), when the appropriate balance between openness and closedness is maintained, the system is said to be in a state of "negentropy", or negative entropy; it tends toward maximum order, as it allows in information and permits change as appropriate, while it also screens out information and avoids changes that would threaten its survival.

On the other hand, Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2008:91) make it clear that "a lack of exchange of information with the outside world in relatively closed systems decreases their competence to deal with stress". For example, a family where there is incest tends to ensure that there is a very limited contact with the outside world, in order to protect the perpetrator at the expense of other family members. "Limited or perhaps even non-existent contact with others outside the family unit may lead to fearful, confused, and ineffective responses in times of crisis" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:91). Such closed family systems run the risk of entropy, in other words, that they may gradually regress or decay because of insufficient input, and thus become prone to eventual disorganization and disorder, particularly if they face prolonged stress (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2008:91).

Becvar and Becvar (2006:71) also acknowledge that if a balance is not maintained between openness and closedness, that is, if a system is at either extreme of the continuum, the system may be said to be in a state of entropy, or to tend toward maximum disorder or disintegration, because the system is allowing in either too much information or not enough information, thereby putting at risk its identity and its survival.

2.2.9 Equifinality and equipotentiality

Becvar and Becvar (2006:71) believe that whatever the particular balance there is in a family between morphogenesis and morphostasis, openness and closedness, or entropy and negentropy, all systems can be described according to the concept of equifinality. These authors explain that a system as it is may be said to be its own best explanation of itself, because, regardless of where one begins, the end is likely to be the same. The term "equifinality" literally means "equal ending". Thus, equifinality is "the tendency towards a characteristic final state from different initial states and in different ways based upon dynamic interaction in an open system attaining a steady state" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:71). According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1998:26), "open systems use both negative and positive feedback loops and they can therefore be considered to operate on the systems principle of equifinality – this implies that the same end state may be reached from a variety of starting points".

By contrast, Becvar and Becvar (2006:71) prefer the notion of equipotentiality, which refers to the notion that different end states may be arrived at from the same initial conditions. In either case, "the implication is that it is not possible to make deterministic predictions about developmental processes. In social work, one cannot predict outcomes, thereby, cannot be prescriptive to family systems" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:71).

At this point, it is appropriate to discuss the Bowen's Family Systems Theory as a remarkable contribution in the development of the systems approach.

2.3 BOWEN'S FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY

During the 1960s and 1970s, Dr Murray Bowen developed a theoretical framework to describe and predict the functioning of people in emotional systems (cited in Chambers, 2009:237). He developed a number of key concepts that he applied principally to the way people relate in the emotionally intense setting of the family, and the therapists he trained used these concepts to assist their clients to observe and reflect on their own functioning and create options for

change in the family system. It seems that Bowen was an exception among family therapists at the time, who were largely pragmatists, more concerned with action than insight, and were more interested in technique than theory (Nichols, 2010:115). Bowen was always more committed to systems theory as a way of thinking than as a set of interventions.

According to Becvar and Becvar (2006:146), to Bowen, the family is an emotional system composed of a nuclear family – all those living in a household – as well as the extended family, whether living or dead, and regardless of where they reside. Bowen's theory sees all of these members of the family, living or deceased, physically absent or present, as those who "live" in the nuclear family's emotional system in the here and now, in the processes that define the family's unique configuration. That is, the family as an emotional system is a universal and transgenerational phenomenon. Thus, while the nuclear family may be the unit with which a therapist works, the emotional systems of previous generations of the family are alive and well, and are very much a part of the family and the therapeutic process.

The six key concepts of Bowen's theory are discussed below, based on Becvar and Becvar's (2006:145-150) and Nichols's (2010:115-190) review of these concepts.

2.3.1 Differentiation of self

There are two distinct aspects to the differentiation process, namely the differentiation of self from others and the differentiation of feeling processes from intellectual processes. A related construct is that of the undifferentiated family ego mass, or fusion – it describes a family's emotional oneness. The theory distinguishes between people who are fused and those who are differentiated (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:145). Thus, differentiated persons have a conscious awareness of the emotional dynamics around them and are also flexible, adaptable and more self-sufficient. They can transcend this level of interaction. By contrast, undifferentiated persons tend to be more rigid and more emotionally dependent on others for their well-being. Nichols (2010:115) defines

differentiation of self as the capacity to think and reflect, to not respond automatically to emotional pressures, internal or external. In essence, it is the ability to be flexible and act wisely, even in the face of anxiety; undifferentiated people are more easily moved to emotionality than to balance thinking and feeling in making decisions.

Becvar and Becvar (2006:147) explain this concept by introducing the concepts of a "solid-self" and a "pseudo-self". They assert that the distinction between these concepts is closely tied to the extent to which a person values the transcendence of the intellectual over the emotional, that is, a person with a solid-self operates on the basis of clearly defined beliefs, opinions, convictions, and life principles, developed through the process of intellectual reasoning and the consideration of alternatives. Conversely, and consistent with the idea of emotional fusion, a pseudo-self is characteristic of a person who makes choices on the basis of emotional pressures, rather than on the basis of reasoned principles. For such people, decisions and choices made at different points in time may be inconsistent, and they lack awareness of this inconsistency.

2.3.2 Emotional triangle

Another important concept in Bowen's theory is projection of the problem onto one or more of the children by one or both of the parents, which creates a triangle or triangulation (cited in Becvar & Becvar, 2006:148). Bowen argues that a dyad, or two-person system, is relatively stable as long as it is calm, and if any stress or anxiety this system encounters is transitory or not chronic. Furthermore, the degree of anxiety or stress necessary to destabilize the system is relative to the degree of undifferentiation in the spouses. However, chronic stress can destabilize almost any but the most differentiated dyads, and even these will be challenged under some circumstances. When situational or chronic anxiety is increased beyond the level of tolerance of the dyad, a vulnerable other person may become triangulated, in other words, one of the members of the dyad may seek a third party as an ally to support his or her position in a conflict with the other member of the dyad. In some cases, when the level of anxiety is too great for this threesome, others may become involved, forming a series of interlocking

triangles. Nichols (2010:116) also concludes that most family problems are triangular, which is why working only on a twosome may have limited results. For example, teaching a mother better techniques for disciplining her son will not resolve the problem if the mother is over-involved with the boy as a result of her husband's distance.

2.3.3 Multigenerational transmission processes

Multigenerational transmission processes refer to the transmission of an emotional process across two (or more) generations. However, it is important to note that the level of undifferentiation, or fusion, transmitted across generations is not constant (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:149). Rather, each subsequent generation tends to move toward a lower level of differentiation. In his theory, Bowen acknowledges that although feelings cannot be qualified as a scientific fact, there appears to be an increasing lack of differentiation and an increase in emotional fusion with each subsequent generation (cited in Becvar & Becvar, 2006:149). Bowen refers to a lack of differentiation at the point of departure from the family of origin as unresolved emotional attachments. It may be handled by means of either denial or isolation of self and the development of a pseudo-self, which are forms of emotional cut-off.

Becvar and Becvar (2006:149) explain that an undifferentiated person may choose to live close to his or her parents, or may move far away from the parents, may isolate him- or herself emotionally from the parents, or may evidence a combination of emotional isolation and physical distancing. Such attempts at emotional cut-off cannot be successful. Bowen (cited in Nichols, 2010) suggests that the more intense a person's attempts at cut-off with the past, the more likely it is that the individual will form an exaggerated version of the parent's family in the family of procreation created with a spouse.

Nichols (2010:116) stipulates that through the family projection process, parents may transmit their lack of differentiation to their children. As a result, emotional fusion between spouses might produce anxiety, which can manifest itself through marital conflict and tension. A projection process involving a child manifests itself

in attempts by parents to seek stability and assurance from a child, who needs stability and assurance from the parents. This sequence builds on the mother-child dyad, but it must be noted that the degree of the projection process is in direct proportion to the degree of undifferentiation in both spouses. A typical example is a husband who is cut off from his parents and siblings, and who relates in an extremely distant way to his wife. In turn, this predisposes her to focus on the children. When the wife is kept at arm's length by her husband, she becomes anxiously attached to the children (this may be the oldest son or daughter, the youngest, or perhaps the child with traits like one of the parents). The danger is that the more the mother focuses her anxiety on a child, the more that child's functioning is stunted (Nichols, 2010:87).

Thus, emotional problems, which are at base interpersonal problems, are the result of a multigenerational sequence in which all members are actors and reactors. The multigenerational transmission process will continue until unresolved emotional attachments and cut-offs are dealt with successfully (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:148).

2.3.4 Sibling position

According to Becvar and Becvar (2006:148), the premise that underpins this theoretical concept is that children develop certain fixed personality characteristics because of their sibling position in the family. These would include such roles as the oldest brother of brothers, the middle child, twin, and so forth. Bowen theory noted that the premise of sibling position enables a therapist to predict the part a child will play in a family's emotional process, as well as which family patterns will be carried over into the next generation. Nichols (2010:117) also explains that a mother may be anxious to make sure that her children feel equally loved, and her anxiety may be translated into treating them exactly alike – an attempt at perfect fairness that betrays the apprehension behind it. The result may be that each child becomes highly sensitive to the amount of attention he or she receives during conflicts with the siblings, something that the mother would like to prevent. Thus, sibling conflict can be explained as an outcome of inevitable rivalry and may be just one side of a triangle.

2.3.5 Emotional cut-off

This concept refers to the way people handle their attachments to their parents or their families of origin at the point of separation, according to Becvar and Becvar (2006:149). By contrast, Nichols (2010:118) sees emotional cut-off as a way people manage anxiety between generations. Nichols (2010:118) states that the greater the emotional fusion between parents and children, the greater the likelihood of cut-off. In a fused family, triangulation is a common pattern, and being in a triangle implies some level of undifferentiation (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:149). That is, the greater the triangulation, the lower the level of differentiation, and the more intense the involvement with the family of origin, and thus the more challenging the separation process. Indeed, leaving one's family of origin does not necessarily mean that one has differentiated.

2.3.6 Societal emotional process

Becvar and Becvar (2006:149) point out that by developing this concept, Bowen extended the principles of the emotional dynamics of the family. He hypothesized that the same processes of dysfunction observed in a family can also be seen in the larger society. Like the dyad mentioned earlier, humankind can handle acute, situational stress very well, but not chronic stress (Becvar and Becvar, 2006:149). Under conditions of chronic stress, both the family and society may lose contact with their intellectually determined principles and will resort to an emotional basis for decisions that offer short-term relief. Good intentions at any social level, without an appropriate distance that allows for a relatively objective view of the whole pattern of the family or the society, tend to be both unhelpful and to foster helplessness.

Nichols (2010:118) believes that this concept involves more than Becvar and Becvar (2006) suggest. Nichols (2010:118) claims that Bowen agreed that sexism, class and ethnic prejudice are toxic social emotional processes, but that Bowen also believed that individuals and families with higher levels of differentiation are more successful in resisting these destructive social influences. Nichols (2010:119) concludes that optimal development occurs when family

members are differentiated, their anxiety levels are low, and partners are in good emotional contact with their own families.

If a family cannot achieve optimal development on its own, such development can be achieved through therapy. According to Bowen, the goal of therapy is not to try and change people – instead, therapy is seen as an opportunity for people to learn more about themselves and their relationships, so that they can assume responsibility for their own problems (Nichols, 2010:119). The central techniques in Bowenian therapy include genograms, process questions, relationship experiments, detriangling, coaching, taking "I"-positions and displacement stories (Nichols, 2010:124). A fuller discussion of therapy techniques falls beyond the scope of this chapter; therefore, only a family genogram is briefly discussed through a case study as one of the important techniques in assessing family systems.

Examining the characteristics of the family systems theory and Bowen's theoretical constructs of the family systems theory, one can draw some parallels; however, only one example is referred to in this chapter, as an in-depth comparison of these aspects falls beyond the scope of this study.

In his theory, Bowen (cited in Nichols, 2010:124) emphasises the importance of differentiation of self – he regards it as the ability to be flexible and act wisely even in the face of anxiety; by contrast, an undifferentiated person may easily move to an emotional state, rather than balance thinking and feeling in making decisions. The concept of differentiation of self is comparable to the notion of boundaries in the characteristics of the family systems theory. Clearer boundaries enhance the individual autonomy of a subsystem's separate members, and they help to differentiate subsystems from one another. Conversely, if boundaries within families are too blurred or too rigid, they elicit confusion or inflexibility, increasing a family's risk of instability and ultimate dysfunction. Thus, the characteristics noted in family systems theory complement Bowen's theory of family systems. It is therefore important to harness both perspectives for effective service delivery to families.

2.4   CONCLUSION

A system is defined as a set of units or elements that stand in some consistent relationship with one another, and it is comprised of both separate elements, Systems theory emerged in the 1940s, when theoreticians began to construct models of the structure and functioning of mechanical and biological units. This theory has evolved as an overall concept, encompassing both general systems theory and cybernetics, focusing on the relationship between elements rather than on the elements themselves.

Family systems theory sees the family as a functioning unit, the members of which solve their problems, make their own decisions, and achieve collective goals. The emphasis is not so much on an individual family member as on how family members interact with one another within a family system to achieve their collective goals.

Another important aspect of family systems theory is analysing family dynamics according to the phases of the family life cycle. The next chapter therefore focuses on the family life cycle and its phases.

CHAPTER 3:
FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The concept "family" is difficult to define. Hence, some family theorists prefer to classify it merely as "a social unit governed by family rules" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:9). The *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a:16) refers to families as "social groups that are related by blood (kinship), marriage, adoption, or affiliation, who have close emotional attachments to each other which endure over time and go beyond a particular physical residence". In line with the elements that define a family, family preservation services aim to preserve families over time, regardless of any disruption that they encounter in different stages of the family life cycle. These services also empower family members to maintain mutual support for one another. This chapter discusses the family life cycle by considering the different stages of the family life cycle in detail. This study includes information from several developmental theorists in order to explain the changes that family members encounter during their various life stages.

3.2 CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE FAMILY

For most people, the word "family" conjures up an image of parents with their children. However, there have been many changes to families that have had a negative impact on their structure and ability to fulfil their roles. According to Kamermann (1995:929), much of the anxiety in recent years about the "death of the family" arises not out of fear of what will happen to families, but out of society's failure or lack of readiness to adapt to changes. The most important of these trends are changes in the structure and composition of families and changes in gender roles – in particular, the increase of single-parent and mother-only families headed by divorced women, or women who have never been married, and the rapid rise in the labour force participation rates of married women with young children, according to the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a:18).

Despite significant changes that are experienced by families, in terms of child-rearing and child socialization, caregiving and the nurturing of elderly and handicapped family members, and, most important, in reproducing the future citizenry, the family still continues to be the primary social unit, with limited support from society. The *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a:i-ii) rightly admits that the South African family is under threat from a host of societal forces, such as high levels of poverty, high levels of unemployment, the high rate of unwanted pregnancies, HIV and AIDS, absent fathers and mothers, domestic violence and other factors that weaken families and undermine their stability. Thus, the role of social service professionals is to understand a person and his or her family in the context of family development, and of the societal forces that may pose a threat to family life.

For this reason, it is imperative that we broaden our understanding of the definition of a "family" to make allowances for these changes and challenges. One basic axiom is that the family is the core of society, and an integral part of the general well-being of individuals in relation to their psychosocial, emotional, physical, spiritual and economic needs.

According to McGoldrick, Carter and Garcia-Preto (2011:1), families are believed to share certain features which include being intimate and interdependent, being relatively stable over time, being set off from other groups by boundaries related to the family group and different identities, and performing supportive tasks associated with families. McGoldrick et al. (2011:1) describe the bonds of an individual to his or her family as follows: "We are born into families; they are the foundation of our first experiences of the world, our first relationships, our first sense of belonging to a group; we develop, grow, and hopefully die in the context of our families." This attests to the old adage that we can choose our friends, but not our families of origin.

The African Union's (2004) *Plan of Action for Families in Africa* delineates three dimensions of the family as a unit – these are

- a psycho-biological unit in which the members are connected by blood ties and kinship, as well as the personal feelings of and emotional bonds between the members of the unit;
- a social unit in which members co-habit in the same household and share the unit's tasks and social functions; and
- a basic economic production unit.

Taking the heterogeneous, multicultural and dynamic nature of South African society into account, a family can be defined

> …as a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, adoption or cohabitation, characterized by a common residence or not, interacting and communicating with one another in their respective family roles, maintaining a common culture and governed by family rules. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:16)

However diverse families and their forms are,

> …no one family form – nuclear, extended, single-parenting, matrilineal, patrilineal, fictive, residential, non-residential, – necessarily provides the ideal form for humans to live or raise children in; wife beating, child abuse, psychological terror, material deprivation and malnutrition take place in each of those family forms. (McGoldrick et al., 2011:10).

Hence it is crucial that family preservation services be rendered at four levels of service delivery, namely prevention, early intervention, statutory intervention, and aftercare and reunification, in order to target all forms of families in their diverse nature.

3.3 LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

In order to achieve the desired outcome, namely an improvement in social functioning, services are rendered at different levels. These levels are on a continuum, so while they may seem to follow a distinct hierarchy, a family member may enter the system at any of the levels, and the levels may overlap in practice (Department of Social Development, 2008b:44). The service provider and a family must determine the family's current social functioning together and

work together to develop an intervention strategy that will enable the family to reach the optimum level of social functioning to enable reintegration into society.

The *Service Delivery Model for Developmental Social Services* (Department of Social Services, 2006) outlines the four levels of service delivery as, first, prevention, second, early intervention (non-statutory), third, statutory intervention/residential/alternative care, and, fourth, reunification and aftercare.

3.4 THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE

Various theories of individual development and models of the family life cycle, especially when employed in combination, are important and useful tools for family therapists, because these theories and models can assist therapists in the processes of understanding and assessing functioning, as well as of creating therapeutic strategies and interventions, by offering a set of guidelines for considering individual and family growth and development (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:110). Becvar and Becvar (2006:110) cite a number of developmental frameworks for individual development that have been found particularly useful – these include the psychosocial model of Erik Erikson (1963), the cognitive development model of Jean Piaget (1955), the moral development models of Lawrence Kohlberg (1981) and Carol Gilligan (1982), and the adult development models of Marjorie Fiske Lowenthal and David Chiriboga (1973) and Bernice Neugarten (1976).

Lauer and Lauer (2000:338) mention Evelyn Duvall as one of the theorists who offered a widely used model of the family life cycle, which consisted of eight stages and the various critical tasks facing people in each of these stages. These stages range from the newly married couple, through the childbearing years, to the "aging family members" stage, in which the original couple are grandparents, or in which one of the spouses dies (Lauer & Lauer, 2000:33). These authors discuss ways in which families must alter their attitudes and relationships in order to adapt to the varying stages (Lauer & Lauer, 2000:338).

McGoldrick et al. (2011:16) have recently constructed a family life cycle in which they identified eight stages, each of which focuses on at least two generations. The stages they identified are points at which family members enter or leave the system. The stages include leaving home, emerging young adults, joining of families through marriage union, families with young children, families with adolescents, launching of children and moving on at midlife, families in late middle age, and families nearing the end of life.

Becvar and Becvar (2006:112) outline nine stages of the family life cycle as depicted in Table 3.1, below. These nine stages are discussed in more detail in this study.

Table 3.1: Nine stages of the family life cycle

STAGE	EMOTIONAL ISSUES	STAGE – CRITICAL TASKS
Unattached young adult	Accepting parent-offspring separation	• Differentiation from family of origin • Development of peer relations • Initiation of career
Newly married adults	Commitment to the marriage	• Formation of marital system • Making room for spouse with family and friends • Adjusting career demands
Childbearing adults	Accepting new members into the system	• Adjusting marriage to make room for children • Taking on parenting roles • Making room for grandparents
Preschool-age child	Accepting the new personality	• Adjusting family to the needs of specific children • Coping with energy drain and lack of privacy • Taking time out to be a couple
School-age child	Allowing child to establish relationships outside the family	• Extending family/society interactions • Encouraging the child's educational progress • Dealing with increased activities and time demands
Teenage child	Increasing flexibility of family boundaries to allow independence	• Shifting the balance in the parent-child relationship • Refocusing on midlife career and marital issues

STAGE	EMOTIONAL ISSUES	STAGE – CRITICAL TASKS
		• Dealing with increasing concern for older generations
Launching centre	Accepting exits from and entries into the family	• Releasing adult children into work, college, marriage • Maintaining supportive home base • Accepting occasional returns of adult children
Middle-aged adults	Letting go of children and facing each other again	• Rebuilding the marriage • Welcoming children's spouses, grandchildren into family • Dealing with aging of one's own parents
Retired adults	Accepting retirement and old age	• Maintaining individual and couple functioning • Supporting middle generation • Coping with death of parents, spouse • Closing or adapting family home

Source: Becvar and Becvar (2006:113)

According to Becvar and Becvar (2006:113), there is ample evidence that family stresses, which are likely to occur around the life cycle transition points, create disruptions of the life cycle, and produce symptoms and dysfunction. When a sense of motion becomes lost or distorted, intervention can involve restoring a sense of life as a process and as movement from and toward (McGoldrick et al., 2011:2). Thus service providers need to be aware of the challenges and changes in each phase of the life cycle to be able to provide appropriate interventions and ultimately preserve the family.

3.5   DISCUSSION OF THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE PHASES

As indicated in the section above, several authors refer to the phases of the family life cycle. The researcher decided mainly to follow Becvar and Becvar's (2006:113) sequence of the phases, as discussed below, because it is the most comprehensive. Nevertheless, the valuable contributions of other theorists are included in the discussion where appropriate.

3.5.1 Unattached young adult

In this stage, the unattached adult is confronted with the challenge of the desire to become more autonomous, and, together with this, the challenge of accepting emotional and financial responsibility for the self (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:113). Adequate completion of the process of becoming an autonomous individual requires a young adult to separate from the family of origin without cutting off or fleeing reactively to a substitute emotional refuge. The young adult phase is therefore a cornerstone of the family life cycle. This is a chance for the young adults to sort out emotionally what they will take along from their families of origin, what they will leave behind and what they will create for themselves, according to the *Manual for Marriage Preparation and Marriage Enrichment* (Department of Social Development, 2007b:69).

According to Becvar and Becvar (2006:114), in the young adult phase, problems usually centre on either young adults' or parents' not recognising the need for a shift to a less hierarchical form of relating, based on the fact that they are now all adults. Problems in shifting status may take the form of parents' encouraging the dependence of their young adult children, or of young adults' either remaining dependent, or rebelling and breaking away in a pseudo-independent cut-off from their parents and families. When parents experience a crisis in accepting this bid for independence by their children, they need to be helped to recognise the new status of their adult children and relate to them as adults, according to the *Training Manual on Families in Crisis* (Department of Social Development, 2008c:71).

According to Becvar and Becvar (2006:114), parents of adult children tend to move closer to each other when the children become independent, provided they have not neglected their relationship in the phases prior to this phase. If the parents did not grow together as a couple, but only as parents, they will have problems when the children leave home, as they will feel obliged to, or may be forced to, spend more time together as a couple. Fortunately, research indicates that the marital satisfaction of the majority of middle-aged couples is often high when the children leave home, because they have less stress arising from the

responsibilities of daily caregiving (Blacker, 2005:292; Williams, Sawyer & Wahlstrom, 2006:213-217).

This phase has been described as the phase in which consciousness-altering substances are used the most (Santrock, 2006:427). These substances include coffee, alcohol, drugs and medication. According to Fulmer (2005:218), reasons for the use of such substances may include the following:

- an absence of adult supervision;
- the use of substance aids in ecstatic celebrations;
- a wish to transcend the self;
- a need to solve inner conflict; and
- a desire for a temporary sense of security.

Santrock (2006:442) indicates that the majority of single young adults do eventually reduce their use of alcohol and drugs, but those with a family history of abuse and addiction can be at risk. According to research done by Fulmer (2005:218), young adults may drink less by the age of 25. Addiction can be more readily identified by the end of this stage, since the reasons for addiction given by teenagers no longer apply. Some developmental theorists argue that sobriety in this phase can be regarded as the onset of maturity (Fulmer, 2005:218).

Sadly, as Van Vuren (2004:212) points out, some single young adults have to shoulder the responsibility of caring for parents with chronic illnesses such as HIV and AIDS. When their parents die, they also have to take on the responsibility of caring for younger siblings. This has implications for the future of the young adult, and influences the amount of financial resources available (Van Vuren, 2004:212).

3.5.2   Newly married adults

According to Becvar and Becvar (2006:114), a family reaches the second stage of the family life cycle when a couple gets married. Marriage tends to be misunderstood as a joining of two individuals. However, what it really represents is the changing of two entire systems, which then overlap, resulting in the

development of a third subsystem. The changing role of women and the dramatic effects of the fact that contraceptives are widely available today, along with our increasing longevity and the mobility of our culture, have contributed to a major redefinition of marriage in our society (McGoldrick, 2011:193). According to Lauer and Lauer (1997:323), a newly married couple tends to have a number of family strengths that are on a very high level – in particular, a couple is likely to agree that among other things they

- will disclose their feelings to each other;

- do not need to worry about too many things;

- can trust each other and are able to confide in each other;

- feel a sense of loyalty to each other;

- tend to share similar beliefs and agree on values;

- generally have respect for each other and take pride in each other; and

- do not face an excessive number of conflicts.

A central task at this stage for a couple is to establish their own marital system, their own way of relating and dealing with the various problems and processes of family life. For the couple to establish their own marital system, they will also have to deal with the dilemma of "fusion and closeness" (McGoldrick, 2011:193). In their quest for intimacy, they often try to get closer to another person. This effort can be carried to an extreme, so that the couple are no longer two separate individuals in an intimate relationship, but almost one fused being, according to the *Training Manual on Families in Crisis* (Department of Social Development, 2008c:71).

Sometimes, an inability to formalize the relationship of a couple living together in marriage indicates that the partners are still too enmeshed in their own families to define a new system and accept the implications of this realignment. It is useful in such situations to help the system to move to a new definition of itself rather than to get lost in the details of incremental shifts the couple may be struggling with (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:115).

McGoldrick (2011:195) suggests that the main task of a couple during this phase is to make decisions about which family traditions and rituals they should retain from each side of the family, and agree which ones the partners will develop themselves. It is even more important to renegotiate relationships with parents, siblings, friends, extended family, and co-workers once the couple marries. It seems important particularly for women that they do not curtail outside relationships, as doing so appears to leave them vulnerable to isolation and frequently to abuse in the marriage.

McGoldrick (2011:210) acknowledges that a new couple may experience several challenges with regard to their marital adjustment which may result from the following (cited verbatim):

- Contextual factors:
    - The couple do not have jobs or resources to support themselves adequately.
    - The wedding occurs without family or friends present.
    - One spouse or both spouses started but did not complete either high school or college.
- Partners differ in terms of their
    - religious, racial, ethnic or class background; and/or
    - financial power, socioeconomic status, education, career options or skills.
- Issues with family of origin:
    - Either partner has a different level of success or social location from his or her own parents, especially a lower success and social location.
    - The couple resides either extremely close to, or at a great distance from, either family of origin.
    - The couple is financially dependent on the family of origin.
    - The couple come from incompatible sibling constellations.
    - Either spouse has a poor relationship with siblings or parents, or the parents had poor or unstable relationships themselves.
    - Either spouse considers his or her childhood or adolescence to have been an unhappy time.
- The husband believes that men's rights, needs, or privilege should predominate in marriage and that women should serve the needs of others over their own needs. The danger increases if he tries to
    - dominate the wife;
    - isolate her from work, friends, or family;
    - control her financially; and/or

- o intimidate her physically.
- Timing of the relationship:
  - o The couple meets or marries shortly after a significant loss.
  - o The couple marries early (before age 20) or late (after age 40).
  - o The couple marries after an acquaintanceship of less than six months or more than five years of engagement.
  - o The wife becomes pregnant before or within the first year of marriage. (McGoldrick, 2011:210)

Family preservation services in this phase include a marriage enrichment programme at a preventative level, as the couple could be encouraged to strengthen their relationship in preparation for the arrival of new family members, which may compromise the quality time that the couple used to spend together.

3.5.3 Childbearing adults

When a couple decides to have a baby, nothing will ever be the same again – a change of membership takes place. Husbands become fathers, wives become mothers, parents become grandparents and there is a change in the function of family members. There is no other phase with more changes or challenges than the phase of the addition of a new child, according to the *Manual for Marriage Preparation and Marriage Enrichment* (Department of Social Development, 2007b:83).

The shift in this stage of the family life cycle requires adults to move up a generation and become caretakers to the younger generation. Typical problems that occur when parents cannot make this shift are struggles with each other about taking responsibility, or a refusal or inability to behave as parents to their children. Often parents find themselves unable to set limits and exert the required authority, or they lack the patience to allow their children to express themselves as they develop, according to the *Training Manual on Families in Crisis* (Department of Social Development, 2008c:72).

According to the *Manual for Marriage Preparation and Marriage Enrichment* (Department of Social Development, 2007b:83), the birth of a child changes the balance in a family with regard to friends, work, siblings and the child's parents.

Parents can experience role confusion due to the expectations of society. Young parents often overlook their own relationship and emphasise the children or the job. This is not good practice, but is all part of the transition into the new phase (Department of Social Development, 2007b:83).

One of the main challenges of this phase in the case of a two-career marriage is the disposition of child-care responsibilities and household chores when both parents work full-time. According to the *Training Manual on Families in Crisis* (Department of Social Development, 2008c:72), the pressure of trying to find adequate child care when there is no satisfactory social provision for this family need produces the following serious consequences that may lead to family crisis (cited verbatim):

- the two full-time jobs may fall on the woman;
- the family may live in conflict and chaos;
- children may be neglected or sexually abused in inadequate child-care facilities;
- recreation and vacations may be sharply curtailed to pay for child care; and
- the woman may give up her career to stay home or work part-time (Department of Social Development, 2008c:72).

It is not surprising that this is the family life cycle phase with the highest rate of divorce, which creates many of the additional crises a family may experience during this time, according to the *Training Manual on Families in Crisis* (Department of Social Development, 2008c:72). During this phase, where the focus is on accepting new members into the family system, the following core changes need to be recognised by a social worker:

- adjusting the marital system to make space for children;

- joining in child rearing, financial and household tasks; and

- realigning relationships with extended family to include parenting and grand parenting roles (Department of Social Development, 2008c:72).

The extended family can be a resource for support, but there may be different reactions to becoming grandparents. Grandparents may feel old, glad or threatened. New babies can bring family members closer. Those families with

strong family support systems such as the extended family can be regarded as the most ideal family, according to the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a). Families have social networks that consist of members of their immediate and extended families, as well as other systems that act as additional resources. These networks are also referred to as "social capital", and can help families to cope with stresses, develop their potential, take advantage of opportunities and express aspirations beyond the immediate context (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:116).

The birth of a child requires adjustment by a couple, since "nothing will ever be the same again" (Department of Social Development, 2007b:87). Raising children is not an easy task and can affect the relationship between parents. Statistics indicate that some parents cannot adjust to new demands and responsibilities, resulting in divorce and unfortunately influencing the security of minor children, according to the *Manual for Marriage Preparation and Marriage Enrichment* (Department of Social Development, 2007b:87). Family preservation services can be very valuable to families with young children, because such services can empower them with parenting skills in order to prevent major problems that can lead to the out-of-home placement of family members.

3.5.4 Preschool-age child

During this phase, "children experience a desire to copy adults around them and take the initiative in creating play situations by making up stories with Barbie's and Ken's toy phones and miniature cars, playing out roles in a trial universe, experimenting with the blueprint for what is believed it means to be an adult" (Harder, 2002:03).

Simons and Irwin (1994:125) indicate that this stage is influenced by a toddler's muscular maturation, locomotor capabilities, initial verbalizations and ability to divide the world into categories, such as "yes" and "no", "good" and "bad", "right" and "wrong" and "yours" and "mine". These authors therefore conclude that parents who over-control toddlers' behaviour may suppress toddlers' self-expression.

In a similar vein, Ross and Deverell (2004:229) warn that children who are controlled by shame tend to become adults who function according to the letter rather than the spirit of the law and are more likely to suffer from compulsive behaviour. It is therefore advisable that, as a child learns to be assertive and take risks, parents allow the child some degree of movement into the adult world without limiting the child's initiative, because too many parental restrictions can cause children to develop a highly constricted conscience based on guilt.

Pickin and St Leger (1993:55) point out that home accidents and the immediate external environment are likely to play a part during this stage. Although pre- and perinatal influences still exert an effect on the health of this group, the health of the pre-school age group is influenced to a greater extent than that of younger ages by their social and environmental circumstances (Pickin & St Leger, 1993:80).

It is also necessary to mention that parents who have a child with a disability or chronic illness experience the world differently. It is extremely difficult for these families to hold onto their unique developmental line where the child has to be taken to a special school, because most of the time the rest of the world is on a very different time line (DeMarle & Le Roux, 2001:35). This daily experience of discontinuity can leave some families with a deep sense of continuously grieving their loss, as it may necessitate changes throughout the family system. For example, a grandparent may have to be more available for childcare than she anticipated in that life stage, and an older sibling may be elevated into a co-parenting role.

The presence of a child has an impact on the emotions and the privacy of the couple. They may feel that they have too little time for themselves and too much responsibility for caring as the child becomes very active. If one parent is closer to the child, the other parent may be jealous, according to the *Manual for Marriage Preparation and Marriage Enrichment* (Department of Social Development, 2007b:85). It is therefore necessary that the family rebalances responsibility in order to accommodate the child with minimal disturbance to the

family system and the child, and family preservation services can be rendered to support the family during this phase.

3.5.5 School-age child

Bergh and Theron (2003:78) indicate that "at school-going age, a child is ready to acquire qualities of productivity such as perseverance and task completion, and to develop a sense of learning, accomplishment and competency". These authors add that it is during this stage that a child is introduced to the concept of division of labour and specialization, and learns the significance of status and roles through the opinions of peers. In response, "a core pathology may develop if a lack of opportunity for industry, an ability to do what is expected, or a negative assessment of others gives rise to feelings of inferiority, as in the case of people who are not even willing to try things because they think they are not worthy" (Bergh & Theron 2003:78).

Similarly, Ross and Deverell (2004:229) suggest that during this period from five to 11 years, children are ready to learn formal skills if they have already developed a sense of trust in the world and have gained some trust in themselves because they have been permitted of being to develop autonomy and initiative. The community provides schools where children can acquire the tools that they will need to enter adulthood. However, these authors cite Erikson, who argues that if a child has problems at this school level, as an adult the person may develop feelings of inadequacy as he or she compares him-or herself with peers.

Pickin and St Leger (1993:55) list some key health or illness issues prevalent at this age, which include malignancies and accidents outside the home. Other issues that are central for this group are formal education and preparation for a healthy lifestyle, special needs groups, and peer group influences.

The researcher sees this stage as challenging for parents, due to the increased time demands made by the activities of school-going children, particularly for parents whose children have some form of disability. While other children of the same age are preparing for their future careers, some children with severe

disabilities cannot be trained, mainly because of physical, mental and/or emotional limitations. Therefore, parents may start worrying about who will look after the child with a disability when the parents reach old age or die. This can lead families to place the child at an institution for children with chronic illnesses and disabilities. In order to prevent such a situation, family preservation services can become vital, particularly if the child's safety is not at risk.

3.5.6 Teenage child

Ross and Deverell (2004:229) argue that, in this stage, the task of a teenage child is to establish independence and freedom from the family and also to establish his or her identity and social role. Thus it can be said that during adolescence, all the qualities and roles developed during the previous phases find expression in a broader social context (Bergh & Theron, 2003:79).

The family changes from a system that nurtures the child and cares for him or her to a preparation centre for the adolescent to enter into the adult world. Adolescents can and do open up the family to a whole array of new values as they bring friends and new ideals into the family arena (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:177). Physical changes in the adolescent often coincide with midlife changes in the parents:

- **Sociocultural context**

  Turning 12 is widely regarded as the start of adolescence. However, this has to be seen against the socio-cultural context from which an individual comes. Some children are regarded as adolescents at an earlier age due to their physical maturity. Cooper (cited in Santrock, 2006:401) states that many ethnic youths must bridge "multiple worlds" in constructing their identities. It is necessary to keep in mind differences in different cultural settings.

- **Gender identity**

  At the age of two to four years, "a child starts to identify with being a girl or being a boy" (Department of Social Development, 2007b:90). Children learn that society has different expectations for men and for women. "In patriarchal societies, men have power and control, and women do not have as much

influence and power as men have", according to the *Manual for Marriage Preparation and Marriage Enrichment* (Department of Social Development, 2007b:90). Such stereotypes may be incorporated into children's thinking and functioning by the time that they reach adolescence.

- **Physical changes**

The physical changes in both boys and girls result in confusion in children. These physical changes can lead "children to have mixed feelings – sometimes feeling embarrassed due to the physical changes, and sometimes feeling glad and proud of growing up" (Department of Social Development, 2007b:90).

Girls tend to grow faster than boys. The growth for girls is often more in their hips, and in boys more in their shoulders. "Adolescents may experience outbursts of physical energy, followed by periods of lethargy" (Department of Social Development, 2007b:91). This can lead to conflict with parents or caregivers. Parents often struggle to understand their adolescent children. An adolescent can "socialize with friends through the night, and then sleep until lunchtime" (Department of Social Development, 2007:91). When this kind of situation arises, children may regard their parents as nagging, and the parents may regard the children as lazy, disobedient and unreliable.

It is important to distinguish between what an adolescent wants to do on the one hand, and the norms, values and family rules on the other (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:176). A different kind of discipline is needed here. It is necessary for an adolescent to experience freedom to develop his or her own identity, "but parents still have a responsibility to set boundaries" (Department of Social Development, 2007b:91).

- **Adjustments in family structure**

This phase in the family life cycle is "characterized by negotiations between the three generations involved" (Department of Social Development, 2007b:91). The parents of an adolescent have to redefine the relationship of the child with and roles with regard to their parents. The parents have to redefine their own relationship and negotiate their future as a couple. Siblings may suddenly question their positions in the family. New rules have to be

negotiated as adolescents experiment with freedom and seek independence (Department of Social Development, 2007:91).

According to McGoldrick (2011:54), once children reach adolescence, the task is to prepare the family for a qualitative change in the relationships between the generations, as the children are no longer so dependent on their parents. This author also highlights that it is during this period that triangles are likely to develop involving adolescents, their peers, and their parents and grandparents. Becvar and Becvar (2006:177) note the need for adjustment as children are growing up, stating that transitions in the family often challenge the existing structure and require accommodation and negotiation as part of the evolution of a new structure.

Unresolved conflict can surface in this phase. Parents may want to raise their children differently from how they themselves were raised. They may realize with a shock that there are similarities and that they are actually doing the same as their own parents did (Department of Social Development, 2007b:91). In such situations, Becvar and Becvar (2006:176) recommend that differences in parenting styles and preferences be negotiated and that children are given a clear message from the parents that they are not equals or peers, but the parents are in charge and must therefore assert their authority.

A large number of adolescents subscribe to conventionalism, which means that they accept and see meaning and purpose in established norms, values, goals, processes and institutions (Mwamwenda, 1996:72-73). As much as parenting is still necessary at this stage, Becvar and Becvar (2006:177) caution that parents need to negotiate and accommodate changes relative to the developmental needs of their children. This therefore means that dealing with an adolescent child would be different from parenting a three-year-old, who needs great care and support, while an adolescent needs increasing independence and responsibility.

3.5.7 Launching centre

Launching children is a very individual experience. Some parents are sad, and others rejoice that their children can function on their own (Department of Social Development, 2007b:96). Parents in this phase may feel revitalized. Fathers may spend less time at work and more time at home. Women in midlife tend to spread their wings and explore opportunities outside the home. They have taken care of the children for many years and now have the opportunity to pursue their own interests, do voluntary work and even go back to school. Men, on the other hand, may decide that they have worked very hard for many years and have missed out on things happening at home (Department of Social Development, 2007b:96).

It is the time when older parents are often becoming ill and dying, according to the *Training Manual on Families in Crisis* (Department of Social Development, 2008c:73).

Garcia-Preto and Blacker (2011:248) note that this is also a time to reassess work choices, nurture friendships, and for some to have the opportunity to "come out" and give expression to aspects of their gender or sexual identity that they had felt forced to keep secret in earlier stages of their life. When this does happen, the couple may move towards divorce.

Garcia-Preto and Blacker (2011:249) regard this phase as a period characterized by launching and marrying off children, burying parents, becoming grandparents and becoming a widow or widower. These authors explain that these events usually occur concurrently in a decade, but that this phase may last 20 years or more and is currently the longest phase in the life cycle. All the above-mentioned experiences have the potential to develop into a family crisis which can place a family in the most difficult position to survive (Department of Social Development, 2008c:74).

The main focus of this phase in the family life cycle is to accept a multitude of exits from and entries into the family system with the emphasis on the following changes:

- renegotiation of marital system as a parent;

- development of adult-to-adult relationships between grown children and their parents;

- realignment of relationships to include in-laws and grandchildren; and

- dealing with disabilities and the death of parents or grandparents (Department of Social Development, 2008c:74).

3.5.8 Middle-aged adults

Parents must incorporate their children's new spouses and grandchildren into the family at this stage (Department of Social Development, 2007b:101). If they believe that their children have chosen the "correct" spouses, a good relationship is likely to be secured. The most difficult relationships in these adult-to-adult connections arise among women in a family, because women can be more sensitive and may overreact (Department of Social Development, 2007b:101).

The duration of a marriage can be 50 to 60 years. Remarriage after the death of a spouse is not uncommon, and nor are remarriages after a divorce in the launching phase, according to Walsh (2005:308) Older men often get married to younger women; they may father children and start second families (Walsh, 2005:308).

Many people have fearful, pessimistic ideas about ageing. Many believe that age brings a decline, a deterioration and loss, ending in death. Younger people tend to adopt stereotypes such as that older people are old-fashioned, senile, rigid, boring, useless and a burden (Department of Social Development, 2007b:104). Much of the research and the literature on aging have focused on illness, disability and a decline in functioning. Positive changes accompanying ageing have been neglected. Grim pictures of later life are often portrayed (Department of Social Development, 2007b:104).

Many older people require long-term care and financial support. Family support is the most prevalent. The "sandwich generation" cares for children, as well as their

elderly parents – these are adults who are sandwiched between aging parents who need care on the one hand, and their own children on the other (Department of Social Development, 2007b:99). Tertiary education for children and medical expenses for parents can be financially draining. Women at midlife are especially burdened, and prolonged caregiving takes a heavy toll (Department of Social Development, 2007b:90)

Relationships with siblings are very strong in this life stage (Department of Social Development, 2007b:104). Many older people have regular contact with other people of their age group, as well as with their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. These relationships are characterized by frequent contact, reciprocal emotional ties and mutual support (Walsh, 2005:309). It is extremely important to emphasise the potential for growth in this phase of later life. Even challenges, such as retirement, grandparenthood, illness, death and losing a spouse, present opportunities for growth and transformation.

3.5.9 Retired adults

For people who are fortunate enough to have a career or a job, retirement represents a significant milestone and adjustment (Department of Social Development, 2007b:104). Men often feel that they will lose significant career roles, status, productivity and some relationships. If a person is forced to retire, the potential negative consequences are greater than if the person wanted to retire. Loss of income is stressful. There are no opportunities for an increase in income. The cost of life does not take the income of the elderly into account (Santrock, 2006:593). It can be stressful if retired people have to move to smaller and more affordable accommodation. Benokraitis (2005:493) emphasises that if retirement benefits do not keep up with inflation, or if a retired person is not covered by a pension plan, poverty is just a few years away. Health or income problems determine a retired person's life satisfaction more than the loss of a work role.

Today, with lower birth rates, improved health care, medicine, nutrition, exercise and an increased life expectancy, relative to the general population, there are an increasing number of older persons. A distinction is made between the "young old" of 65 to 74 years, the "old old" of 75 to 84 years and the "oldest old" of 85+ years (Santrock, 2006:558). Many experts on ageing prefer to talk about function rather than age – that is, focusing on the person's ability to function and not on the person's chronological age (Department of Social Development, 2007b:98).

Retirement often has an impact on the marital relationship, as it requires a role adjustment (Department of Social Development, 2007b:105). A loss of status and productivity may result in one partner's wanting to take over at home. It may also be that one partner expects to enjoy full leisure after years of hard work, and this can lead to resentment from the other partner. This can happen especially in very traditional marriages with specific role expectations (Department of Social Development, 2007b:105).

As people live longer, more will become grandparents and even great-grandparents. Grandparents can relive their own experiences in childrearing (Department of Social Development, 2007b:106).The relationship between parents and grandparents can be enriched by the experience of becoming grandparents. Parents often have more empathy with their elderly parents when they have a first-hand experience of childrearing.

Grandparents and grandchildren often have a special bond. The relationship is not complicated by responsibilities and conflict (Department of Social Development, 2007b:96). They also have a common "enemy". Young children benefit from the wisdom, companionship and attention of grandparents. Grandparents can act as a transmitter of cultural practices and rites of passage (Department of Social Development, 2007b:96).

This phase may also require people to face a number of challenges, such as the following:

- **Grandparent-headed households**

  An emerging grandparent role is that of surrogate, in which a grandparent provides regular care or replaces parents in raising grandchildren. Many grandparents are responsible for taking care of grandchildren. Families consisting of only grandparents and grandchildren are a reality. According to Benokratis (2005:498), "the increase in grandchildren living with grandparents results from factors such as the growth in drug abuse among parents, teen pregnancy, divorce, the rapid rise in single-parent households, disability due mental and physical illness, and the death or incarceration of parents". Children can also live with grandparents because of child abuse and neglect by parents (Department of Social Development, 2007b:106).

  Although many grandparents enjoy taking care of their grandchildren, they may also experience stress and isolation, financial difficulties and multiple roles that they did not expect to have to face in their later years (Department of Social Development, 2007b:106). Taking care of grandchildren can also have an influence on their health.

- **Chronic illness**

  Chronic illness increases drastically as society ages, but today even those whose lives are impaired with illnesses live longer than ever before. Fears of loss of physical and or mental functioning, chronic pain and progressive degenerating conditions are common pre-occupations (Department of Social Development, 2007b:106). Health problems and their severity vary greatly. Alzheimer's, arthritis, high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer, visual, intellectual and hearing deficiencies are only some of the conditions prevalent in this phase (Benokraitis, 2005:486; Santrock, 2006:569; Walsh, 2005:312). Deterioration may be exacerbated by depression and feelings of helplessness. This has an impact on family members.

- **Being a widow or widower**

  Loss of a spouse is a highly stressful transition. Despite the initial problems with the challenges in daily living, older surviving spouses become more resilient over time (Walsh, 2005:316). Going through the grieving process helps to work through the reality of the loss. Relationships are rebalanced. It may be necessary to acquire new skills. Research indicates that the

adjustment may take up to two years. After this period, new activities and interests can be in place (Walsh, 2005:316).

According to Santrock (2006:621), rising divorce rates, increased longevity and better health have led to an increase in remarriage among older adults. However, remarriage by a parent in his or her later years can be a challenge to adult children. Will they approve of the new spouse? Will the new spouse take their inheritance from them? Is the new spouse only interested in a parent's money? (Santrock, 2006:621).

- **Ethnicity and people in later life**

    Some ethnic groups, according to Benokratis (2005:498), are over-represented in poverty statistics. Older individuals in impoverished ethnic groups are more likely to become ill, but they are less likely to receive treatment. They also are more likely to have a history of less education, unemployment, worse housing conditions and shorter life expectancies. According to Benokratis (2005:498), many have never contributed to a retirement fund and have to rely on social security grants. However, extended family networks may help these older individuals to cope with the basic essentials of living and may provide support to them.

3.6   ADVANTAGES OF THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE APPROACH

The family life cycle approach assumes that family life is changing continually and is influenced by people's psychosexual development, and by rites of passage such as marriage, divorce, child-rearing or retirement. During each of these stages of development, people modify their roles and relationships, and also alter the division of labour and their level of satisfaction (Baker, 2001:48). The family life cycle approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of life events, family crises, processes and challenges relating to age, gender, and roles and responsibilities of each family member. It also promotes an understanding of an ideal and desirable progression through life's stages. The family life cycle approach is very useful in guiding how relevant actors can provide services and resources that are appropriate for the specific developmental stages and ages of family members (Department of Social Development, 2008a).

3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE FAMILY LIFE CYCLE APPROACH

Becvar and Becvar (2006:110) are concerned that the stage models of family development tend to be linear. Hence, these models display some problematic characteristics, because these models tend to (cited verbatim):

- describe isolated moments, or arbitrary punctuations, in what from a systems perspective is actually an ongoing and interactive process;
- describe a traditional family model that reflects only a small portion of families;
- focus on the developmental milestones of one individual, usually the first child, and are weak in their ability to capture the complexity of, or to reflect the many levels of family interaction;
- outline the general characteristics of each stage, although specific issues and tasks, as well as style of progress through the life cycle, may vary a great deal from family to family; and
- may require periodic revisions in order for those models to reflect the developmental processes of individuals and families relative to changes in the larger society, as with many theories that attempt to define living phenomena.

The researcher acknowledges the limitations highlighted by Becvar and Becvar (2006:110), as this type of debate challenges professionals dealing with families to make professionals give up their attachments to old ideals and start using a more positive conceptual frame, as encouraged by McGoldrick et al. (2011:10).

Like Becvar and Becvar (2006:110), Williams et al. (2006:71) show that the family developmental perspective has been criticized because the processes of life do not always unfold in such clearly marked stages, and the model is also biased to reflect mainly white, middle-class nuclear families consisting of a man, a woman and children, ignoring other kinds of families, such as single parents, divorced parents and same sex households. This makes it essential for professionals to begin to acknowledge the extent of societal change and variations in families and broader society today.

McGoldrick et al. (2011:3) express concern about a number of changes in family life cycle patterns that have escalated dramatically, especially because of lower

birth rates, longer life expectancy, the changing role of women, and very high divorce and remarriage rates, among other things. The researcher shares these authors' view that it is time to stop thinking of transitional crises as permanent traumas and to stop using words and phrases linked to the norms and prejudices of the past – terms such as "broken" or "fatherless homes", "children of divorce", "out-of-wedlock children" and "working mothers". It is time that we align ourselves to accept and address changes in the family life cycle.

3.8 CONCLUSION

Families today live in a complex and increasingly diverse society. Families reflect other social institutions and are undergoing rapid and dramatic transformations in form, composition and structure. Today's diverse family forms increase the probability that individuals are likely to experience more family transitions over their lifetime than was the case in previous generations. For this reason, it is imperative that we broaden our understanding of the definition of a family to include single parent families, families headed by divorced women or women who have never married, and same sex families, to name but a few. The family is therefore defined in the *Draft National Family Policy* "as a group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, adoption or cohabitation, characterized by a common residence or not, interacting and communicating with one another in their respective family roles, maintaining a common culture and governed by family rules" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:11).

Theories of individual development and models of the family life cycle have been discussed in this chapter, particularly the stages of the family life cycle proposed by Becvar and Becvar (2006:112), while also making use of the theories of individual development in some of the life cycle stages. The following stages have been discussed in this chapter:

- unattached young adult;
- newly married adults;
- childbearing adults;
- preschool-age-child;
- school-age-child;

- teenage child;
- launching centre;
- middle-aged-adults; and
- retired adult.

The notion of the family life cycle is based on the premise that families go through a process from birth through growth to decline and death. A useful way of conceptualizing the family life cycle is to look at ways in which families must alter their attitudes and relationships in order to adapt to each stage. Families' experiences in passing through the family life cycle are also affected by social changes.

Some of the challenges facing families in later life have been discussed. These include living in grandparent-headed households, chronic illness, loss of a spouse and becoming a widow or widower, and issues of ethnicity relating to people in later life.

In conclusion, therefore, it is important to remember the views of researchers such as Curtis (2009), who states that people need to be assured that they can learn missed skills and improve themselves and their family's quality of life at any stage. It is comforting to know that self-examination, education and perhaps counselling are ways in which people can improve themselves and their family life. These are also actions that can help people to manage other issues too, such as going through a divorce or being a part of a non-traditional family structure. Family preservation services, which are discussed in the next chapter, may play a role in this process.

CHAPTER 4:
FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

4.1   INTRODUCTION

According to the *Review of Family Preservation and Family Reunification Program* prepared by Westat Inc, James Bell Associates Inc & Chapin Hall Center for Children (1995), the term "family preservation" has been used to describe a variety of programmes that are intended to provide services to children and families who are experiencing serious problems that may eventually lead to the placement of children in foster care, or otherwise result in the dissolution of the family unit.

The term has also been used differently in different programmes, for example, some programmes specifically "employ the term to denote family services that are family-centred, have a crisis orientation and/or have distinct characteristics, such as being delivered in the home, being intensive, being of short duration, as well as focusing on family strengths", according to the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:9). The *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a:47) describes family preservation as "services to families that focus on family strengths in order to strengthen families to keep them together as far as possible".

For the purposes of this discussion, family preservation refers to all those services that are rendered to families with the focus on family strengths at all levels of service delivery, namely prevention, early intervention, statutory intervention, and aftercare and reunification with the aim of keeping families together and prevent the out-of-home placement of children.

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:10) explains that the term "family preservation" was coined in the early 1980s, and is generally understood to mean keeping families

together, and to refer to specific services and programmes intended to strengthen families in crisis and reduce the removal of children from troubled families. A number of key phrases are used (Department of Social Development, 2008b:10, cited verbatim):

- **a movement:**
  what distinguishes family preservation as a professional reform movement from other family-focused movements such as family support, family economic development movements and family therapy is its basic purpose, namely to work with families to prevent the removal of family members;

- **an approach:**
  a family preservation approach implies that families should be strengthened and supported in order to keep them together as far as possible;

- **a philosophy:**
  as a philosophy, family preservation discourages the removal of family members from families (families are defined in the broader sense to include members of the extended family);

- **a perspective:**
  family preservation promotes the perspective that the best way to achieve permanency in the lives of family members is to allow them to be with their families and to work with the family to try to prevent the placement of family members outside the family;

- **a strategy:**
  the family preservation strategy is based on the belief that family members need a family in which to develop. Every person needs a permanent family in which to grow up. Family preservation is a way of working together with families to enhance qualities such as respect, togetherness, joy and strengths (Department of Social Development, 2008b:10).

According to Strydom (2010:192), family preservation is "a strategy to empower families to enhance the optimal development of children and to prevent the statutory removal of children from their families".

Berry (1999:199) simply defines family preservation practice as an intensive, home-based, family-centred model of family treatment aimed at doing "whatever it takes" to strengthen the family and prevent the unnecessary placement of children into substitute care. Puyenbroeck, Loots, Grietens Jacquel,

Vanderfaeillie and Escuderos (2009:222) also associate family preservation services with preventing the removal of children. Puyenbroeck et al. (2009:222) hold a similar view to Berry, who indicates that during the 1970s and 1980s a specific category of services designed for families whose children faced imminent removal by out-of-home services became known as intensive family preservation services.

Cash (2001:43) argues that the rise of intensive family preservation services represents a shift from protecting the child by removal from his or her parental home to changing the family dynamics into a safe environment for the child to grow up in, whenever possible. Cash (2001:43) also explains that it was believed that if a myriad of intensive services were provided in the family's home on a short-term basis, the family would experience multiple successes and the child would be able to remain at home safely.

Simplifying the definition, Tracy (1995:973) states that family preservation services are intended to "remove the risk of harm to the child instead of removing the child from the home".

It is therefore appropriate to state, in summary, that family preservation services emerged in response to the disintegration of the family and that they provide the hope and promise of a better future for children and families who are vulnerable or at risk, in line with the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:9).

4.2   BACKGROUND

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:09) explains that in the late 1970s, an American organization called Homebuilders in Washington State began a programme which came to lead the family preservation movement. Homebuilders is a private organization founded in the 1970s. It was one of the first home-based, time-limited family preservation programmes limited to families at imminent risk of child removal because of child abuse or neglect (Berry, 1999:201). According to Berry

(1999:201), for the past 20 years, this programme has practised and documented effective family preservation practice techniques, based on a social learning theory model of family therapy and supported by other concrete methods of strengthening the family environment, both physically and emotionally.

According to Berry (1999:201), homebuilders caught the attention of behavioural scientists because the organization claimed to have prevented the placement of approximately 97% of children that they served in their intensive casework services for families where children were in imminent need of placement. Despite the scepticism that initially surrounded the programme, current practice in many family preservation programmes worldwide continues to be based on the Homebuilders model (Berry, 1999:201).

Arguing along similar lines as Berry (1999), Tracy (1995:973) relates that family preservation services grew out of dissatisfaction with traditional child welfare services, particularly foster care. A number of studies conducted during the 1960s and 1970s found that children were often removed from their homes by default, because alternative supportive services were not available. In addition, disproportionately more children from poor, non-white, and single parent families ended up in foster care. Placements were often unstable; consequently, many children had multiple placements, which gave them no sense of permanence. Finally, few efforts were made to reach out and work with the children's biological parents before, during or after placement (Tracy, 1995:973).

The family preservation perspective in South Africa originates from the *Draft Interim Policy Recommendation* by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk (1996b), following on from the *Family Preservation: Pilot Project Report* (Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk, 1996a). Although these interim policy recommendations are in draft form, they have had an impact on the transformation of the Child and Youth Care System, including the adoption of the family preservation perspective of keeping a family together as long as possible, and of preventing unnecessary placement of family members in alternative care.

As a result of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk's policy recommendation, the various provinces established projects on Family Preservation Services. Of those projects, the Inanda Family Preservation Project was the most enduring, lasting for more than four years, from 1997 to 2001 (Ravestijn, 2001:1). In 1997, the National Department of Social Development developed the first *Manual on Family Preservation Services* as mandated by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk. The 1997 *Manual* focused on intensive family preservation services which concentrated only on preventing out-of-home placements of children.

In giving effect to the operation of the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a), the Department of Social Development later embarked on the process of developing a second *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b), which outlines the best approach for social service professionals to deliver such services. This *Manual* replaces the 1997 version, the later one being informed mainly by the *Draft National Family Policy*. The 1997 *Manual* focused exclusively on intensive family preservation services, while the newly developed one focuses on family preservation services on four levels of service delivery, namely prevention, early intervention, statutory intervention, and reunification and aftercare, as well as intensive family preservation services.

4.3   AIMS OF FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

Tracy (1995:973) mentions the following primary goals of family preservation services (cited verbatim):

- to allow children to remain safely in their own homes;
- to maintain and strengthen family bonds;
- to stabilize the crisis situation that precipitated the need for placement;
- to increase the family's coping skills and competencies; and
- to facilitate the family's use of appropriate formal and informal helping resources.

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:42) outlines the following aims (cited verbatim):

- keeping families together and safe;
- providing support mechanisms to families in order to function well and be self-reliant;
- keeping families as the primary caregivers of family members;
- improving the well-being of family members in their families and in communities;
- working with families at risk to prevent the removal of family members from the home;
- supporting the strengths of families in order to improve the functioning of families so that the behaviour that led to crisis is less likely to occur again; and
- reunifying families and family members who have been removed at some point.

Hurley, Griffith, Ingram, Bolivar, Mason and Trout (2012:1003) see the primary goal of intensive family preservation services as improving "parenting skills and family functioning to prevent out-of-home placements for youth experiencing abuse and neglect".

Based on the above explanations about the aims of family preservation services, it is apparent that these services seek to improve the functioning of families while also ensuring that the family environment is safe for all the family members.

4.4 KEY ELEMENTS OF FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES AND INTENSIVE FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

McCroskey and Meezan (1998:62) argue that family preservation can be divided into two basic programme types, namely rehabilitative family preservation services, and intensive family preservation services. It is therefore necessary to outline the key elements of these two basic programme types briefly, as set out in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Key elements of two family preservation service programme types

Rehabilitative Family Preservation Services	Intensive Family Preservation Services
• Services are directed toward ameliorating problems in families whose stability is threatened because abuse or neglect may lead to the removal of a child from the home.	• Services are a special subset of family preservation services offered to families whose problems make the removal of a child imminent.
• Workers first assess the family and its support systems and then develop a service plan with the family.	• Workers focus more on the family's immediate problems and provide more intensive help to address problems.
• The assigned worker engages the entire family in the home setting, although office visits and meetings in community settings may also be used.	• Families are almost always seen in their homes, on a flexible schedule designed to encourage participation by all family members.
• Workers provide a wide range of services including case management, advocacy, behaviour modeling and parent education among others as well as concrete services.	• Workers focus on the family's immediate problems, carry caseloads of only two to six families at a time, see families from 4 to 20 hours per week, usually lasting between 4 and 12 weeks and can be reached by the family 24 hours per day.

Source: McCroskey & Meezan (1998:62)

According to Horchak-Andino (2006:7), intensive family preservation services are designed to support families in crisis in which children are either at imminent risk of placement, or have already been placed outside the home. She adds that these services are designed for both birth and adoptive families, and are effective as reunification services, as well as for placement prevention. The goal is to keep children safe and avoid both unnecessary removal and unnecessarily long separations from family in out-of-home care. Intensive family preservation services share the values, beliefs and characteristics outlined below (cited verbatim):

- immediate response within 24 hours;
- accessibility of staff 24 hours per day, seven days a week;
- small case-loads (two to four families);
- intensive interventions (five to 20 hours per week as needed);
- service delivery in the family's home and community;

- usually short-term services (four to eight weeks), to be followed by other support services;
- hard and soft services delivered by the same worker;
- recognition of the importance of interaction between families and com-munities, and assistance to families to forge those links;
- goal-oriented services with "limited" objectives; and
- a focus on teaching skills (Horchak-Andino, 2003:7)

Similarly, Berry, Propp and Martens (2006:44) explain that intensive family preservation services models include the following service components: they target families in crisis, are home-based, are available 24 hours a day, provide intensive and comprehensive intervention (five to 20 hours a week as needed), combine concrete and therapeutic services and skills-based teaching delivered by the same worker, allow workers to have small caseloads (two to four families), and are usually short-term (four to eight weeks).

In 1998, Wilson (1998:14) listed the following elements of intensive family preservation services in the South African context (cited verbatim):

- they only work with families on the verge of having a family member placed/removed;
- they are crisis-oriented, and deal with each family as soon as possible once a referral has been made;
- they have flexible hours – seven days a week and 24 hours a day;
- a thorough and careful assessment process is followed to ensure that no family member is left in danger;
- the family is dealt with as a unit;
- services are often delivered directly in the home;
- family members are taught skills that assist them in obtaining resources and services;
- family preservation workers have small case-loads;
- there is a limited length of involvement; and
- follow-up is crucial after services have been delivered in order to evaluate the progress of the family and success of any programmes implemented.

Ten years later, the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:44) mentions the following general characteristics or elements of family preservation services on all levels of service delivery (cited verbatim):

- a holistic developmental assessment of the family to ensure appropriate services and programmes for the family in accordance with the family life cycle;
- holistic developmental services to families, with the family as the focal point for service delivery;
- integrated service delivery to the family, with stakeholders using the collaborative model; and
- a paradigm shift from problem-focused service delivery to a strength-based approach.

Wilson (1998) and later Hurley et al. (2012:1003) explain that family preservation programmes tend to share a number of characteristics, including a focus on families who face a high risk of out-of-home placement, a preference for low case-loads of two to three families per family preservation practitioner, a brief but intense four- to six-week programme, and delivery of services in the home, providing opportunities to teach skills to families 24 hours and seven days a week.

4.5 LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY FOR FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

According to the *Service Delivery Model for Developmental Social Services* of the Department of Social Development (2006), there are four levels of service delivery that can be identified, namely (1) prevention, (2) early intervention (non-statutory), (3) statutory intervention (residential/alternative care), and (4) aftercare and reunification. In order to distinguish clearly between family preservation services on these different levels of service delivery, the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:46) and the *White Paper on Families in South Africa* (Department of Social Development, 2013b:38) recommend the use of the terms as discussed below.

4.5.1 Preventative level: Empowerment and support programmes for families

Prevention refers to services that prevent a need for the family and its members to receive intensive services from professionals. All actions which lead to the development of human capacity and which contribute to the healthy development of family members and their family are preventative in nature. Services such as youth clubs, sports programmes, after-school care, parenting skills programmes, life skills programmes, and marriage preparation and marriage enrichment are examples of empowerment and support programmes and services to families (Department of Social Development, 2008b:46). The *White Paper on Families in South Africa* (Department of Social Development, 2013b:38) also describes "prevention as empowerment and support programmes which are aimed at preventing the need for the families and their members to receive intensive services from professionals".

4.5.2 Early intervention level (non-statutory): Intense family support programmes

"Services delivered at this level make use of developmental and therapeutic programmes to ensure that families at risk are kept together as far as possible and are prevented from entering and receiving services at statutory level" (Department of Social Development, 2013b:38). Intervention at this level is designed to prevent families from needing to enter the system and receive services at the statutory level, for example, intervention involves providing psychosocial support to all victims of abuse (Department of Social Development, 2008b:46).

In essence, then, family preservation services at the early intervention level target families facing serious and immediate threats to family functioning and stability. Usually, these services are offered to families whose family members are in danger of being placed outside the home.

4.5.3 Statutory level: Residential / alternative care / incarceration / rehabilitation / diversion options for people in conflict with the law

The statutory process must not be confused with statutory services. The statutory process is about a particular level of intervention and a period during which families are waiting for the outcome of a legal (court) procedure, namely enhancing human resources capabilities to remove intra-organizational and inter-system obstacles (Department of Social Development, 2013b:38,43). Whether a family member is in trouble with the law and/or in need of care and protection, the family member(s) faces some form of court proceeding which may result in his or her returning home, being placed in care and/or custody, or being required to participate in a particular programme. This time should be used effectively to learn from (and with) the family what their present developmental and therapeutic needs are (Department of Social Development, 2008b:46).

Section 46 (1) of the *Children's Act, No 38 of 2005* (RSA, 2005) states that the "placement of a child in the care of his or her parents for early intervention services to the family is also an option". This may be a diversion option, but if the intervention fails to achieve the desired outcome, the situation must be reconsidered. Families should be in this "waiting" phase as briefly as possible.

4.5.4 Aftercare and reunification level

Reunification and aftercare refers to a "range of legal placement options for family members who have been through the statutory processes" of the Children's Court, Juvenile Court or Criminal Court Systems (Department of Social Development, 2008b:46). Options range from the least restrictive (e.g. extended family/foster care), to slightly more restrictive (e.g. child/youth care residential centres), to the most restrictive (e.g. secure care, commitment to a rehabilitation centre, certification to a hospital for people with mental disorders, and a sentence of imprisonment). The *White Paper on Families in South Africa* (Department of Social Development, 2013b:38) emphasises the need to "implement appropriate protocols for reintegration and reunification of family members who have been separated for extended periods of time for various reasons".

- 80 -

Strydom (2010:192) emphasises that in order to avoid the removal of family members from their families, "the focus of social workers, when rendering family preservation services, must first be on prevention services, then on early intervention services and last on statutory services".

4.6 FAMILY PRESERVATION BELIEFS

A number of authors have identified core assumptions, beliefs and values of family preservation – these are briefly discussed below.

4.6.1 Keeping families together

It is assumed that children or vulnerable family members need families, and develop best within the loving support of families. As far as possible, family members should remain together, according to the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:11).

Kelly and Blythe (2000:31) point out that inherent in family preservation services is the belief that children need permanent families, preferably their own families. McCroskey and Meezan (1998:62) assert that the key assumptions of family preservation services include the notions that children should remain with their families whenever possible, that families are constantly engaged in a process of development and growth, and that all families have strengths they can draw on.

4.6.2 Families have the ability to change

According to Kelly and Blythe (2000:31), families that are afflicted by stress, poverty and drugs are sometimes able to change with intensive, round-the-clock services and support, to return to an adequate level of functioning that allows them to stay together safely. The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:11) also states that often, when families are in trouble, the welfare system tends to blame them for the situation families are in trouble, the welfare system tends to blame them for the situation

they are in. Hurley et al. (2012:1003) suggest that the important tenet of family preservation is promoting family engagement in treatment, which is one of the best and strongest predictors of successful outcomes.

Berry (1999:206) also acknowledges that families in family preservation programmes are highly stressed families facing multiple problems or crises – even so, these families may possess many strengths as well. Berry (1999:206) adds that family preservation practice has the stated philosophical advantage of a strength perspective, in that it aims to assess and build on the strengths that families do have and to help families to acquire new strengths as well. The model "seeks to improve the physical and social family environment, with resulting effects on children's health, behaviour, safety and development, by teaching family care skills to parents, with an effect on parenting skills, environmental conditions, and the acquisition of resources" (Berry, 1999:206).

4.6.3 Families are partners in the service delivery process

Family preservation values, beliefs and intervention processes are consistent with notions of consumer involvement, consumer input, and consumer-driven services (Kelly & Blythe, 2000:41). This reinforces the belief that families can participate fully in setting goals, planning services and implementing treatment with support from well-trained staff. It is believed that families have a right to speak for themselves – so "they define themselves, participate in the planning of the services they will receive and determine their course of action", as the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:11) puts it. Hurley et al. (2012:1003) explain that in order to encourage engagement, family preservation practitioners use a variety of techniques to assess and draw on the strengths of family members, for example, non-blaming and non-shaming language and practices; practitioners also consistently affirm, praise and support family's members' attempts at changing and learning new skills.

4.6.4 A crisis is an opportunity for change

The key assumption of family preservation is that treatment is based on a response to a crisis, and that short-term services are therefore optimal (Berry, Cash & Brook, 2000:191). The goal is to "help the family survive the immediate crisis and learn from it, to be resilient and to remain together safely" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:11).

4.6.5 Safety of all family members is of paramount importance

The safety of all family members is the prime focus of family preservation (Department of Social Development, 2008b:11). Some professionals have wondered whether they can provide adequate safety by removing risks, rather than removing children, an approach that has led to some criticism of family preservation services (Kelly & Blythe, 2000:32).

It is noted with appreciation that family preservation beliefs view a family as the best place in which to raise their members and see families capable of developing enough resilience to deal with any crisis that they may encounter with minimal external support.

4.7 MODELS IN FAMILY PRESERVATION

Although family preservation services share a common philosophy of family-centred services, they differ in their treatment theory, the level of intensity of services, and the length of service provision. As a result, three models have emerged, as discussed below.

4.7.1 Crisis intervention model

According to the *Evaluation of Family Preservation and Reunification Program, Interim report* (2001), the crisis intervention model is based on crisis theory. It stresses the situation of everyday people confronted with unstable and unsecure circumstances arising from precipitating events. It operates in the

belief that symptoms can be worked through in a brief amount of time. Crisis theory also holds that those experiencing a crisis – families about to have a family member removed – are more amenable to receiving services and learning new behaviours. The American Homebuilders foster care placement prevention programme is the prototype programme for this intervention model.

Nelson, Landsman and Deutelbaum (1990:6) point out that the crisis intervention model holds that families are most open to change during a period of crisis, when typical coping patterns can no longer maintain family stability and independence. Hepworth, Rooney and Larson (2002:382) explain that crisis intervention is time-limited, focuses on problems of living rather than psychopathology, is oriented to the here and now, involves a high level of activity by the practitioner, employs tasks as a primary tactic of change efforts, and is an eclectic framework that can accommodate various practice theories and interventions.

4.7.2 Home-based model

Nelson et al. (1990:8) assert that the home-based model displays many of the same characteristics as the crisis intervention model, but includes longer-term interventions based on family systems theory. Family systems theory is used as the basis for assessment and intervention, and it focuses attention on the family as a whole, on subsystems within the family and on the family's interaction with its community. Services are delivered primarily in the home to provide outreach and accessibility, more accurate assessments, opportunities to model behaviour in a realistic setting, and maximum self-determination for families seen on their own turf (Nelson et al., 1990:8).

Similarly, the *Evaluation of Family Preservation and Reunification Program, Interim report* (2001) states that the home-based model focuses on the behaviour of the family overall and how members interact with one another. The model looks at attempts to change the way in which the family functions as a whole and within the community. Programmes using the home-based model stress longer-term interventions, based on family systems theory.

Wayman, Lynch and Hanson (1990:56) believe that the home is the ideal setting to gather information about family concerns and priorities, demonstrate and plan intervention with families. Concrete and supportive services are also stressed by having therapists provide such services directly, and by including transportation and advocacy also coordinate services with other service providers, such as services related to housing and health care, among others.

4.7.3 Family treatment model

The family treatment model differs from the two other models in its emphasis on therapeutic interventions and less involvement in the direct provision of concrete and supportive services (Nelson et al., 1990:10). Generally it is a less intensive model that may be deployed in an office or home setting. Treatment is focused on the family as a whole and is designed to help family members to meet their needs in more functional and satisfying ways. The treatment process consists of three stages, namely, assessment, treatment, and termination. A variety of approaches are employed, such as structural, strategic and communication-based family therapy (Nelson et al., 1990:10).

Miller, Ryan, Keither, Bishop and Epstein (2000:179) have identified four major stages of family treatment model, namely assessment, contracting, treatment, and closure. Each stage contains a set of specific goals and a sequence of sub-stages. The *Evaluation of Family Preservation and Reunification Program, Interim report* (2001) also mentions that this model focuses less on the provision of concrete and supportive services, and more on family therapy.

Services are provided in an office, as well as in the home, and are less intensive than those using the crisis intervention model. The Intensive Family Services (IFS) programme, which began in the United States in 1980, is based on the family treatment model. The IFS programme also uses family systems theory, which sees individual behavioural problems as a reflection of other family problems. Therefore, treatment focuses on the family as a whole.

4.7.4 Theory adopted by the Department of Social Development

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:70) does not mention any of the abovementioned models explicitly. Instead, it mentions four approaches and models to service delivery as its theoretical framework, namely the family life cycle, a developmental approach, the family preservation approach and an integrated approach. The content of the *Manual* does refer implicitly to the models mentioned above, but it does not adopt them as its theoretical framework.

4.8 CONCLUSION

Family preservation has been used to describe a variety of programmes that are intended to provide services to children and families experiencing serious problems that may eventually lead to the placement of children in foster care, or may otherwise result in the dissolution of a family unit. Family preservation can be divided into two basic programme types, namely rehabilitative family preservation services and intensive family preservation services. Although these two basic service types can be distinguished, the phrases "family preservation services" and "intensive family preservation services" are often used interchangeably by service providers.

A number of family preservation services share the following primary goals:
- to allow children to remain safely in their own homes;
- to maintain and strengthen family bonds;
- to stabilize the crisis situation that precipitated the need for placement;
- to increase the family's coping skills and competencies; and
- to facilitate the family's use of appropriate formal and informal helping resources.

The family preservation perspective in South Africa originates from the *Draft Interim Policy Recommendation* (Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk, 1996b). Although these interim policy recommendations are in draft form, they have had an effect on the transformation of the Child and Youth Care

System, including the family preservation perspective of keeping the family together as long as possible and the desirability of preventing unnecessary placement of family members in alternative care.

According to the *Service Delivery Model for Developmental Social Services* (Department of Social Development, 2006), four levels of service delivery can be identified, namely prevention, early intervention (non-statutory), statutory intervention (residential/alternative care), and aftercare and reunification. The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:44) also stipulates the following elements of family preservation services based on these same levels of service delivery (cited verbatim):

- holistic developmental assessment of the family to ensure appropriate services and programmes for them in accordance with the family life cycle;
- holistic developmental services to families with the family as the focal point for service delivery;
- integrated service delivery to the family with stakeholders using the collaborative model; and
- family preservation services that necessitate a paradigm shift from problem-focused service delivery to a strength-based approach.

At this point it becomes necessary to establish whether the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* has been formulated clearly according to the requirements of a good policy document. In order to reach a conclusion with regard to this, the next chapter focuses on the various theoretical frameworks regarding policy formulation.

CHAPTER 5:
THE STAGES OF THE POLICY CYCLE

5.1 INTRODUCTION

For Meyer and Cloete (2000:110), the policy process normally starts when a "policy issue or problem is identified by one or more stakeholders in society who feel that the actions of the government affect them or another segment of society detrimentally". They then mobilise support to persuade policy-makers to do something in order to change the status quo in their favour – this preliminary process to change public policy is normally referred to as "policy agenda-setting" (Meyer & Cloete, 2000:97). Hogwood and Gunn (cited in De Coning, 2000:12) define a policy as a "series of patterns of related decisions to which many circumstances, and personal, group and organizational influences have contributed".

The policy-making process involves many sub-processes, and it may extend over a considerable period. The aims and purposes underlying a policy can usually be identified at a relatively early stage in the process, but they may change over time; in some cases, they may be defined only retrospectively (Meyer & Cloete, 2000:97). The outcomes of policies should be studied and, where appropriate, the outcomes should be compared and contrasted with the policy-makers' intentions (Meyer & Cloete, 2000:97). For a policy to be regarded as a "public policy", it must to some degree have been generated, or at least processed, within the framework of governmental procedures, influences and organizations. Anderson (1994:4) defines a public policy as "whatever governments choose to do or not to do".

Meyer and Cloete (2000:98) divide the "ecology" of policy-making into the following stages:
- problem identification;
- problem articulation;
- agenda-setting;

- policy formulation;
- policy legitimization;
- programme design and development;
- programme implementation;
- policy reassessment; and
- policy change.

Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:569), who hold similar views, state that the policy-making process can be disaggregated into a series of stages. These include identifying the problem, estimating (calculation of risks, costs and benefits of each possible solution), selecting solutions, implementing selected options, evaluating results and, eventually, terminating a policy based on the conclusions reached by evaluating its results (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:569). The principle underpinning this less complex policy cycle is the logic of applied problem-solving. Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:569) also explain that policy processes may seem different, but all have the same goal, namely identifying the problem and finding solutions.

Mamburu (2004:142) presents a comprehensive overview of South African public policy-making and legislative processes in a form of a table which highlights the stages, features, role players and types of policy documents (see Table 5.1, overleaf).

Table 5.1: South African public policy-making and legislative processes

Stages	Features	Role players	Types of policy documents
Policy agenda	The larger the number of the people affected by a problem, its severity and visibility, the more likely it is to be on the agenda.	Demonstrations, media, perceptions	Policy Proposal (Draft Bill)
Policy formulation	How best can a problem be resolved with the available resources?	Elite groups, government officials, presidential organizations, legislatures, interest groups	Draft Bill (Green Paper)
Policy adoption	Choice of an effective policy or programme to deal more effectively with the problem. A final policy draft is adopted.	Cabinet President	Draft Bill (White Paper)
Policy implementation	Post-legislative phase during which plans and programmes are put into action.	Government and NGOs	Programme Frameworks
Policy evaluation	Estimation, assessment and/or appraisal of policy. Policy is improved. Adoption of final policy choice	Elite groups, government officials, presidential organizations, legislatures, interest groups	Draft Bill (Policy Proposal) Amendment Act

Source: Adapted from Mamburu (2004:142)

The table above depicts a linear policy process which is the ideal. However, Bernstein (1999:19) expresses some concern about the fact that, in South Africa, although enormous effort has gone into reviewing old policies and formulating new ones since 1994, each department has done this in different ways, using different methods, styles and people. She explains that because of the need to speed up transformation, a plethora of White Papers have been produced, but that only limited gains have been made so far.

This chapter therefore focuses on the public policy cycle stages, which include agenda setting, policy formulation and decision-making, policy adoption,

implementation and its challenges, approaches to implementation, evaluation and termination, and the critique of the policy cycle framework. The last part of the chapter situates the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* within the policy cycle.

5.2 THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS

5.2.1 Agenda-setting – recognising the problem(s) and selecting the issues

Policy-making presupposes the recognition of a policy problem. Problem recognition itself requires that a social problem has been defined as such, and that a need for government intervention has been expressed (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:45). The second step is for the problem that has been recognised actually to be put on the agenda for serious consideration of public action (agenda-setting). An agenda is nothing more than "the list of subjects or problems to which governmental officials and people outside the governments closely associated with those officials are paying some serious attention at any given time" (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:45). In a similar vein, Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:570) define agenda-setting as the recognition of a problem by the government. The problems identified in many instances undergo complex processes before they are put on the agenda.

While a government's (formal and informal) agenda is central to studies on agenda-setting, the means and mechanisms of problem recognition and issue selection are closely connected with the way a social problem is recognised and perceived on the public and media agenda (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:45). Agenda-setting results in the selection of a number of problems or issues from a range of diverse problems and issues – this is regarded as a crucial stage in the policy-making process because it determines who influences or controls the policy-making process and also how stakeholders influence the policy agenda (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:570).

- 91 -

One can distinguish between two types of agenda-setting, "namely the setting of systemic" agendas and the setting of "institutional agendas" (Meyer & Cloete, 2000:109):

- **Systemic agendas**

  According to Mamburu (2004:149), a systematic agenda is usually a general topic under discussion. It includes all issues that members of the political community commonly perceive as meriting public attention, and that they believe government should intervene in to solve. It is a broader set of issues facing society. However, it should be noted that not all the issues raised in the systemic agenda receive government attention. Birkland (2006:63) points out that some ideas fail to reach the systemic agenda because they are politically unacceptable in a particular society. Government officials are inundated with, literally, thousands of problems from the public and are expected to act on all of them. In reality, only a small number of these issues on the systemic agenda receive serious government intervention (Meyer & Cloete, 2000:110).

- **Institutional agendas**

  If a problem or idea is successfully elevated from the systemic agenda, it moves to the institutional agenda, a subset of the broader systemic agenda (Birkland, 2006:65). This is where problems receive formal attention from the government. Usually, institutional agendas are linked to government action in the form of resources, legislation and time-frames for action. According to Mamburu (2004:149), an institutional agenda consists of those problems to which legislators or public officials feel obliged to give serious and active attention. It is usually found in the calendar of the authoritative decision-making of the government department concerned. Usually, "decision-makers presume that older problems warrant more attention because of the longevity and the greater familiarity officials have with them" (Mamburu, 2004:149).

There are four main phases of agenda-setting, as issues move from the systemic to the institutional agenda. Issues are first initiated, their solutions are specified and their support base is expanded; then, if the process is successful, the issues receive status on (or enter) the institutional agenda (Meyer & Cloete, 2000:110).

5.2.2 Policy formulation and decision-making

Sidney (2006:79) asserts that in a traditional "stage" model of the public policy process, policy formulation is part of the pre-decision stage of policy-making: a set of policy alternatives are identified to address a problem, and then that set of solutions is narrowed in preparation for the final policy decision. Thus policy formulation focuses on "what" questions such as the following (Sidney, 2006:79):

- What is the plan to deal with the problem?

- What are the goals and priorities?

- What options are available to achieve these goals?

- What are the costs and benefits of each of the options?

- What externalities, positive or negative, are associated with each alternative?

According to Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:569), "policy formulation is a complex political and administrative process that often extends across institutional and sectoral boundaries". These authors assert that "there is no reliable information on a policy formulation process, and that there is also no accepted conceptual and theoretical approach to the analysis of the policy formulation process". Indeed, they believe that the whole process is flawed, in some instances.

During the policy formulation and decision-making stages of the policy cycle, expressed problems, proposals and demands are transformed into government programmes. This type of approach to policy formulation assumes that participants in the policy process have already recognised and defined a policy problem and placed it on the policy agenda. Formulating the set of alternatives thus involves "identifying a range of broad approaches to a problem, and then identifying and designing the specific sets of policy tools" that constitute each approach (Sidney, 2006:79).

5.2.3 Policy goals, objectives and alternatives

According to Chambers (2000:79), a goal is a statement, in general and abstract terms, of desired qualities in human and social conditions. This author

emphasises that all elements of a programme or policy must be judged on the basis of their contribution to the programme's goals and objectives – the extent to which programme or policy elements make such contributions is a measure of the wisdom of choosing these elements as an instrument of policy operations. Therefore, a programme or policy goals and objectives are the programmatic "measure of all things".

Policy formulation and adoption include defining objectives – what should be achieved with the policy – and considering different action alternatives. Specifying objectives and developing options involves an intertwined and interrelated series of actions or phases in the policy formulation process (Roux, 2000:116). Problem identification leads nowhere if clear goals and objectives are not identified and formulated, answering questions such as "Where do we want to go?" "What we want to achieve?" and "Where and how do we want to address the issue at stake?" (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:571). Thus, policy analysis is impossible if the problem is not defined and the objectives of the process are not identified and formulated in clear terms (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:571).

Chambers (2000:83) mentions another important aspect with regard to policy objectives: "if objectives are to be of maximal use, objectives must specify clearly who is to be affected, what is to be changed, or whose circumstances or surroundings are the target of the change efforts". If target groups and performance standards are not specified, goals and objectives are almost always read to indicate that the policy will serve a larger population than is really intended. The purpose of developing objectives and goals in a policy can be summarized as giving the operational outcome toward which programme operations are directed. Administrators cannot make decisions about daily issues such as constructing budgets or distributing money among various programmes without a concrete objective. Programmes also cannot be evaluated for effectiveness, unless there is an objective which serves as a measurable standard against which data from actual achievement can be assessed. Programme goals are also essential because they "provide a crucial link between concrete and specific objectives and the public documentary sources" that establish a programme or policy (Chambers, 2000:86).

However, Roux (2000:127) cautions against prioritizing the objectives of a policy. He argues that a policy analyst is only able to determine priorities if he or she also pays attention to other aspects of priority-setting such as the selection of criteria for determining priorities, the dimension of choice in which the priorities are expressed, the types of resources in which allocations are denominated, and the mechanisms to implement priorities. Thus, policy analysts need exceptional skills and a high degree of professionalism to systematize and prioritize objectives in a particular order.

Role players in the public policy-making process include the elite group, government or public officials, presidential organizations, legislatures and the various interest groups (Mamburu, 2004:155), as discussed below.

5.2.4   Role players in policy-making process

Roux (2000:119) explains that in searching for alternative solutions to a problem, analysts may appeal to experts in a particular functional field, for example, human rights, gender issues, child abuse or education. Such authorities can be a valuable source of policy alternatives. Roux (2000:119) adds that policy alternatives may also be derived from assessing the beliefs, needs and values of those stakeholders who will be directly influenced by particular policy outcomes.

Many role players from local, provincial, national and international communities participate in the public policy-making process. Those who play a major role and are easily identifiable in South African communities include an elite group also referred to as "think tanks", the government (public officials), presidential organizations, the legislatures and various interest groups (Mamburu, 2004:154).

Jann and Wegrich (2006:48) state that some authors differentiate between the formulation (of alternatives for action) and the final adoption of a policy (the formal decision to take on the policy). Because policies are not always formalized into separate programmes, a clear-cut separation between formulation and decision-making is often impossible. However, a brief discussion on policy adoption is presented below.

5.2.5 Policy adoption

The formal institutions of the governmental system are central to the final adoption of a particular policy option (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:50). The final decision about which proposed policy options will finally be adopted depends on a number of factors. Firstly, the feasible set of policy options is reduced by basic substantial parameters. Some policies are rejected because there are not enough resources (especially economic resources), or political support, which is a critical resource in the policy-making process. Secondly, the allocation of competencies between different actors (for example, the government) plays a crucial role in decision-making (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:50).

Mamburu (2004:164) maintains that the policy adoption phase falls within the decision-making sector, and involves decisions regarding the selection of the most effective means of solving a particular social problem.

5.2.6 Implementation

One of the most important conceptual innovations of policy research in the 1970s was identifying the implementation stage as a missing link in the study of policy-making (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:42). Prior to that, the implementation of policies was not seen as a separate stage within or as an element of the policy-making process. What happens after a bill becomes a law was not perceived as a central problem for decision-makers and policy analysts. The underlying assumption was that once a government passes a law that is where the core business of policy-making ends. This perception has changed fundamentally.

Pulzl and Treib (2006:89) also explain that implementation studies emerged in the United States in the 1970s, as a reaction to growing concern about the ineffectiveness of wide-ranging reform programmes. Until the end of the 1960s, it was taken for granted that political mandates were clear, and administrators were thought to implement policies according to the intentions of the decision-makers (Pulzl & Treib, 2006:89). However, because policies seemed to lag behind policy expectations, the process of "translating policy into action" began to attract more

attention. As a result, policy-makers and decision-makers initiated debate on the implementation process as a stage in the policy-making process.

Brynard (2000:164) also explains that "early scholars of policy science saw implementation as merely an administrative choice which, once policy had been legislated and the institutions mandated with administrative authority, would happen of and by itself". But this view has been found to be incorrect. It is noteworthy that recently, a new wave of interest in policy studies, including policy implementation studies, has emerged among scholars in South Africa and abroad (Brynard, 2000:164).

Carter (1989:338) refers to implementation as "the directed change that follows a policy mandate, the process of rearranging patterns of conduct to honour the prescriptions stipulated in the decision". Thus, implementation starts after the decision to adopt a policy has been made, and it ends successfully when the goals sought by the policy are achieved. Unfortunately, the process may be modified by the organization responsible for carrying it out, pressured by rival agencies, constrained by the courts, repudiated by the public, resisted by those who must change their patterns of behaviour, or otherwise frustrated, so that it does not accomplish what was intended (Carter, 1989:339).

Programmes are an essential pathway through which policies could be implemented. In practice, programmes are an intricate part of public policy, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation. Hence programmes can be defined as "long-term, multi-activity endeavours implemented by networks of country institutions in multiple locations whose production and/or service delivery objectives and impact goals derive from indigenous policy choices", according to Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:571). These authors argue that programmes form some of the development strategies through which institutions translate their policies into development objectives in the process of policy implementation. This entails specifying broad courses of action and key activities to be undertaken by all the role players. Policies are merely abstract statements or intentions that both public and private institutions desire to achieve. Policies alone are meaningless

unless they are translated into tangible and action-oriented programmes and projects (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:572).

5.2.6.1 Implementation instruments

According to Jann and Wegrich (2006:51), the decision on a specific course of action and the adoption of a programme does not guarantee that the action on the ground will actually follow policy-makers' aims and objectives. Policy implementation is broadly defined as "what happens between the establishment of an apparent intention on the part of the government to do something, or to stop doing something", and the ultimate impact of that intention in the world of action (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:51). These authors caution that the "implementation stage is critical, because political and administrative action at the frontline can hardly ever be controlled perfectly by objectives, programmes, laws" and the like. Therefore, policies and their intentions are very often changed or even distorted. In this regard, Ruchefsky (1996:14) argues that the "execution of a policy may be delayed or blocked altogether" – this is why it is necessary to interpret a policy. Ruchefsky (1996:14) also maintains that "governments pass legislation that frequently requires further explanation". In some instances, the issues mentioned in a policy can be so technically complex that they require agency expertise.

Kearns and Lawson (2008:869) emphasise that effective policy depends upon having an implementation agency which is sufficiently skilled and committed for the task, which has adequate resources, and whose room for discretion and autonomy can be curtailed. Thus, the interpretation of the policy is a vital function, because government uses a policy as a resource to enforce compliance on the part of its citizens, agencies and other groups, thereby restricting or prohibiting the behaviours of certain groups in the policy system.

An ideal process of policy implementation would include the following core elements (cited verbatim):

- the specification of programme details (How and by which agencies or organizations should the programme be executed? How should the law or programme be *interpreted*?);

- 98 -

- the allocation of *resources* (How are budgets distributed? Which personnel will execute the programme? Which units of an organization will carry out decisions about single cases?) (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:51).

It is a fact of life that the mere adoption of a solution is seldom sufficient to achieve a policy goal, because programmes require funding. As with the other phases of the policy process, budgeting is a multifaceted process that involves many actors at different levels of government (Rushefsky, 1996:12). Rushefsky (1996:14) explains that there needs to be an organization with appropriate resources (people, funding, facilities) to carry out any programme.

Mamburu (2004:165) points out that public policy implementation is concerned with two concepts, namely, first, policy outputs (the observable and measurable results that a policy achieves) and, second, policy impact (the effects a policy has on the communities concerned). This implies that it is critical to compare the costs to the respective benefits of a programme. Mamburu (2004:165) acknowledges that policy implementation involves that money is spent, laws are enforced, employees are hired and plans of action are formulated.

Hill (2003:269) suggests that implementation resources can be defined as those individuals or organizations that can help implementing units learn about policy, best practices, or professional practices which are meant to change the character of services delivered to clients. Implementation resources are constituted of many types of actors, such as consultants, academics, entrepreneurs, foundations, journalists and professional associations. What these actors have in common is that they extend opportunities to learn about policy and best practices to professionals in practice and use their authority to convince them to facilitate changes in practice (Hill, 2003:269).

5.2.6.2 Implementation challenges

Schutte, Weck and Boessenkool (2004:177) argue that an institutional basis for policy communication and implementation is weak or absent in many structures. Such an "institutional gap" constitutes one of the most important barriers to

effective governance. Communication takes place by means of meetings, talks, workshops, speeches and discussions within institutional levels, but often not between them to the necessary extent.

Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:571) argue that criticisms levelled against poor implementation of policies or policy gaps arise from various challenges, such as a separation between the policy-makers and policy-implementers, and a lack of citizen inputs, participation and feedback. A separation between policy-makers, policy-implementers and the general public stifles policy innovation and eventually results in dysfunctional policy action and implementation (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:571).

Brynard (2000:178) stipulates that in order to make sense of the complexities in implementation, the five-C protocol has to be understood. He sums up this protocol as follows:

- **Content**

    The content of the policy is important in respect of which means are required to achieve the ends of the policy, and also in respect of how these ends are determined and how the specific means to reach those ends are chosen. Thus policy content may or may not provide for resources for capacity building (Brynard, 2000:178).

- **Context**

    A context-free theory of implementation is unlikely to produce powerful explanations or accurate predictions. Like the other four variables, the institutional context is shaped by the larger context of the social, economic, political and legal realities of the system. Looking at the context is not an attempt to understand the importance of the larger contextuality, but it should emphasise the importance of how this affects the implementation process, primarily via the institutional corridor through which implementation must pass. Thus the institutional context of the relevant agencies may hinder or help such capacity enhancement. (Brynard, 2000:178)

- **Commitment**

    Governments may have a logical policy, but if those responsible for carrying it

out are unwilling or unable to do so, little will happen. Commitment is important at the "street level". All levels through which policy passes influence and are influenced by all four remaining variables, namely content, context, capacity, and clients and coalitions. (Brynard, 2000:178)

- **Capacity**

  The capacity of the public sector, in terms of general systems thinking, refers to the structural, functional and cultural ability to implement the policy objectives of a government, in other words, the ability to deliver those public services aimed at raising the quality of life of citizens which the government has set out to deliver effectively, as planned over time (in a durable way). (Brynard, 2000:178)

- **Clients and coalitions**

  This reflects the importance of the government's joining coalitions of interest groups, opinion leaders, and other outside actors who actively support a particular implementation process (Brynard, 2000:178).

5.2.6.3 Approaches to implementation

Various authors identify three approaches to implementation, namely, a top-down approach, a bottom-up approach and the hybrid-theorist approach (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:52; Pulzl & Treib, 2006:89):

- **Top-down approach**

  Initially, implementation was regarded from a perspective that was later called the top-down approach (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:52). According to Pulzl and Treib (2006:89), top-down theories started from the assumption that policy implementation starts with a decision made by central government, and these theories were based on a "black box model" of the policy process inspired by systems analysis. Top-down models emphasise the ability of decision-makers to produce unequivocal policy objectives and to control the implementation stage (Pulzl & Treib, 2006:90). Intra- and inter-organizational coordination problems and the interaction of field agencies with the target group are regarded as the most prominent variables that account for implementation failure (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:52).

Implementation studies of the first generation thus shared "a hierarchical, top-down understanding of governance, at least as a normative yardstick for the assessment of outcomes of implementation" (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:52).

Since the 1970s, implementation studies "based on the top-down perspectives have increasingly been challenged on analytical grounds and in terms of their normative implications" (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:51). These authors add that empirical evidence has confirmed that "implementation was not appropriately described as a hierarchical chain of action", and this provided the grounds for a competing concept of implementation. Pulzl and Treib (2006:92) conclude that the top-down theorists "assumed a clear separation between policy formation and policy implementation". They list the following six criteria for effective implementation (cited verbatim):

- policy objectives are clear and consistent;
- the programme is based on a valid causal theory;
- the implementation process is structured adequately;
- the implementing officials are committed to the programme's goals;
- interest groups and (executive and legislative) sovereigns are supportive; and
- there are no detrimental changes in the socioeconomic framework conditions.

- **Bottom-up approach:**

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, bottom-up theories emerged as a critical response to the top-down school. Several of their studies showed that political outcomes do not always relate well to the original policy objectives. The assumed causal link was thus questionable (Pulzl & Treib, 2006:92). In essence, this approach suggests the need to study what actually happens on the recipient level, and analyse the real issues that influence action on the ground.

Thus, the bottom-up school rejects the idea that policies are defined at the central level and that implementers need to stick to these objectives as neatly as possible. Instead, the availability of discretion at the stage of policy delivery appears to be beneficial, as local bureaucrats are seen to be much nearer to the real problems than central policy-makers (Pulzl & Treib, 2006:92). Another explanation focuses on the policy itself, acknowledging that unsuccessful

policy implementation can be the result of both bad implementation, and bad policy design, based on wrong assumptions about cause-effect relationships.

- **Hybrid theorist approach:**

  According to Pulzl and Treib (2006:95), as a reaction to growing uneasiness with the heated debate between "top-downers" and "bottom-uppers", the hybrid theorists tried to synthesize both approaches. Jann and Wegrich (2006:51) explain that these theorists try to overcome the divide between the other two approaches by incorporating elements of top-down, bottom-up and other theoretical models; hence, their approach is called "hybrid theory".

  These theorists try to reconcile the idea of political steering by central government with the argument that the transformation of policy goals into action depends upon the interaction of a multitude of actors with separate interests and strategies. Introducing the concept of policy networks to implementation research, they suggest giving more weight to processes of coordination and collaboration among separate but mutually dependent actors (Pulzl & Treib, 2006:96).

5.2.7 Evaluation and termination

Carter (1989:272) states that "effective delivery of public services requires more than the discovery and implementation of what the policy-makers have decided is the best programme" they can devise. He adds that in recent years, "policy-makers have come to realize that they also need to determine how programmes actually behave". This means that there has to be a way to measure the outcomes under operating conditions and find out whether a programme is accomplishing what was intended and, if not, to discontinue or improve the programme. Cloete (2000:211) indicates that policy evaluation refers broadly to the process of finding out about a public policy in action, the means being employed and the objectives being served. He explains that policy evaluation or assessment is normally undertaken to derive the following benefits (cited verbatim):

- to provide a precise assessment of the nature and extent of the impacts that can be expected and hence help planners identify the projects likely to produce the best return on the resources invested;

- to show that the observed changes are not due to the project but to external factors, and thus avoid investment in projects that are unlikely to produce the desired benefits;
- to assess the factors contributing to project impact and thus help planners improve the project design;
- to identify those groups that tend to benefit least from certain kinds of projects and thus propose special measures needed to encourage these groups to participate; and
- to estimate when the impact is likely to occur and thus increase the precision of project analysis procedures.

Carter (1989:274) points out that, because evaluation is a form of policy analysis, a number of procedures are applicable. The objectives of the programme to be evaluated must be identified, measures of effectiveness must be found, and criteria for comparison must be determined. The alternatives to be compared are then investigated, data are gathered and the costs and other consequences are estimated. Policy-making is supposed to contribute to problem-solving, or at least to a reduction of the problem load (Pulzl &Treib, 2006:90).

In the evaluation stage of a policy cycle, the intended policy outcomes are the focus. It is plausible that finally policy-making should be appraised against the intended objectives and the impact of the policy – this forms the starting point of policy evaluation. Evaluation is associated with the final stage in the policy cycle, which ends either with the termination of the policy, or with its redesign, based on a modified problem perception and agenda-setting (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:51).

5.3   CRITIQUE

Critiques of the policy cycle framework question the analytical differentiation of the policy process into separate and discrete stages and sequences. As mentioned above, implementation research has played a crucial role in preparing the ground for that critique. Implementation studies have revealed that any attempt at a clear-cut separation between policy formulation and implementation fails to reflect real-world policy-making, either in terms of any implementation, or in terms of the actors involved (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:53).

In South Africa, criticism levelled against poor implementation of policies or policy gaps focuses on challenges such as the separation between the policy-makers, policy-implementers and the general public, which stifles policy innovation and in turn results in dysfunctional policy action and implementation. The problem is exacerbated when too much emphasis is placed on policy input strategies without paying attention to the capacity of institutions to effect positive outcomes and output (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:572). Van Baalen and De Coning (2006:215) argue that policy failure is frequently attributed to methodological defects that have to do with bad management and badly designed policies.

In reviewing government policy on the transformation of the public service in South Africa, Bernstein (1999:71) remarks that the government's formulation and implementation of right-sizing policies are seriously flawed. Its implement-tation has been "ad hoc, fragmented and uncoordinated". Instead of a well-planned, coordinated and consultative approach as recommended by the *White Paper on the Transformation of Public Service* (RSA, 1995), the right-sizing process to date has been characterized by a series of poorly conceived, uncoordinated and largely unsuccessful initiatives, based on insufficient consultation and agreements struck in the Central Bargaining Chamber without much transparency.

For the family policy to be well understood, it is of the utmost importance to define and conceptualize it within the context of social policy.

5.4   SITUATING THE *MANUAL ON FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES* IN THE POLICY CYCLE

Conventionally, if a programme has to follow the public policy process, it would entail agenda setting, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation and policy evaluation (Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:578). In this context, with regard to the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, there is a stage missing, namely policy adoption by all role players before the actual implementation. This has the potential to disadvantage the programme, as it may lack buy-in from stakeholders, resulting in inadequate implementation resources. This was

confirmed by Strydom's (2010:198) findings that there are often insufficient funds for initiating projects, and also too few social workers. These shortages may be considered obstacles to the delivery of family preservation services.

Van Baalen and De Coning (2013:171) refer to a policy as a relatively detailed statement of government objectives in a sector, and a general statement of the methods to be used in achieving these objectives. The authors further explain that the details about the methods are contained in the programme and project plans that are adopted to carry out the policy. Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:571) see programmes as an essential pathway through which policies are implemented. In giving effect to the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a), the Department of Social Development embarked on the process of developing the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b). It is important to mention that this *Manual* replaced the 1997 version which was developed as a result of a policy recommendation by an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk, as discussed in Sections 4.2 and 4.8.

The researcher is of the opinion that the development and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* should be seen as located in the policy implementation phase in the cycle, because it was developed as one of the mechanisms of translating the *Draft National Family Policy* objectives in action for the benefit of families. Van Baalen and De Coning (2013:172) argue that programmes and projects form part of development strategies through which institutions translate their policies into development objectives in the process of policy implementation by specifying the broad course of action and key activities to be undertaken by all role players.

Discussing the implications for implementation, Hill (2003:278) explains that a policy may fail because implementers misunderstand it or lack the knowledge needed for implementation. The author therefore recommends that policy-makers might need to increase implementers' access to implementation resources by subsidizing the costs of training, onsite consultation and conferences.

Schutte et al. (2004:175) acknowledge that people who have to implement policy give meaning to a policy in a certain way, depending on the specific circumstances and the context. The author further concludes that the institutional basis for policy communication and implementation is weak or absent in many structures in South Africa. Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:572) attribute policy failure to the separation between policy-makers and those who implement policy.

Gray and Sewpaul (1998:25) sum up the possibilities of whether a policy could be implemented by stating that "policy implementation depends on complex factors which include sound research, socio-political climate, available resources, institutional structures and public opinion".

5.5   CONCLUSION

The phases of the policy process have been thoroughly discussed in this chapter, namely policy agenda, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. However, it must be remembered that the policy cycle framework is based on the assumption that it is a linear process, while this is often not the case in practice, because a number of external factors influence the policy environment. Programmes are an essential pathway through which policies can be implemented, but, in practice, programmes are only one integral part of public policy, policy formulation, policy implementation and policy evaluation. The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* is one example of a programme through which family policy is implemented. It forms the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6:

OVERVIEW OF THE *DRAFT NATIONAL FAMILY POLICY* AND THE *MANUAL ON FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES*

6.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview and summary of the two documents that are fundamental to this study, namely the *Draft National Family Policy 2008* (Department of Social Development, 2008a)[3] and the *Manual on Family Preservation Services 2008* (Department of Social Development, 2008b).[4] A comparison between the content of these two documents and the information presented in the literature with regard to family policy issues and family preservation services is included. The overview of the *Draft National Family Policy* and the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* assisted the researcher to develop a checklist which she uses to analyse the formulation and content of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.*

6.2   THE *DRAFT NATIONAL FAMILY POLICY*

The *Draft Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a) is divided into four chapters. The first chapter focuses on the introduction of the *Draft Policy*, the nature of the problem it outlines, its aims and objectives, rationale, vision, mission, principles and approaches to service delivery. The second chapter presents a background on and context for South African families. The third chapter of the *Draft Policy* highlights and discusses programmes and actions for family well-being. The fourth chapter concludes with the institutional mechanisms and implementation; monitoring and evaluation process; policy and legislative frameworks relevant to the *Draft Policy*; the role of government departments; the role of professionals; the role of volunteers; and the role of civil society. The

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[3] Referred to in this chapter as the *Draft Policy* for the sake of brevity.

[4] Referred to in this chapter as the *Manual* for the sake of brevity.

chapters of the *Draft Policy* are discussed below, relating the issues raised to the wider literature on the topic, where applicable.

6.2.1 The first chapter of the *Draft Policy*

6.2.1.1 Introduction

The first chapter gives background on the disintegration of families in South Africa. The *Draft Policy* points out that the "dawn of the democratic era also brought to light the reality of family disintegration, which is highly prevalent in the country" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:1). This disintegration is rightly regarded as "one of the key challenges facing South Africa that also threatens to undermine all the gains that have been made in the social, economic, and political spheres" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:1). Despite the challenges that are currently faced by families, the *Draft Policy* claims that

> …the family is not explicitly addressed in many of the country's policies, but rather it is usually inferred. In this way, the family is implied and not focused upon as the point of intervention. As a consequence, socio-economic benefits indirectly filter down to the family because they do not originate from its deliberate targeting. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:1)

This is the premise from which the *Draft Policy* positions itself with regard to families in South Africa.

Regarding family policy issues in the United States of America (USA), Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:560) claim that although there is no single institution that has had a greater influence than the family in shaping people's lives, affecting interpersonal relationships, and even in determining national stature, the USA does not have an explicit national policy for families. These authors lament that "even the current Obama administration has failed to put forward a comprehensive policy aimed specifically at strengthening and enhancing the quality of family". Robila (2009:1), writing on Eastern Europe, argues that an explicit family policy can address problems that families experience in society, and has as its goal the advancement of family well-being. The various authors

mentioned here appear to hold similar views on how to address family disintegration and challenges, and, for South Africa, the solution proposed is the *Draft Policy*.

6.2.1.2 Nature of the problem

The *Draft Policy* asserts the following:

> South Africa has not had a family policy in its fourteen years of democracy that specifically focuses on issues that primarily affect the family, [despite the fact that] South African families are almost in a state of crisis.[…] It is due to this identified policy gap that the *Family Policy* has been developed. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:1-2)

The description of the problem as presented in the *Draft Policy* is vague. Meyer and Cloete (2000:97) explain that a policy process normally starts when a policy issue or problem is identified by one or more stakeholders in society who feel that the actions of the government are detrimental to them or to another segment of society. According to Gil (1992:76), the way policy issues are defined is crucial for the entire process of the policy, and Gil warns that care should be taken to avoid definitions which are likely to limit policy analysis and the development of alternative policies. Millar (2008:167) points out that "to develop the policy, certain assumptions must be made about families and family roles as families have changed through the years and therefore different policy responses are required".

6.2.1.3 Aims and objectives

The principal aim of the *Draft Policy* is "to provide a comprehensive, co-ordinated and synchronized approach to social service delivery for families, in order to strengthen their supportive, socialising and nurturing roles" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:3). According to Fox and Meyer (1995, quoted by Roux, 2000:117), a goal is "an unrealised state not yet achieved by the members of an organisation but which they regard as desirable", while an objective is "a short-term goal that can be deduced from an organisation's mission and could be stated by means of a process of negotiation". The objectives of the *Draft Policy* are the following (cited verbatim):

1. Create an awareness and understanding of family issues in South Africa, and amongst organisations and all relevant role players in order to achieve family strengthening and well-being;
2. Raise organisational capacities in terms of resources and personnel's competencies towards the mainstreaming of family concerns in South Africa;
3. Create an enabling environment with the family as the focal-point of policy development and implementation; and
4. Develop, implement, monitor and evaluate specific responses to families from a family-orientated perspective. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:3)

Emphasising the importance of specification of objectives, Gil (1992:77) states that the objectives of social policies constitute key criteria for the evaluation of the social significance of these policies and the analysis of their effectiveness. In discussing the goals and objectives of the *Draft Policy*, it should be noted that Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:567) assert that a family policy should consider carefully whether the policy is to be directed toward the traditional family or toward a diversity of lifestyles, relationships and families, as well as whether it should be directed at preventing families' changing and maintaining the status quo, or at supporting change, flexibility and creativity.

6.2.1.4 Rationale

Linked to the nature of the problem, the *Draft Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a:3) states that "South Africa does not have an identified policy that focuses on the family or evaluates the impacts of social service delivery in relation to its needs" as its rationale. It elaborates on this point by explaining that the "family is only addressed by other policies that have a bearing on its well-being, for example from the perspective of agriculture, education, health, housing, water and sanitation, among others" (Department of Social Development, 2008a3). In essence, the motivation for a family policy is said to be that the "family's position has not markedly improved, despite the country's successes with certain initiatives, for instance growing the economy" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:4).

It is not the intention of this chapter to challenge the *Draft Policy*, but the researcher maintains that the development and formulation of a social policy should not be based primarily on the *absence* of a policy, but should focus explicitly on addressing pressing social problems in society. Nevertheless, even with regard to policy in the USA, Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:561) confess that "among all the agencies overseeing education, health, commerce, labour, agriculture, transportation and the like, no agency [in the USA] is devoted specifically to the family." Indeed, these authors admit that there is considerable rhetoric espousing the importance of strengthening families, but there is less agreement in the population about what that means and entails. This suggests that the *Draft Policy* is taking a step in the right direction by attempting to open up the debate in South Africa and work towards a policy that can be implemented.

Roux (2000:117) warns that methodological policy analysis that will assist policy formulators to arrive at the best policy options available is not possible if the problem is not well-defined in a policy. Thus, Roux strongly emphasises the importance of clear conceptualisation of the policy rationale or problem.

6.2.1.5 Vision

The premise of the *Draft Policy'*s vision is "a well-functioning, independent, resilient and socially integrated South African family… able to nurture, support and provide care to its members" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:4).

Louw and Venter (2010:109) indicate that a vision statement goes beyond planning by challenging organizational members to go beyond the status quo in pursuit of a long-term goal. They list attributes necessary for a vision to be effective – it should be brief, clear, abstract, specify the challenges, future oriented, focused, understandable to all role players, stable, and aspirational. With regard to families, Zimmerman (1995:3) holds that a family policy's vision should be aimed at maximizing the well-being of families; and defines family well-being as a value that includes the state of being healthy, happy and free from want, as well as achieving satisfaction with marriage, work, leisure, housing and so forth.

6.2.1.6 Mission

The *Draft Policy's* stated mission is to "develop, promote and implement specific actions and programmes that enable the family to play its requisite roles in society and also contribute to the overall development of South Africa" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:4).

According to Louw and Venter (2010:114), developing a mission statement is one of the fundamental steps in the strategic management process, as it gives key role players the necessary direction to develop strategies in line with changing trends. These authors further advise that a "good mission statement should describe the fundamental objectives of the business, and should include what people variously refer to as guiding principles, credos, or corporate philosophies". Ehlers and Lazenby (2009:66) define a mission statement as "an enduring statement of purpose that distinguishes an organisation from other ones and it embodies the philosophy, identity and character of an organisation".

6.2.1.7 Principles

The principles of the *Draft Policy* are listed under the following headings (Department of Social Development, 2008a:4-8):

- "Prevention and early identification of problems for programme actions"
- "Family-focused statutory care"
- "Partnerships with families"
- "Family resources and resilience"
- "Community involvement and participation"
- "Promoting parental care and reinforcing the role of mothers and fathers in the upbringing of children"
- "Recognising South Africa's diverse families"
- "Prioritising vulnerable and adversely affected families"
- "Recognition of traditional family values, religious systems, and customs in the strengthening of the family"
- "Human rights and democracy".

- 113 -

According to Gil (1992:78), knowing the value premises inherent in a policy is a prerequisite for predicting the manner of its implementation and its actual consequences for society. This author further advises that consideration should be given mainly to value dimensions which are most likely to affect attitudes, decisions, and actions concerning resource control, work organization and rights distribution. The value premises adopted in the *Draft Policy* do reflect the broader democratic nature of the country as outlined in the principles above, namely human rights and democracy.

6.2.1.8 Approaches to service delivery

Gil (1992:79) points out that "once the objectives and value premises of a policy are clarified, theories or hypothesis underlying policy strategy and its concrete provisions should be made explicit and their scientific validity should be examined." With regard to the circumstances in which South African families find themselves, as well as rendering services that respond appropriately to their needs, the following approaches are listed by the *Draft Policy:*

- **Life Cycle Approach**

  The *Draft Policy* recommends this approach as an "important perspective" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:8) during its implementation process, because it "will allow for a comprehensive analysis of life events, family crises, processes and challenges relating to age, gender, and roles and responsibilities of each family member" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:8).

  According to Becvar and Becvar (2006:110), various theories of individual development and models of the family life cycle, especially if the theories and models are employed in combination, are important and useful tools for family therapists, because they assist by offering a set of guidelines for considering individual and family growth and development. Becvar and Becvar (2006:110) warn that the stage models of family development tend to be linear and to describe a traditional family model that reflects only a small portion of families today. Like Becvar and Becvar (2006:110), Williams et al. (2006:71) suggest that the family developmental perspective has been rightly criticized because life processes do not always unfold in clearly marked stages, and they argue

- 114 -

that the perspective has also been skewed by a focus on white, middle-class families, ignoring other kinds of families, such as single parents, divorced parents and same-sex households.

- **Systems approach**

    The *Draft Policy* regards this theory as helpful for service providers who need to "analyse and interpret family-related issues and [it] enables them to locate the family in society. The family has to be linked to overall national development goals and not be viewed in isolation" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:8).

    This perspective thus lays the foundation for an integrated approach to service delivery. Prochaska and Norcross (2003:375) define a system as a "set of units or elements that stand in some consistent relationship with one another and it comprises both the separate elements as well as the relationships among those elements". Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:131) explain that the family systems frame of reference sees families as living systems that respond to environmental pressures, but do so in interaction with the effect of the perceptions and motivations of individual family members. These authors argue that each family system must adapt to its environmental conditions in order to survive, and must change its structure and modify its processes of adaptation to account for the needs and desires of its members.

- **The Social Development Approach**

    The social development approach, according to the *Draft Policy*, citing Patel (2005),

    > …recognises that the family is the basic unit of society and plays a key role in the survival, protection and development of children. Its rationale is that families should be supported and their capabilities have to be strengthened for the purpose of meeting the needs of members (Patel, 2005). (Department of Social Development, 2008a:9).

    The implementation of the *Draft Policy* "and its monitoring and evaluation will have to be counterbalanced with rehabilitative, preventative and developmental interventions" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:9).

According to Estes (1998:2), social development refers to "the processes through which people are helped to realize the fullness of the social, political and economic potentials that already exist within them". The developmental approach advocates shifting away from the subjectivity of a problematic, dysfunctional family that has to be rehabilitated to a family that has particular capacities (Patel, Schmid & Hochfeld, 2012:6).

6.2.2 The second chapter of the *Draft Policy*

6.2.2.1 Background and context

Gil (1992:75) states that policy development should begin by identifying and exploring issues to be dealt with by given policies, and that the manner in which given issues are to be identified and described depend on their intrinsic nature and on the state of established knowledge concerning them. In line with Gil's criterion, the *Draft Policy* focuses on the history and factors that contributed to family breakdown. It states:

> For centuries the family in South Africa, especially amongst the African population, has been undermined by external forces emanating primarily from the political and economic arenas. Colonial conquest and apartheid both contributed significantly to the marginalisation and erosion of the family in South Africa. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:10)

Moreover,

> …the migrant labour system threatened the very foundation of the African extended family, as the absence of men meant that only the elderly and women were left to play central roles in meeting the needs of the family. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:10)

The *Draft Policy* explains:

> In order to build a new nation and transform the inequitable relations that were inherited from the apartheid society, the post-1994 democratic Government promulgated the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) and instituted various policy and legislative reforms. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:11)

The *White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme* (RSA, 1994:6) defines the RDP as "an integrated coherent socio-economic policy framework and it seeks to mobilise people and the country's resources towards

the final eradication of the results of apartheid and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future".

Although the *Draft Policy* regards the promulgation of various policy and legislative reforms as part of the answer to address the disintegration of families in South Africa, it also states that these reforms have been limited in their power to resolve family issues, hence the need for a specific Family Policy.

6.2.2.2 Gender and poverty

The *Draft Policy* highlights a critical challenge with regard to gender. It asserts that poverty "takes on gender dimensions due to the inherent and past inequalities and discriminatory practices in the country. Women continue to be marginalised in relation to men" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:13). According to data from Statistics South Africa (2012, cited in Department of Social Development, 2013b:23), the unemployment rate for women was 27.5 % in the April-June 2012 quarter, while the figure for men was 22.8%. Ten years earlier, in 2002, according to the White Paper on Families (Department of Social Development, 2013b:23) the corresponding figures were 33.9% for women and 26.1% for men. It is clear that while the unemployment rates appear to have decreased, women continue to face higher unemployment rates than men.

6.2.2.3 HIV/AIDS and the family

The *Draft Policy* points to HIV/AIDS as one of the social ills that continues to ravage families. It states that HIV and AIDS have already "devastated South African families and undermined family relationships" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:15). The disease is worse and more prevalent amongst young and middle-aged adults (the economically active population), leaving fewer people to care for children and older people (Department of Social Development, 2008a:15).

According to Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:333), many HIV-infected persons are under 25 years of age, but young people continue to engage in high-risk sexual behaviours, such as sex with multiple partners without any form of protection. The

comprehensive *Progress review of the implementation of the White Paper on Population Policy for South Africa (1998) and the ICDP programs of action* (Department of Social Development, 2010:51) reports that the spread of HIV/AIDS is closely associated with poverty and unequal power relations that increase women's vulnerability, and undermine women's capacity to participate equally in development.

6.2.2.4 Defining the family in South Africa

The *Draft Policy* acknowledges that it is very difficult to pinpoint and define the concept of a "family", so "some family theorists prefer to classify it as a social unit that is regulated by 'family rules'" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:16). According to the *Draft Policy*, the theorists agree that "families are social groups that are related by blood (kinship), marriage, adoption or affiliation, who have close emotional attachments to each other which endure over time and go beyond a particular physical residence" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:16).

Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:4) also state that it is very difficult to define a family; they explain that "traditionally and legally, the family refers to two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption who reside together in a household". This is a specifically Western view of the family that spread from Europe to its colonies. These authors point out that families can also be defined in terms of their functional significance as a societal institution, or in terms of their unique relational characteristics.

Zastrow (2003:176) uses a broader description of the family as a "primary institution for the rearing of children". In this sense, the family is defined according to its essential functions.

At least 14 types of South African families are identified in the *Draft Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a:17-18; cited verbatim):
- Three-generation – grandparent(s) with parent(s) and child(ren);
- Nuclear – two parents and at least one child;

- 118 -

- Skip-generation – grandparent with grandchild(ren), but no child(ren) of his/her own;
- Single unmarried parent with at least one child;
- Single married parent (absent spouse) with at least one child;
- Elderly only – one or multiple;
- Single adult – the family is composed of only one member, who is an adult;
- Child-headed – all members of the family are children, i.e. below 18 years of age;
- Married couple – husband and wife;
- Married couple with adopted child(ren);
- One adult with adopted child(ren);
- Siblings only – adults and children (all family members are siblings including individuals below the age of 18);
- Other – such as the extended family which is multi-generational in character and includes family members who are bound by either blood or legal relations. They may cohabit or may not share the same household. This category also includes the cohabitation type of family that consists of two adults staying together without any contractual agreements and with or without children (Economic Policy Research Institute, 2008:14); and

Lastly, other categories of families for example, migrant and refugee families, same-sex families or urban and rural families need to be taken into account as well.

Zastrow (2003:175) cautions that it is a serious mistake for social workers and other helping professionals to use the nuclear family as the ideal model that individuals in our society should strive to form because many other family forms are functioning. He lists a number of examples (cited verbatim):

- a married couple without children, who are the primary caregivers for the wife's mother, who has Alzheimer's disease and who resides with the couple;
- two gay men in a committed relationship, each of whom has joint custody of two children with his former wife;
- a childless married couple who have decided not to conceive children;
- a single parent with three young children;
- a blended family in which the husband and wife have children in the current marriage, plus children from earlier marriages, all of whom live in the household; and

- an unmarried young couple living together in what amounts to a trial marriage.

6.2.2.5 Population increase in the family

According to the results of the *Community Survey* (Statistics South Africa, 2007, cited in Department of Social Development, 2008a:20), the South African population was estimated at 48.5 million in 2008. According to the *Progress review of the implementation of the White Paper on Population Policy for South Africa (1998) and the ICDP programs of action* (Department of Social Development, 2010:20), data show that the South African population increased from approximately 40.6 million in 1996 to 48.7 million in 2008. It is clear that any increase in the size of the population will have a direct effect on the quality of services delivered to families (Department of Social Development, 2008a:20), because "population increases invariably exert pressure on the resources that are available to families and their members" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:20).

The *Draft Policy* outlines the categories of families mentioned below as intended beneficiaries of the *Draft Policy*. This is in line with Gil (1992:80) criterion that policies should be aimed primarily at specific groups of a society who constitute the "target segment" for the intended effects of the policy:

6.2.2.6 Families at risk

The *Draft Policy* defines families at risk as those

> …that are facing threat from various negative forces in society. They are also prone to extreme vulnerabilities. One of the Family Policy's principles hinges on prioritising families that are already in crisis and face imminent danger of disintegration for intervention, in order to strengthen and preserve them. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:21)

For these types of families, the *Draft Policy* indirectly refers to family preservation services as an appropriate intervention.

6.2.2.7 Families in crisis

Families in crisis can function sufficiently well to

> …cope with daily challenges, but may experience a crisis as a result of sudden trauma or a setback such as death, disability, unemployment, or a heinous crime like rape or violence, among others. In such instances, an urgent intervention is required to assist families to manage the crisis until they are able to revert to their own coping skills and systems. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:22)

The type of intervention recommended by the *Draft Policy* for this type of family is intensive family preservation services, which are short-term in nature and form part of the modules in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.*

6.2.2.8 Families in transition

The *Draft Policy* states:

> Families in transition are defined by change or disruptions which may result from separation, divorce and death. […] When this occurs, family members, especially the most vulnerable and dependent, fail to access resources that are important for their optimal functioning. Therefore, families which are in transition need special support from the state. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:22)

Again, intensive family preservation services may be appropriate for these types of families. There also seems to be an overlap between families in crisis and this type of family.

The different categories of families that are discussed above, as listed in the *Draft Policy*, are discussed by Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:493) under "social stresses on families", but these authors do not differentiate between families according to the challenges they face. These authors explain that stressor events or crisis-provoking events refer to "pressure or tension in the family system which is viewed as a disturbance in the steady state of the family"; the extent to which the family defines the event as a crisis reflects the family's value system and previous experience in meeting a crisis.

Zastrow (2003:184) refers to families facing various challenges as "troubled families". This author lists four factors that define troubled families, namely low

levels of self-worth; indirect, vague and dishonest communication; rigid and non-negotiable rules; and a linkage to society that vacillates between being fearful, placating or blaming.

6.2.3   The third chapter of the *Draft Policy*

Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:561) distinguish between policies and programmes: a family policy includes a broad set of goals or objectives for families that government bodies and social organizations then attempt to achieve by means of structured programmes and/or activities; programmes are practical applications to achieve or fulfil the policy goals.

In order for families to flourish in South Africa, the *Draft Policy* recommends a number of programmes and actions that need to be instituted; it calls these "interventions". These are discussed below.

6.2.3.1 *Family strengthening*

The Department of Social Development (2008a:23) suggests family strengthening, which it describes as follows:

> Family strengthening refers to the deliberate process of giving families the necessary opportunities, relationships, networks, and support that will help them to raise their children successfully.

A study conducted by the United Nations (2001), *Approaches to family policies: A profile of eight countries*, shows that family policies usually aim at strengthening families and at enhancing overall socio-economic progress in a society by using the family as a framework for action. The *White Paper for Social Welfare* (Department of Social Development, 1997b) thus also states that the goal of child and family welfare services in social work is to maintain and strengthen the functioning of high-risk families.

The *Draft Policy* even specifies a process that needs to be followed in order to attain family strengthening (Department of Social Development, 2008a:24; cited verbatim):

- 122 -

i.   An identification of the needs and challenges of a family;
ii.   Recognising the resources the family has;
iii.   Identifying family strengths and priorities;
iv.   Co-ordination of the roles of various agencies involved in the area;
v.   Identification of unmet needs, gaps and support; and
vi.   Developing strategies for intervention.

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:65) explain the process of identifying and assessing the needs and challenges of the family as follows: "[C]ounsellors probably get a better and more comprehensive sense of how a family functions by interacting with its members over a period of time than they would form any initial interviewing in the evaluation phase." They emphasise that assessment is essential throughout the family counselling process, as a counsellor can only engage in suitable interventions based on progressively refined appraisals of the family.

According to Zastrow (2003:65), assessments focus on evaluating a client's needs and problems, as well as factors involved in the client's ecological context, and warns that "it is essential that social workers include client's strengths in the assessment process".

6.2.3.2 Enhancing family resilience and family preservation

According to the *Draft Policy,* the "strengthening of families will ultimately result in family resilience" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:24). Moreover, family preservation

> …relates to initiatives by both the state and civil society that focus on children and families that are facing severe challenges. The former may also lead to the dissolution of the family unit and the placing of children in foster care. Therefore, family preservation needs to be anchored in family reunification strategies. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:25)

DeFrain and Assay (2007:1) assert that most research on families has focused primarily on the problems or weaknesses of families, and it is only over the past three decades that the focus has shifted to strong and resilient families. The authors point out that that resilient families manifest a set of qualities which

include showing appreciation and affection, commitment, positive communication, having enjoyable times together, spiritual well-being, and the ability to manage stress and crisis effectively. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:11) argue that "resilient families are not problem-free, but have developed the ability to survive and regenerate even in the midst of overwhelming stress, misfortune, hardships, and life-altering transition points".

6.2.3.3 Focusing on families at risk and providing care to vulnerable members

The *Draft Policy* emphasises that families "that are under threat or that have already fallen below the threshold of risk will be targeted via different programmes" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:25).

This is in line with what Zastrow (2003:177) explains about types and forms required for troubled families – the services that social workers provide to troubled families are extremely varied. They include family preservation services, family therapy and family life education, among others. Zastrow (2003:177) points out that not all of these services can be provided by social workers. However, social workers need to know where to find some of these services and how to assist a family in obtaining these services when the family needs them.

6.2.3.4 Engaging traditional and religious structures

The *Draft Policy* states that in "the African community, there is a general pattern of traditional family life that still exists in present times" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:26). The nuclear family unit of husband, wife and children still forms part of a larger kinship structure where family ties and co-residence extend both horizontally and vertically (Human Sciences Research Council, 2004). The *Draft Policy* acknowledges:

> These kinship connections remain the primary sources of social and material support and general reciprocity. […] Different religions inculcate in family members a sense of belonging, self-respect, respect for others, and mutual obligations and reciprocity. Therefore, programmes of both government and civil society will have to tap into the aforementioned sectors so as to enhance the coping capacities of the families. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:26)

Zastrow (2003:175) acknowledges the important role that traditional extended families play, stating that it is a predominant pattern in pre-industrial societies. Zastrow (2003:175) explains that the members in these types of families divide various agricultural, domestic, and other duties among themselves; thereby serving as a support network system within the family.

Van der Merwe, Swart and Hendriks (2009:125) suggest that the nature, identity and role of Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) should be considered central to the ongoing debate about the place and role of the religious sector in the sphere of social welfare and social development in South Africa. These authors are concerned that the State's expectations of the religious sector can easily lead to a situation where FBOs are drawn into the State's agenda. If that happened, it would minimize the particular character, identity and social contribution of FBOs.

6.2.3.5 Provision of social services

In line with the *Plan of Action on the Family* (African Union, 2004), the *Draft Policy* states that "social services will encompass the following: health, education and literacy training, social security and health insurance, and a focus on families with special needs" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:17). Highlighting the specific issues that are involved in programmes and activities for families in various countries, the United Nations (2001) states that the countries make an effort to enable health, education and welfare services to function more collaboratively and more effectively, with an increased emphasis on preventive measures.

6.2.3.6 Peace and security programmes

These programmes refer to safety improvement programmes for families, communities and institutions (e.g. schools) that must be developed in accordance with the strategies and principles outlined in the *Draft Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a:28).

Research discussed in the *Synthesis report on implementation of Government Programmes* (Department of Social Development, 2003) reveals that the *Community Policing Policy Framework* has had the most impact so far, as it resulted in an improved relationship between the police and communities. It is an open question whether that finding still holds true more than a decade later.

6.2.3.7 Human rights and democracy advocacy

"The principle of human rights and democracy should be learned, practised and respected first and foremost in the family. Families are best suited to undertake this task through socialisation" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:28). There is no single institution that has greater influence than the family in shaping the lives of its members and even in determining national stature (Eshleman & Bulcroft, 2010:560). Through socialisation, family members absorb the accumulated knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and values of their culture, and also learn the social and interpersonal skills they need if they are to function effectively in society (Benokraitis, 2011:6).

6.2.3.8 Linking family strengthening to the moral regeneration campaign

The moral regeneration campaign, which is at present run under the auspices of the Office of the Deputy President, must also look at strengthening and preserving families and should promote family well-being (Department of Social Development, 2008a:29). Socialisation and regulation of sexual behaviour is regarded as one of the essential functions of society that help maintain the stability of society by ensuring that family members behave within its norms (Zastrow, 2003:176).

6.2.3.9 Growing the economy and sustaining human development

The *Draft Policy* clearly stipulates that growing the economy and sustainable human development is central to the government's long-term vision and that this is related to the issue of improving the livelihoods of families. This implies that "deliberate measures by the state aimed at transforming the economy and empowering the majority of the population are critical to family strengthening and well-being" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:29). According to

Benokraitis (2011:6), the family is an economic unit that provides financial security and stability to its members through the provision of food, shelter, clothing, and other material resources that ensure the family's physical survival.

6.2.3.10 Employment creation

Employment creation is critical to South Africa's macro-economic policy, because it is vital "if poverty is to be eradicated and, more specifically, if the welfare of families in South Africa is going to be secured" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:30). A key point to note regarding the job market is that while many unskilled workers are unemployed, there is a shortage of suitably skilled workers, which is a constraint on expansion, as indicated in the *Synthesis report on implementation of Government Programmes* (Department of Social Development, 2003).

6.2.4 The fourth chapter of the *Draft Policy*

This chapter of the *Draft Policy* promotes institutional mechanisms and the implementation of a Family Policy by various stakeholders. The *Draft Policy* also advocates the co-ordination of various policies and legislation that have a bearing on the family, even though they may primarily respond to the needs of other groups. Acknowledging the complexity of implementing a policy, particularly when a number of role players are involved, Brynard (2000:177) states that "policy formation and policy implementation are inevitably the result of interactions among a plurality of separate actors with separate interests, goals and strategies". Explaining the detailed process of implementation, Dye (1998:330) says that "implementation involves all the activities designed to carry out the policies enacted by the legislative branch, which may include the creation of new organizations, departments, agencies and the assignment of new responsibilities to existing organizations".

6.2.4.1 The Monitoring and Evaluation process

The *Draft Policy* encourages the coordination of different government policies in order to "promote the strengthening of the family and engender its well-being"

(Department of Social Development, 2008a:32). From the *Draft Policy* it is clear that how effectively the policies are implemented depends on how "clearly articulated and executed [the] Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) process" is (Department of Social Development, 2008a:32). The M&E should function as "an important platform for the implementation of the family policy" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:32). According to Mamburu (2004:177), "evaluation of a policy is a process of making an assessment based on the comparison between the costs and the benefits of a policy programme with the aim of informing the policy makers of the worthwhileness of the programme".

Cloete (2000:215) says that "while a policy project or programme is being implemented, a need exists to monitor the implementation process in order to keep track of the time-frame, the spending programme, the progress towards objectives and the quality and quantity of outputs." Evaluation should be planned for during the policy design phase, as this will ensure the availability of sufficient financial resources to conduct the evaluations (Cloete, 2000:218). Rossi, Lipsey and Freeman (2004:48) advise that early in the planning process, evaluators should pay explicit attention to the nature with the following primary stakeholders:

- policy-makers and decision-makers: these are the people who must decide whether a programme should start, continue, be discontinued, expanded, restructured or curtailed;
- target participants: these are individuals, households, or other units that are the focus of the intervention or services being evaluated.
- programme managers: these are the staff who oversee and administer an intervention;
- programme staff: these are the staff who deliver a programme and services or who perform supporting roles;
- contextual stakeholders: these are "organisations, groups and individuals in the immediate environment of a programme with interests in what the programme is doing or what happens to it" (Rossi et al., 2004:48);
- the evaluation and research community: these are evaluation professionals whose task it is to read evaluations and assess their technical quality and credibility.

The *Draft Policy* sees M&E of its implementation as vital, but it does not specify which institution or stakeholders should be responsible for this task, or acknowledge clearly that financial resources are required to conduct the policy evaluation.

6.2.4.2 Policy and legislative frameworks

The overarching institutional framework that guides the implementation of South Africa's policies and legislation is the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa No. 108 of 1996* (RSA, 1996). The *Draft Policy's* central aims, namely to promote family life, as well as to strengthen the family, resonate especially with sections 26, 27, 28 and 29 of the *Constitution*. The implementation of the *Draft Policy* depends on the realization of these constitutional rights. For example, section 26 is concerned with the right to adequate housing, and section 27 enshrines the right to healthcare, food, water and social security. Sections 26 and 27 of the *Constitution* clearly stipulate that the State must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within the available resources, to achieve the progressive realization of each of these rights. However, section 28, which deals with the rights of the child, and section 29, which addresses the right to education, do not have conditions for their realization – the State must guarantee these rights.

The *Constitution* also encompasses a Bill of Rights that enshrines the socio-economic rights of the citizenry. These constitutional provisions directly influence the plight of the family and the manner in which its members contribute towards society's well-being and stability.

Other relevant policies and legislation include the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which is a major policy initiative of the government. It is defined in the *White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme* as "an integrated coherent socio-economic policy framework that seeks to mobilize the people and the country's resources towards the final eradication of the results of apartheid and the building of a democratic, non-racial and non-sexist future" (RSA,1994:6). The Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) is another relevant policy mentioned in the *Draft*

Policy. It aims at rebuilding and restructuring the economy in line with the goals of the RDP (Department of Social Development, 2008a:33-34).

As stated earlier, the *White Paper for Social Welfare* (Department of Social Development, 1997b) is the first overall social welfare policy under the 1996 *Constitution.* It confirms the government's "commitment to securing basic welfare and human rights, as well as active citizen participation in promoting human well-being" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:34). Its stated vision is to reform the apartheid era residual social welfare system and to bring it in line with the new constitutional framework and binding international law. Section 1 in Chapter 8 of the *White Paper for Social Welfare* (Department of Social Development, 1997b) focuses on the family and the life cycle (families, children, youth and ageing) and outlines strategies to promote family life, as well as to strengthen families.

6.2.4.3 The role of government departments

The *Draft Policy* clearly articulates that "implementation of the family policy will be dependent on a sound institutional framework, an active political administration and technical expertise" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:34). Government departments must "facilitate the translation of the policy's aims, objectives and strategies into actual programmes that are delivered by different stakeholders" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:34). The *Draft Policy* states that the government must

> …provide leadership in the implementation of the Family Policy, whilst also developing partnerships with the private sector and civil society. Such partnerships shall be based on an integrated approach to social service delivery. Therefore, every government department has a role to play in the strengthening of families and in promoting the well-being of families. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:34)

Among other departments mentioned in the *Draft Policy* is the Department of Social Development itself, which considered pivotal to the implementation of the Family Policy and is the lead department which will coordinate programmes that meet the needs of families (Department of Social Development, 2008a:35).

Mamburu (2004:155) notes that public officials are the most effective role-players in the policy-making process, because they are in a position to identify community problems and translate them into policy statements. Fox, Schwella and Wissink (1991:38) also acknowledge the important role of public officials, indicating that "public officials render two types of policy making, namely, internal policies which are concerned with the internal running of their departments and the external policies which concern problems of the communities".

The role played by elected political office-bearers or the legislature in the policy making process is highlighted by Meyer and Cloete (2000:102), who specify that elected representatives receive a mandate from the electorate to shape and give content to policies. These authors explain that political leaders tend to use public speeches, media debates or political campaigns to raise policy issues. IN South Africa, with regard to family issues, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk was appointed by Cabinet as one of presidential organizations to investigate problems in the child and youth care system and formulate a policy proposal (Gray & Sewpaul, 1998:12).

6.2.4.4 The role of social service practitioners

The specific roles of various professionals are acknowledged in the *Draft Policy*, which states that the "family policy shall also be implemented by various professionals that are accountable to the state with regard to families" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:41).

Social service practitioners, which include

> …[s]ocial workers, social auxiliary workers, child care workers, youth workers and community development practitioners are central to the implementation of the Family Policy through their work with families and their members by providing, among other things, psychosocial support, counselling, referrals, child protection services, social security and social development services. They shall essentially be working in an integrated manner as they deliver social services to families. They shall also help to link family members to community resources and other social services. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:41)

- 131 -

Other professionals mentioned in the *Draft Policy* include psychologists, psychiatrists, lawyers, medical and health practitioners, safety and security personnel, economists, labour specialists and policy analysts (Department of Social Development, 2008a:41-43). Meyer and Cloete (2000:102) explain that career public managers also play an important role, as they are appointed officials who are both "receivers and manufacturers of policy problems because they have considerable power to determine what goes into the policy agenda."

6.2.4.5 The role of volunteers and the community

The important role of volunteers is specifically recognised by the *Draft Policy*:

> Volunteers have a critical role in implementing the family policy. Already, the bulk of activities which are family-oriented, such as home-based care for those who are afflicted by HIV/AIDS or care for orphans and other vulnerable persons are all being undertaken by volunteers. The role of volunteers will be supported by government and taken as critical in the raising of the quality of life of families and their members. Therefore, resources shall be marshalled by the government in order to make the work of these individuals more effective. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:43)

Community participation in the policy process can be achieved through the direct involvement of ordinary members of the community, who can be referred to as volunteers, and leaders of legitimate organizations in the community (Meyer & Cloete, 2000:105).

6.2.4.6 The role of civil society

The *Draft Policy* states:

> Government, through its various departments, for example the National Department of Social Development, has already established working partnerships with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). It works in partnership with NGOs, FBOs, the business sector, organised labour, CBOs and other role-players in the spirit of *Batho Pele* (People First), so as to build a better society. […] Civil society therefore becomes an important intermediary in the light of government public policy and an important avenue for the articulation of the family policy. (Department of Social Development, 2008a:43)

It is progressive and realistic for the *Draft Policy* to particularly mention and appreciate the partnerships with civil society, because these organizations play a crucial role in the development and implementation of policies. Meyer and Cloete (2000:101) refer to the elite theory; they mention that those with money, knowledge, skills and resources have more leverage and bargaining power in influencing the government with regard to policy issues. These authors also acknowledge the role of interest groups: they have collective strength and the capacity to mobilise their members as they increasingly play a larger role in shaping the public agenda.

6.2.5   Conclusion on the *Draft Policy*

The *Draft Policy* arose out of a need to address family disintegration which was mainly caused by structural factors. The fact that there was no existing policy that specifically addresses the needs of families in South Africa was perceived as a policy gap by the Department of Social Development and its stakeholders. As a result, the *Draft Policy* was developed. There are a number of important issues that are addressed in this policy, namely programmes and actions which are actual interventions recommended by the policy. The intervention that is most relevant to this study is enhancing family resilience and family preservation, which is regarded as initiatives by both the state and civil society that focus on children and families facing severe challenges (Department of Social Development, 2008a). The *Draft Policy* is forward-looking in valuing the partnership of civil society in effective service delivery, although it is not clear whether resources are suitably channelled from both sides to promote that partnership.

6.3   THE *MANUAL ON FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES*

The *Manual* stipulates that "this manual replaces all previous manuals developed from 1997/1998" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:ii).

In its introduction, the *Manual* states that its aim is

> …to train social service professionals to deliver services to families from a family preservation perspective and this perspective implies working with families from a strength-based approach, in order to keep families together as far as possible. (Department of Social Development, 2008b:ii)

The second aim of the *Manual* is

> …to promote family preservation services on all levels of service delivery, namely prevention, early intervention, statutory intervention, aftercare and reunification. (Department of Social Development, 2008b:ii)

The *Manual* consists of **eight modules and three annexures** which are also referred to as family preservation tools. The modules and annexures are structured as follows:

- **Module 1:** Orientation to family preservation
- **Module 2:** Situational analysis of families in South Africa
- **Module 3:** Family preservation services
- **Module 4:** The collaborative model
- **Module 5:** Services on four levels
- **Module 6**: Developmental assessment (risks and strengths) and identifying resilient factors that lead to family empowerment
- **Module 7:** Family developmental plans
- **Module 8:** Engaging with families, cultural competency and teaching families new skills
- **Annexure A**: Family Group Conferencing
- **Annexure B:** Community conferencing / mobilisation
- **Annexure C:** The Youth Mentorship Model

The outlined modules and annexures are individually discussed below.

6.3.1 Module 1: Orientation to family preservation

The module commences by defining the concept of "family" and its key features. It adopts the definition mentioned in the *Draft Policy,* of a family as "a group of

persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, adoption, or cohabitation […], characterised by a common residence [or not], interact and communicate with one another" in their respective family roles, "maintain a common culture and are governed by family rules" (Department of Social Development, 2008a:16, 2008b:5).

According to Benokraitis (2011:4), a family is "an intimate group of two or more people who live together in a committed relationship, care for one another and any children, and share activities and close emotional ties". The author also explains that at times it may seem unnecessary to define a family, but its meaning differs from one group of people to another and the definitions have both political and economic consequences.

Twelve types of families are mentioned in the module in the *Manual*, as opposed to 14 that are identified in the *Draft Policy*. The types that are excluded are migrant and refugee families, as well as a family made up of siblings only (Department of Social Development, 2008b:6). The module makes a distinction between well-functioning and dysfunctional families. It defines well-functioning families as those that are "psycho-socially and emotionally stable" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:6). Dysfunctional families are defined as the families who "cannot effectively fulfil their roles and responsibilities towards their members and such as families at risk, families in crises and families in transition" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:7).

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:11) acknowledge that all families, regardless of lifestyle, inevitably face serious problems or crises at some point in their life cycle. Indeed, most families become "temporarily dysfunctional in response to persistent stress while some have learned to call upon certain internal assets and strengths, allowing them to rebound from adversity" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:11). The researcher appreciates the more nuanced use of the term "dysfunctional" by Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:11) than in the *Manual*. The authors use this term to refer to the *situation* of the family, rather than to define the *family* itself. The *Manual* refers to "dysfunctional families", which can be seen

as labelling, therefore undermining the potential of a family to overcome its challenges in the future.

The module then focuses on defining family preservation. It states that family preservation services refer to all services to families, focusing on family strengths. It defines family preservation as a movement, an approach, a philosophy, a perspective and a strategy. According to Strydom (2010:192), "family preservation is a strategy to empower families to enhance the optimal development of children and to prevent the statutory removal of children from their families". According to a study on the *Review of Family Preservation and Family Reunification Programs* done by Westat, Inc. et al. (1995), the term "family preservation" has been used to describe a variety of programmes intended to provide services to children and families experiencing serious problems.

The following family preservation core beliefs are highlighted in the *Manual* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:11; cited verbatim)

- families are resilient;
- keeping families together;
- families have the ability to change;
- respecting the family;
- a crisis is an opportunity for change;
- families are partners; and
- the safety of all family members is of paramount importance.

These core beliefs seem to identify the strengths and potential of the family well, but the fragments "keeping families together" (the second bullet) and "respecting the family" (the fourth bullet) appear to refer to actions, rather than beliefs (the remainder of the bullets are phrased as short sentences). This may seem like a mere stylistic problem (not maintaining parallel structure in a bulleted list), but it may cause confusion to the implementers of this *Manual* if described (in the current form) as "beliefs". It would be better to rephrase as "families should be kept together" and "the family should be respected", respectively.

The module also discusses the principles and values of family preservation which are the following – family preservation should be

> …family-centred; child-centred; participation; integration; empower-ment; effective and efficient; appropriateness; cultural competence; building on strengths of families; fostering families' resourcefulness; flexibility; and *ubuntu*. (Department of Social Development, 2008b:12)

Again, parallel structure in terms of grammatical form is not maintained in the list, switching between participial forms, adjectives and nouns. This makes the points difficult to follow.

The *Manual* lists the following aims of family preservation (Department of Social Development, 2008b:15; cited verbatim):

- keeping families together;
- reunifying family members with their families;
- improving the well-being of family members, specifically children, youth and vulnerable family members in their families and communities;
- supporting the strengthening of families to fulfil their responsibilities;
- keeping families as primary caregivers of children; and
- working with families at risk so as to prevent the removal and out-of-home placement of family members.

The *Manual* refers to the above-mentioned as the specific "aims" of the family preservation approach, but the list is introduced with the confusing phrase "family preservation advocates for". This wording does not make it clear whether family preservation actually aims to do this, or merely advocates for this. By comparison, Tracy (1995:973) mentions the following primary goals of family preservation services (cited verbatim):

- to allow children to remain safely in their own homes;
- to maintain and strengthen family bonds;
- to stabilize the crisis situation that precipitated the need for placement;
- to increase the family's coping skills and competencies; and
- to facilitate the family's use of appropriate formal and informal helping resources.

The need for family preservation services in South Africa is discussed in the *Manual,* which attributes this need to the social ills affecting families, such as

poverty, unemployment and HIV/AIDS, among others. South Africa's legislative framework is itemised in the module as vital for the contextualisation of family preservation. Lastly, the module discusses a paradigm shift in the context of family preservation, in that services to families should move from a rescue-intervention approach or deficit-based approach to a strength-based approach. This is in line with an explanation by DeFrain and Assay (2007:1), who state that "most of the research on families, historically speaking, has focused primarily on the problems or weaknesses of families".2702

6.3.2 Module 2: Situational analysis of families in South Africa

This module discusses various challenges facing South African families. It points out that whilst the family can be considered the most important unit for offering family members stability and a secure environment, families are facing a variety of challenges that do not guarantee the well-being of family members. These challenges are discussed below in relation to the literature:

- "Increasingly, more and more families are living in poverty" and the communities are drained of resources to provide support to these families (Department of Social Development, 2008b:32). According to the United Nations (2001), fighting poverty is one of the most important tasks of governments to improve quality of life for underprivileged families. The United Nations (2001) list income support schemes, income maintenance programmes and increases in social welfare benefits as the cornerstones in effectively assisting families experiencing economic hardship. For individuals and families, living in poverty means adjusting to conditions that offer very few opportunities for escaping their socio-economic context, or achieving even minimal personal or family goals (Eshleman & Bulcroft, 2010:169).

- "Family life has become increasingly diverse and complex, leaving families vulnerable to different forms of stress" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:30). Benokraitis (2011:16) argues that many people have become pessimistic because of changes in families, which include high rates of divorce, unprecedented numbers of single-parent families and a decline of parenting authority in the home. Zastrow (2003:175), who also acknowledges the great diversity in marital arrangements and family forms, notes that there

are increasing numbers of transracial marriages, marriages between spouses of diverse ages and cultural backgrounds, single-parent families and blended families.

- "The HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa has had an enormous impact on family life, resulting in families being vulnerable" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:30). The literature also recognises that families, including children, are threatened by the rising incidence of HIV infections (Benokraitis, 2011:197)

- "There is no adequate system that protects family members from abuse (in the family and community) and the interventions that tend to disrupt family life, such as the removal of family members, are more readily available than those that are aimed at prevention and early intervention" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:30). This statement is borne out by Strydom's (2010:194) comment that "family preservation services in South Africa are being delivered in an inverse order to what is recommended by policy documents, meaning that the focus is still on statutory services instead of on preventative services".

- "There is tremendous strain on the service delivery system, especially with regard to a lack of adequate resources to deal with the complex problems facing families" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:30). The system is under strain especially because of a serious shortage of trained social workers, resulting in overloaded human resources. Strydom (2010:195) also points out that a shortage of social workers and inadequate resources in the communities hamper service delivery.

Other factors that influence and impact on family life mentioned in this module include crime, child abuse and neglect, substance abuse, domestic violence, mortality, urbanization and migration.

6.3.3 Module 3: Family preservation services

This module starts by recapping the aims of family preservation which were also mention in Module 1 (Department of Social Development, 2008b:42; cited verbatim):

- Keep families together and safe.
- Provide support mechanisms to families in order to be well-functioning and self-reliant.
- Keep families as the primary caregiver of family members.
- Improve the well-being of family members in their families and communities.
- Work with families at risk to prevent the removal of family members from the home.
- Support the strengths of families – improve the functioning of families so that the behaviour that led to crisis is less likely to occur again.
- Reunify families and family members who have been removed at some point.

Some wording has been changed and some words have been added, compared to the aims as listed in Module 1. For example, in the first bullet the words "and safe" are not mentioned in Module 1 but have been added here. In the third bullet, the word "children" (in Module 1) has been replaced by "family members". The second bullet has been added in this module and is not in Module 1. The dual listing of aims in different places and with different wording may cause some confusion among the implementers of this *Manual*, and this needs to be addressed in some form.

In discussing the characteristics of family preservation services, the module mentions the first family preservation programme developed in South Africa, as described by Wilson (1998). The programme had elements of an intense family support programme:

- it worked only with families facing the imminent removal of a family member;
- services were delivered directly in the home where possible;
- the programme was crisis-oriented; and
- families could make use of flexible hours, as services were delivered seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Instead of this type of programme, the module recommends that family preservation services be delivered on all levels of service delivery, namely prevention, early intervention, statutory intervention, and reunification and aftercare. This implies that family preservation services should focus not only on

families in crisis situations, but rather on all families. Elements of family preservation services at all levels highlight a holistic, integrated approach (Department of Social Development, 2008b:43; cited verbatim) – what is required is

- Holistic developmental assessment of the family to ensure appropriate services and programmes for the family in accordance with the family life cycle.
- Holistic developmental services to families with the family as the focal point for service delivery.
- Integrated service delivery to the family with stakeholders utilising the collaborative model.

McCroskey and Meezan (1998:62) suggest that family preservation can be divided into two basic programme types, namely rehabilitative family preservation services and intensive family preservation services. These authors explain some of the differences between these two programmes: in rehabilitative services, social workers first assess the family and its support systems and then develop a service plan with the family, whereas in an intensive family preservation programme, social workers first focus more on the family's immediate problems and then provide more intensive help to address these problems.

The difference between the family preservation programme described by Wilson (1998) and the one recommended by the *Manual* is that while an intense family support programme is target-specific, only concentrating on a few families whose members are on the verge of being removed from their care, the *Manual* advocates for a "holistic" and inclusive approach to family preservation services. This is ambiguous, as it may refer to holistic and inclusive services to the target family/families, or it may refer to more inclusive services to all families. The latter concept is appealing because it implies that more families would receive services than a limited number, but such an approach would require more resources if it is to be implemented effectively.

The difficulty of broader implementation is confirmed by Strydom (2010:197) in her study on the implementation of family preservation services. In discussing the delivery of family preservation in South Africa, Strydom identifies a shortage of social workers, insufficient funds for initiating projects, limited vehicles to do home

visits in the organizations, and insufficient resources in the communities as some of the obstacles that hamper the implementation of family preservations services.

The module distinguishes between family preservation services on the different levels of service delivery, referring to them as a framework of services (Department of Social Development, 2008b:44; cited verbatim):

- Preventative level: empowerment and support programmes
- Early intervention level (non-statutory services): intense family support programmes
- Statutory level: residential / alternative care / incarceration / rehabilitation / diversion options for persons in conflict with the law
- Aftercare and reunification level: family reunification for families and aftercare services for support to the family

The *Manual* stresses that services delivered to a family can be on one level, but can also cut across to two or more levels of service delivery. According to Strydom (2010:192), in order to avoid the removal of the children from the family and ensure the implementation of developmental social services, the focus of social workers should be on prevention services first, then on early intervention services and only as a last resort on statutory services.

The third module again discusses principles underpinning service delivery to families in depth, and the content is not very different from the principles and values of family preservation services discussed in Module 1. This repetition with minor variation can also cause some confusion among implementers, particularly because no explanation is given for the repetition, and there is only a slight difference in the content.

The module concludes by separating the facts from the myths about family preservation. For example, one of the myths mentioned is that "family preservation services endanger the lives of family members by leaving vulnerable family members at home in abusive situations" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:49). The response to the myth is that, in fact, "vulnerable family members particularly children are placed at the centre of service delivery and risk assessment is conducted to ensure that no harm will come to any member of the family while services are rendered". The need to overcome such

myths is clear from Kelly and Blythe's (2000:32) statement that "some professionals have been wondering if they could provide adequate safety by removing the risks rather than removing children and that has led to lot of criticism of the family preservation services".

6.3.4 Module 4: The collaborative model

The fourth module explains that the collaborative model that is used in family preservation services is about "making use of combined strengths to ensure that the provision of services to families utilises a variety of expertise and skills to benefit the families receiving the services" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:60). It also emphasises that the provision of effective family preservation services calls for "professional collective behaviour, which means that professionals need to work together to provide a comprehensive and holistic service" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:60). This is in line with Gockel et al.'s (2008:94) argument that although the core service in family preservation is usually delivered through home visits with professional counsellors, programmes may include referrals to other community-based services as part of an integrated intervention, making use of available professional collective expertise.

According to the *Manual*, the collaborative model "reflects the integrated approach whereby service providers should holistically deliver services to families, but intrinsically also refers to the family as surrounded by its close support networks, embedded in the safety net of the community and broader society" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:60). With regard to the various needs of families, Zastrow (2003:177) points out that it is impossible for a single social worker to provide all the services needed by a family. This implies that the expertise of other professionals may be needed, and then the social worker involved should guide the family in using such professionals' services.

The module concludes by giving a background on the origin of the collaborative model. It explains that it was born out of the vision of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) for Young People at Risk that children and their families are valued, and contributes to a caring and healthy society. The collaborative model

therefore looks beyond the nuclear family, as it includes the extended family system, as well as the role of the community in supporting families at risk. According to Gray and Sewpaul (1998:19), the IMC was constituted at a time when the government in South Africa was exerting a great deal of pressure on the child and youth care system to deal with an unanticipated crisis following the uncoordinated release from prison of 2000 juveniles who were awaiting trial for a variety of crimes. These authors mention that this Committee involved various sectors, including the Ministries of Welfare, Education, Correctional Services, Police Services, Justice, Health and the RDP. It becomes clear therefore that the collaborative model was born out of the participation of various experts with the common goal of transforming the child and youth care system in South Africa.

6.3.5 Module 5: Services on four levels

The module starts off by looking at a number of models, and then comments on strategies, services and programmes, as discussed below.

6.3.5.1 Family life cycle model

According to the Department of Social Development (2008b:70), the family life cycle model permits a "comprehensive analysis of life events, family crises, processes and challenges relating to age, gender, roles and responsibilities of each family member", and the family as a whole. In the *Manual*, this is a preferred model because it promotes the creation and understanding of an ideal, "desirable progression through life's stages and the provision of services and resources that are appropriate for specific developmental stages and ages of the members of the family" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:70).

According to McGoldrick et al. (2011:1), "human development takes shape as it moves and evolves through the matrix of the family life cycle, embedded in the larger socio-cultural context". In essence therefore, the authors advise that the family life cycle and the larger social context in which the family is embedded are the natural framework on which to focus our understanding of individual identity and development. Discussing the family development perspective, Benokraitis (2011:36) states that the family life cycle model examines the changes that

families experience over their lifetimes, claiming that it is the only theoretical perspective that emerged out of a specific interest in families and still focuses exclusively on the family rather than the relationships in unmarried couples.

6.3.5.2 Developmental approach

The *Manual* indicates that "[s]ervice delivery to families need to be redesigned according to the socio-economic development of the family and its members" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:71). Patel et al. (2012:5) define developmental social welfare as a "pro-poor strategy promoting participation of the socially excluded in development activities to achieve social and economic justice, a partnership approach to social development, social solidarity and active social citizenship". The Department of Social Development (2005) published an *Integrated Service Delivery Model* that provides guidelines for the service delivery model. This *Integrated Service Delivery Model* (Department of Social Development, 2005:5) explains that a developmental approach is "based on the strengths of the individual, group or community, and that it recognizes the capacity for growth and development".

6.3.5.3 Family preservation approach

The *Manual* states:

> All services/programmes to families should be directed at family preservation – strengthening families to keep them together as far as possible and for as long as possible. Family preservation services should consider the resources of families and social networks, for example the extended family and the costs they bear in supporting and caring for family members and meeting their needs. Family reunification services should be prioritized in cases of inevitable removal of family members, especially in foster care placement and residential care. (Department of Social Development, 2008b:71)

According to Cash (2001:43), the development of intensive family preservation services represents a shift from protecting children by removing them from their parents' homes to changing the family dynamics into a safe environment for children at risk to grow up in, whenever possible. Strydom (2010:192) sees family preservation as a "strategy to empower families to enhance the optimal development of children".

- 145 -

6.3.5.4 Integrated approach

The *Manual* comments on the integration of services as follows:

> Services to families should be rendered in an integrated and holistic manner. This should express itself through service delivery plans which reflect partnerships amongst government departments and between the government and civil society. The integrated approach will promote services to families that are rendered by a multi-disciplinary team to individual family members and are family-focussed for a more sustained and greater impact on the needs of families and communities. (Department of Social Development, 2008b:72)

The *White Paper for Social Welfare* (1997) emphasises the importance of this approach, as it states that its mission is "to serve and build a self-reliant nation in partnership with all stakeholders through an integrated social welfare system which maximizes its existing potential, and which is equitable sustainable, accessible, people-centred and developmental". The *Integrated Service Delivery Model* (Department of Social Development, 2005:2) indicates that a developmental framework requires interrelated, intersectoral and integrated service delivery from the various sectors and government departments involved – for the implementation of such a framework to be successful, this collaboration and coordination must be underpinned by the attitudes and values of the developmental approach.

6.3.5.5 Key strategies

The Module then lists, without any introductory discussion, the following key strategies or programmes and actions (some are different from the Policy), as appropriate ways to address the vulnerabilities of families (Department of Social Development, 2008b:73; cited verbatim):

- Poverty alleviations
- Access of families to essential resource and needs-based services
- Control the main causes of morbidity and mortality with special focus on families infected/affected by HIV and AIDS
- Programmes to promote responsibilities of family members and the family
- Programmes to protect the family and its members
- Strengthen family relationships

- Promoting environmental sustainability
- Promoting peace and security.

This listing is again a confusing mix of noun phrases ("poverty alleviation", "access of…", "programmes…") and calls to action starting with verbs ("control…" and "strengthen…") or participles ("promoting…").

6.3.5.6 Services and programmes for families

The module specifically gives clarity with regard to family preservation services and programmes delivered on different levels as follows:

- **Prevention:**

  This refers to promoting functionality and preventing dysfunctionality and vulnerability. Such services include "marriage preparation and marriage enrichment programmes, parenting skills programmes, communication skills programmes and skills development programmes" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:74).

- **Early intervention:**

  This refers to "intense family support services which focus on families where there is imminent risk of removal of family members" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:75). Such services include "family therapy, marriage counselling programmes, diversion programmes, out-patient programmes for substance abuse and mental health problems, behavioural therapeutic programmes and psycho-therapeutic services" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:75).

- **Statutory intervention:**

  If prevention and early intervention services do not manage to resolve the challenges of the families at risk, statutory intervention should take place. The courts should assist in the placement of family members while reunification services are delivered to a family.

- **Aftercare and reunification:**

  This refers to services delivered after the finalisation of the statutory process and placement of the family member in alternative care. Phases of the family reunification process are discussed in detail in this module.

The prior *Integrated Service Delivery Model* (Department of Social Development, 2005:18) listed four levels of service delivery, namely (1) prevention, (2) early intervention, (3) statutory intervention, and (4) reconstruction and aftercare. This model sees these levels of intervention as crucial in achieving improved social functioning, as clients may enter the system at any of the levels. Strydom (2010:193) also refers to various policy documents that encourage social workers to focus first on preventative services, then on early intervention services and only as a last resort on statutory services.

6.3.6 Module 6: Developmental assessment (risk and strengths) and identifying resilient factors that lead to family empowerment

This module emphasises the importance of assessment, which forms the "foundation of family preservation work at all levels of service delivery" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:94). It explains that "a holistic, developmental assessment of the family is the first step in family preservation services and this assessment will guide the multi-professional team regarding what services the family requires and whose responsibility each service is" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:94). The family is regarded as a critical team member in the assessment in this module from the start. This sends a message to the family that their active involvement and participation in the process is essential.

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:65) believe that assessment has to be done throughout family counselling – it enables counsellors to broaden their understanding, to develop, adjust, and reject hypotheses, and then to undertake suitable interventions based on progressively refined appraisals of the family. Lerner (2011:440) refers to the family life cycle model as "an important framework in assessing families", because this framework helps therapists to "locate the points at which the chronic background anxiety in a family is likely to coincide with the acute stress of navigating a current life cycle transition".

The goal of a developmental assessment, according to this module in the *Manual* is to "determine the least restrictive, most empowering environment, and programmes and resources suitable to the family at a given moment during the

intervention process and/or in the long term" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:95). According to Zastrow (2003:63), extensive knowledge of human behaviour and the social environment is needed to achieve a high degree of accuracy in assessing the problems that occur in a particular client system.

6.3.6.1 Phases in the developmental assessment process

The module highlights the following phases in the developmental assessment process (Department of Social Development, 2008b:94; cited verbatim):

- Engaging with the family: it is important that all members of the professional team establish trust and a rapport (relationship) with the family for the family to feel emotionally, physically and socially safe with the team.
- Assessing the family: it is important to be aware that assessment ends only once it has been documented and a developmental plan to address the assessed needs has been implemented and evaluated. Two aspects are involved in the assessment, namely 1) risks and challenges facing the family; and 2) strengths of the family in order to enhance and build on them.
- Developmental plan (family plan): the developmental family plan needs to be implementable and be evaluated regularly. The assessment process itself can be a developmental or therapeutic tool in establishing a relationship with the family.
- Disengagement or referral: how the family preservation team (multi-professional) disengages with a family is just as critical as how they engage with them. The family needs to be assured that care and protection will continue after the termination of a specific programme and that the family will either be referred to a more or lesser restrictive programme, as necessary.

Zastrow (2003:82) lists three forms of social work interviews, namely "informational or social history interviews, and assessments to arrive at an appraisal, and therapeutic interviews", which are meant to help clients to change. The *Learner Manual: Safety and Risk Assessment of Children in the Field of Child Protection Services* (Department of Social Development, 2012:19) describes assessment as a "process and a product". The *Learner Manual* adds that as a process, assessment means collecting, analysing and synthesising information to "provide a concise picture of people's needs and strengths, within their unique circumstances". As a product, assessment results in an actual

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formulation or statement regarding the nature of a person's circumstances and other related factors at a given time.

The phases in the developmental assessment processes mentioned in this module seem to go beyond the assessment process, as they include intervention and termination. This module rather seems to provide a simplified paradigm of the problem-solving process as a whole, which involves assessment, intervention, termination and evaluation (Zastrow, 2003:58).

6.3.6.2 Risk assessment of families

The module recommends that a risk assessment of the family and each family member be conducted as soon as possible to "ensure that the safety of each family member is considered as first priority when engaging the family in any family preservation programme, irrespective of the level of the programme" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:95). Family risk factors include (Department of Social Development, 2008b:97; cited verbatim):

- Parental attitudes and behaviours
- Family management of conflict and other behaviours
- Family relationship issues
- Inadequate parental care / parent absenteeism
- Parental neglect
- Abusive parents

According to the *Learner Manual: Safety and Risk Assessment of Children in the Field of Child Protection Services*, risk refers to the "estimated likelihood of future child maltreatment that may stem from the characteristics, behaviour or functioning or the family, and/or environmental conditions" (Department of Social Development, 2012:18). The *Learner Manual* claims that there is a risk of maltreatment in every family, and it presents itself on a continuum from low to high risk.

6.3.6.3 Assessment of family strengths

The module describes assessing family strengths as considering the behaviours of the family and identifying areas of particular strength. The strengths of any family are said to" lie in the strengths of its members, as well as in the inter-

relationships within the family and the intra-relationships with its social support networks" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:104). Family strengths include "capacities, dreams and family vision, skills within the family, talents and abilities" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:104).

The *Integrated Service Delivery Model* (Department of Social Development, 2005:13) states that a developmental approach is based on identifying the strengths of the individuals, groups, or communities, and also in promoting their capacity for growth and development. Zastrow (2003:60) claims that it is essential that "social workers include clients' strengths in the assessment process". Lombard (2008:158) comments that "providing social developmental services is challenging, because the developmental approach advocates using strengths, asset-based and non-discriminatory approaches".

Risk and strength assessment templates are attached in the *Manual* for easy reference, explaining in detail the domains of both the risk and strength factors mentioned above. However, these templates seem to be designed as checklists, rather than as comprehensive tools, as they lack detailed indicator descriptions of both risks and strengths.

6.3.6.4 Resilience in families

The module states that a clear "understanding of the risk factors and identified strengths in a family can assist in developing the resilience capacity of the family" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:117). Resiliency or "protective" factors are defined in this module as "factors that shield or protect family members from the negative effects of risk factors or adversities families have to face" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:117). Resiliency factors are said to include "good verbal and communication skills, ability to control one's emotions, healthy attitudes towards alcohol and drugs, [a] sense of well-being, and sense of responsibility" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:117).

Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:2) define resilient families as follows:

> These families, regardless of the type and number of problems they encounter, they are more competent, showing greater recuperative ability despite misfortune, more flexible, more collaborative,

- 151 -

adaptive to changing external conditions, purposeful in pursuing satisfaction for all members and in successfully carrying out developmental tasks.

DeFrain and Assay (2007:1) also point out characteristics that define resilient families, which include "showing appreciation and affection, commitment, positive communication, enjoyable times together and spiritual well-being".

6.3.7 Module 7: Family developmental plans

The *Manual* defines a family developmental plan as an "agreement that is reached between the family, other significant systems and the service providers, and forms the basis for the delivery of services on all levels of service delivery" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:127). A family developmental plan serves the following purposes (Department of Social Development, 2008b:127; cited verbatim):

- A quality plan helps the family, the service providers and the larger system to agree on services that need to be rendered.
- It helps to obtain a commitment from all, as it clarifies and builds mutual understanding.
- It helps to minimize miscommunication; if there is no planning, it is unlikely that there will be a proper path towards achieving the desired outcomes.
- A quality plan helps to establish where the family is in working towards the objectives and the goals set for the developmental plan and the service delivery process.

The module emphasises that "family development plans need to be value-based, and should involve mutuality, participation, team work, empowerment, self-determination, integrity and acceptance" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:128).

According to Zastrow (2003:88), note-taking is an integral part of counselling because social workers need notes to refresh their memory of past interviews, to record contracts made with clients, record what has been done or left undone and also share important facts with colleagues.

The *Manual* also provides a format for developing family developmental plans that can be used by service providers.

6.3.8 Module 8: Engaging with families, cultural competency and teaching families new skills

6.3.8.1 Engaging with families

The *Manual* refers to engagement as the "initial establishment of a relationship when the service provider initiates contact with a family" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:149). This is also "a process when families and service providers work together on mutually agreed upon goals and objectives" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:149). The most critical steps, according to the *Manual*, when engaging with families and their members include "planning to engage; establishing relationships; empowering family; and identifying and meeting the needs of the family" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:150).

The process of engaging with the family does not appear to be different from the assessment process discussed in Module 6.

6.3.8.2 Cultural competency

According to the *Manual*, cultural competency refers to the "ability of an individual to fully understand what other cultures are about and why people from a different culture may act and think differently" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:169). Service providers are advised to be culturally competent in order to respect the values and traditions of families, and be able to work effectively in cross-cultural situations. Cultural competence is also seen as a "learning process which starts with a recognition that each culture carries its own distinct symbols, traditions, and even behaviours" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:169). The following specific steps to acquire cultural competency are listed (Department of Social Development, 2008b:170; cited verbatim):

- Understand your own cultural heritage
- Use people as resources

- Understand diversity
- Explore blind spots
- Observe and appreciate
- Use …social and educational resources
- Design a personal growth plan

The module recommends that service providers engage appropriately with families, demonstrating a sense of cultural competence in their work with families.

In this regard, Zastrow (2003:281) advises that "workers need to understand how their own professional actions contribute to social and economic injustice in the world and especially for those who are at risk because of their culture". The author further explains that it has long been asserted that similar needs exist in all cultures, but how those needs are moulded and shaped is culturally relative. Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:357) also point out that over several decades, a number of authors have stressed that power in families is not based merely on comparative resources, but also on the cultural context of norms within which spouses bargain for power within families.

6.3.8.3 Teaching families new skills

The family preservation approach supports the argument that families are able to learn alternative and new ways to do things (Department of Social Development, 2008b:179). The approach relies on the underlying assumption that family members do in fact "want the best for one another" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:179). According to the *Manual,* teaching new skills or enhancing existing skills involves the following steps (Department of Social Development, 2008b:179; cited verbatim):

- Creating an atmosphere that is conducive for learning.
- Assessing the family's learning needs.
- Planning and contracting with the family in the learning process.
- Using a variety of teaching methods, for example problem-solving, behavioural management, teaching self-care and relaxation, assertiveness training, and modelling skills.
- Developing the new skills and offering support during the learning process.

- Enhancing existing skills so as to strengthen the resources in the family.
- Teaching skills to or enhancing the skills of a family […] based on a core set of values, namely trust, [a] non-judgemental attitude, respect, mutuality, teamwork and empowerment.

In respect of teaching new skills, a United Nations (2001) report on eight countries states that skills modules usually cover areas such as communication within families, health, parenting and childhood care. In particular, regarding family preservation services, McCroskey and Meezan (1998:62) mention that social workers usually provide a wide range of services which include case management, behaviour modelling and parent education. However, it is important to note what Hurley et al. (2012:1004) say about teaching families new skills: family preservation practitioners do not teach parents new skills in classrooms, but rather model and apply the use of cognitive-behavioural methods in real-life settings such as the home, car or shopping mall.

6.3.9 Annexure A: Family Group Conferencing

Family preservation has taken on board the Family Group Conferencing approach as its "strategy for entry into services to families at all levels of service delivery" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:198). The *Manual* describes Family Group Conferencing "as a decision-making process that is used in any circumstance where there is a need for service to individual family members with the family as focal point for service delivery" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:198).

Crampton (2004:175) states that "the use of Family Group Conferencing and related family involvement interventions in child protection is a rapidly growing practice" around the world. This author further explains that the approach can be "used to place children with their extended family or possibly into formal foster care" when required. Stages of Family Group Conferencing include the reception stage, setting the stage, conducting the conference, a private family conference (giving family time alone to deliberate on issues), ratifying and finalising the plan, closure and celebration.

6.3.10 Annexure B: Community conferencing/mobilisation

In this *Manual*, community conferencing and mobilisation are referred to as

> …a family preservation strategy designed to bring about community efforts to address the needs of families and their members. It is said to be underpinned by a collaborative effort, diverse individuals, groups, service providers, community leaders, professionals, para-professionals and volunteers in the community. The aim of this strategy is to create safe communities where children and other family members can thrive and develop into productive members of society. (Department of Social Development, 2008b:210)

In the contexts of the USA, Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:65) state that communities, particularly rural communities, often exhibit high levels of involvement in all institutions such as families, church, schools and voluntary organizations, resulting in high levels of personal bonds. This may also apply to South African communicates to some extent. Zastrow (2003:227) also stipulates that community change can best be brought about through broad-based participation by a wide spectrum of people at the local community level.

The *Manual* refers to community conferencing as a

> process which involves different stages and milestones, namely building a vision, creating trust amongst partners, conducting community assessment, developing strategic community plans, taking action, evaluating the process, and maintaining momentum. (Department of Social Development, 2008b:211)

6.3.11 Annexure C: The Youth Mentorship Model

The Youth Mentorship Model involves carefully selecting and training young adults "to be mentors for young people in the community to assist service providers at all levels of service delivery" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:230). The model is based on the belief that "positive development occurs through a reciprocal and dynamic interaction between the young person and the environment in which he or she lives" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:230). Based on similar principles, South African Youth Education for Sustainability (2008) runs youth mentoring programmes, focusing on filling the gap between children's homes and independent living by means of a one-to-one,

person-centred strength-based mentoring programme. The mentors in this programme include business people, lecturers, bankers and housewives who give an hour of their time each week for a year to participate in the programme. The Heartlines Youth Mentors Programme (2008) also empowers individual people in communities with tools and networks to become effective mentors.

The *Manual* recommends that youth mentors be able to display the following competencies (Department of Social Development, 2008b:240; cited verbatim):

- Understand and identify risk factors in different domains
- Understand youth development and the challenges of growth
- Be respectful and sensitive to cultures of young people and their families
- Work closely with parents
- Foster inter-sectoral collaborations to address the needs of young people
- Possess individual counselling skills, as well as group and community facilitation skills
- Form partnerships with young people
- Have knowledge of youth serving programmes in the community.

6.4   CONCLUSION

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* was developed by the Department of Social Development in 2008 to train social service professionals to deliver services to families from a family preservation perspective, bearing in mind the *Draft Policy* (as discussed in Section 6.2, above). The *Manual* contains valuable information which can assist social service professionals to deliver family preservation services in different levels. However, the limitations with regard to some aspects of the *Manual*, as discussed above, may lead to ineffective execution of family preservation services if they are not addressed. The experiences of the participants in this study regarding the value and the limitations of the *Manual* were explored in an empirical study, as discussed in Chapters 7 and 8.

CHAPTER 7:
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study analyses the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* which was developed by the Department of Social Development in 2008 and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of this *Manual*.

Helton and Jackson (1997:142) describe family preservation services as services that aim to preserve families over time, regardless of any disruption. The term "family preservation" has been used to describe a variety of programmes (Westat, Inc. et al., 1995) According to the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b), family preservation services refer to a strategy, approach or a philosophy that is based on the belief that family members need a family in which to develop to their full potential.

The researcher was responsible for monitoring the implementation of family preservation services in all provinces in the Department of Social Development, and she observed the inadequacy and inconsistency of the interpretations of the concept of family preservation services among social service professionals in the various provinces. These observations prompted her to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation thereof by means of this study.

In this chapter, based on the background presented above, the researcher provides a context for her adoption of the research methods used in this study. The chapter discusses the methodology and research components employed in detail.

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7.2 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

7.2.1 Goal of the study

The **goal** of this study was

> to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation thereof.

7.2.2 Objectives of the study

In order to ensure that the abovementioned research goal was reached, the following specific steps were taken:

- theoretically conceptualizing the following aspects which are central to family preservation services:
  - systems theory, which sees the family as a functioning unit in which members solve their problems, make their own decisions and achieve collective goals;
  - the family life cycle model as a way to understand the various challenges that families encounter in their lifetime;
  - family preservation services as defined or described in different ways in various programmes;
  - the stages of the policy cycle;
- contextualizing the *Manual on Family Preservation Services;* and providing an overview of the *Draft National Family Policy* and the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* as fundamental documents in the study;
- analysing the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*;
- analysing the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*; and
- formulating conclusions and making recommendations regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in order to enhance service delivery to families.

7.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

According to Babbie and Mouton (2011:75), an empirical question usually addresses a problem in a real-life situation. This study's analysis of the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual* is the first research that attempts to focus on the effectiveness of this practice manual.

Fouché and De Vos (2005:91) maintain that one of the most salient sources of research questions is the daily practice of the caring professions. The researcher agrees – hence, the research questions of this study emerged from the researcher's observation of social service professionals that she served in her place of employment, the Department of Social Development.

For researchers who use mixed methods research, Delport and Fouché (2011:447) suggest formulating at least two research questions. This implies that one question will be quantitative and the other qualitative in nature.

In this study, the researcher used two research questions, instead of hypotheses. The following research questions were formulated for the study:

- **How does the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* adhere to the requirements of a policy document?**
- **What are the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*?**

The answers to these questions could assist the Department of Social Development with regard to the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, which could in turn lead to improved service delivery to families across South Africa. Babbie and Mouton (2011:339) state that improvement-oriented research is usually driven by concerns about use and application. The intended outcome of this study is therefore improved services to families by ensuring that recommendations are made regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.*

7.4   RESEARCH APPROACH

A number of authors on research methods, such as Babbie and Mouton (2001:49, 53), Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:37) and Fouché and Delport (2005:17), all identify two broad types of approaches: qualitative and quantitative approaches. These approaches can be used separately or in combination, depending on what a study requires.

According to Fouché and Delport (2002:79), the main aim of a quantitative study is to measure the social world objectively, to test hypotheses and to predict and control human behaviour. Becker and Bryman (2009:181) assert that although the term quantitative research seems to imply that quantification is the sole distinguishing characteristic of this research strategy, it is clear that there is more to quantitative research than the mere presence of numbers. This argument resonates well with Strydom and Delport's (2005:320) point that quantitative and qualitative approaches can be equally effectively applied to content analysis.

Terre Blanche, Kelly and Durrheim (2006:273) indicate that a "qualitative study involves taking people's subjective experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them, making sense of people's experiences" by interacting with them, and making use of qualitative research techniques to collect and analyse information. According to Fouché and Delport (2002:79), a qualitative study aims mainly to "understand social life and the meaning that people attach to everyday life". Babbie and Mouton (2001:272) see a qualitative researcher as someone who prefers understanding events, actions and processes in their context.

When a researcher uses both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study in order to understand a research problem, it is referred to as mixed methods research (Ivankova et al., 2007:261). According to De Vos (2005b:360), "mixed methods research studies are those that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches into the research methodology of a single study".

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:43) note that the term mixed methods typically refers to both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques and analyses

where the type of data collected is intertwined with the type of analysis used. Creswell (2014:218) explains that the benefits of using a mixed methods approach lie in its ability to draw on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative research, and to minimize the limitations of both approaches. Creswell (2014:218) regards mixed methods research as a useful strategy that assists researchers to gain a more complete understanding of research problems, by enabling researchers to

- compare or contrast various perspectives based on both quantitative and qualitative data;
- explain quantitative results by following up by collecting and analysing qualitative data;
- develop a fuller "understanding of changes needed for a marginalized group through the combination of qualitative and quantitative data" (Creswell, 2014:218); and
- improve their grasp of "the need for and impact of an intervention program through collecting both quantitative and qualitative data over time" (Creswell, 2014:218).

The analysis of the content of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and its implementation necessitated the use of both quantitative and qualitative approaches in a single study. Using a mixed method made it possible to compare the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual* as some of the implementers of family preservation services on the one hand, with the quantitative data obtained on the other hand. This allowed a more complete understanding of the research problem.

The researcher started by collecting and analysing quantitative data to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, and later collected and analysed qualitative data on the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual*. Hence, mixed methods research was chosen as the most appropriate research approach for this study.

7.5   TYPE OF RESEARCH

Kumar (2005:8) identifies three types of research, namely an application, objectives and an inquiry mode. Moreover, if a researcher focuses a research endeavour on potential application or application, there are two broad categories involved, namely pure and applied research. According to Kumar (2005:8), "pure research involves developing and testing theories and hypotheses that are intellectually challenging to the researcher, but may or may not have practical application at the present time or in the future". Most applied research, on the other hand, is used in social sciences for policy formulation, administration and the enhancement of understanding of a phenomenon (Kumar, 2005:9).

Fouché and De Vos (2005:105) prefer to label research either basic or applied. These authors state that "basic or pure research seeks empirical observations that can be used to formulate or refine theory, while applied research on the other hand, most often is the scientific planning of induced change in a troublesome situation". Durrheim (2006:45) suggests that the "findings derived from basic research are typically used to advance our fundamental knowledge of the world", while applied research contributes towards practical issues of problem-solving, decision-making, policy analysis and community development.

Neuman (2006:25) argues that in applied research a study is conducted mainly to address a specific concern, or to offer solutions to a problem experienced by a researcher's employer, or a community or a social movement to which the particular researcher is committed. Applied research is therefore designed to offer practical solutions to a concrete problem or address the immediate and specific needs of practitioners.

Applied research was conducted in this study, because the researcher was concerned with practical results that can contribute to the improvement of services in South Africa. In order to achieve this, the researcher analysed the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual*, in order to improve the services provided to families.

7.6   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The terms "research design", "strategies" and "methods" are used interchangeably by different authors (Fouché & Delport, 2002:271). Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:29) define a research design as the planning of scientific research from the first to the last step, as a programme that guides a researcher in collecting, analysing and interpreting observed facts.

Durrheim (2006:34) uses a similar definition, describing a research design as a strategic framework for action that then functions as a "bridge" between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. He also refers to designs as plans that guide "the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure" (Durrheim, 2006:34).

The above definitions indicate that a research design is a form of planning that has to be done by a researcher before a research project can be undertaken. The planning therefore guides the research process from the initial stages to the end.

In this study, quantitative and qualitative approaches were integrated in an explanatory mixed methods research design, but the research was executed in two distinct phases. The quantitative and qualitative research designs and methods implemented in the two phases are discussed below.

7.6.1   Mixed methods research

This study involved mixed methods research. It is therefore important to note that four main types of mixed methods designs have been identified, namely exploratory designs, explanatory designs, triangulation designs and embedded designs (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007:62-79; Ivankova et al., 2007:264-270).

According to Delport and Fouché (2011:441), "the explanatory design is a two-phase mixed methods design which starts with the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data".

Creswell (2014:15) describes an "explanatory sequential mixed methods model as a research method in which a researcher first conducts quantitative research, analyses the results and then builds on the results" to explain them in more detail with qualitative research. He explains that this research method is considered explanatory because the initial quantitative data results are explicated further with the qualitative data.

The researcher followed exactly this process in this study. The researcher started by collecting and analysing quantitative data on the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services,* using content analysis to process the results. The researcher then collected and analysed qualitative data about the experiences of a sample of 20 social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual.* The researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect this qualitative data, because this data collection method is effective at helping a researcher to understand complex issues and in examining contemporary, real-life situations (Soy, 2006:1).

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:71), the overall purpose of an explanatory design is to "gather and interpret qualitative data to help to explain or build upon initial quantitative results from the first phase" of a study. In the current study, the qualitative data results on the experiences of social workers implementing family preservation services did indeed clarify and explain some issues with regard to the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* that emerged from the quantitative results.

The research design that was most appropriate and that also enabled the researcher to address the problem statement of the research study was content analysis. Content analysis is defined as a "technique for gathering and analyzing the content of text and it includes, inter alia, books, newspaper or magazine articles and official documents" (Neuman, 2000:292). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006:286) assert that "content analysis can also be conceptualized as an inherently mixed method of analysis, or a method that always contains the possibility of both qualitative and quantitative applications".

Sequential timing within the explanatory mixed methods design involved that the quantitative data were collected and analysed first; the qualitative research design was then implemented in order to build upon the quantitative results.

7.6.2   Quantitative research design

A quantitative research methodology focuses collecting data in a numerical form so that facts can be easily measured; this methodology is preferred by positivist researchers who want to observe social realities in terms of quantification and objectivity (Neuman, 2000:66). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005:142), content analysis, which was used in the current study, is a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes or biases, which are all to be found in a wide variety of disciplines. Babbie and Mouton (2011:384) suggest that some topics are more appropriately addressed by content analysis than by any other method of inquiry. In line with Babbie and Mouton's (2011) suggestions, the researcher found that content analysis was the most appropriate method of inquiry to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*.

7.6.3   Qualitative research design

Creswell (2014:187) lists five qualitative research designs, namely narrative research, phenomenology, ethnography, the case study and grounded theory. The qualitative research design that was deemed most appropriate for this research study was phenomenology.

Fouché (2005:270) indicates that the purpose of a phenomenological approach is "to understand and interpret the meaning that subjects give to their everyday lives"; advising researchers to enter a subject's life world or life setting and place themselves in the shoes of the subjects. Creswell (2014:14) sees phenomenological research as "design of inquiry coming from philosophy and psychology in which the researcher describes the lived experiences of individuals about a phenomenon as described by participants. Babbie and Mouton (2011:271) caution that in order for researchers to use phenomenology

- 166 -

effectively, qualitative researchers should attempt to become more than just participant observers – they have to make a deliberate attempt to put themselves in the shoes of the people they are studying and see things from those people's points of view.

7.7 POPULATION, SAMPLING FRAME, SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD

7.7.1 The population

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:85) describe a "population" as a "target population", a set of elements on which research focuses, and to which the results obtained by testing the sample can be generalized. A population is thus the total collection of all "units of analysis" about which a researcher wishes to draw specific conclusions (Welman et al., 2005:52).

According to Mouton (2002:134), a population is a collection of objects, events or individuals with common characteristics that a researcher is interested in studying. This implies that a population does not have to refer only to a number of people, but can also refer to a number of objects, documents and other things. However, it must be emphasises that a set of people or objects become a population of study only if a researcher actually has an interest in studying them.

In this study, the researcher used two units of analysis, namely, first, the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, and, second, social workers who have been involved in the implementation of the *Manual*, specifically in the Social Development sector in all provinces.

The *Annual Report* of the Department of Social Development (2009) states that "the Department provided training on family preservation services on all levels of service delivery and the training programme was conducted in all provinces where 40 service providers were trained in each province". Based on the assumption that such training had been provided, three main criteria were used to define the population of social workers to participate in this study – the population consisted of social workers who

- worked in the Social Development Sector, in other words, were employed by the Department of Social Development and/or employed by the NGOs subsidized by the Department of Social Development;
- were trained on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*; and
- were implementing family preservation services.

7.7.2 Sampling frame

Babbie and Mouton (2001:174) define a sampling frame as the actual list of sampling units from which a sample or some stage of the sample is selected. Durrheim (2006:133) describes a sampling frame more broadly as the actual form in which a population becomes accessible to researchers. A typical example of a sampling frame is a list of names from which a sample can be drawn (Strydom, 2005a:200).

In this study, the researcher requested provincial family coordinators to provide a list of social workers who were implementing family preservation services in each province to serve as a sampling frame. Lists of social workers implementing family preservation services were provided for each province.

7.7.3 Sample and sampling method

The term "sample" always implies the simultaneous existence of a population or universe, of which the sample is a smaller section, or a set of individuals selected from a population (Strydom, 2005a:193). Strydom (2005a:204) explains that sampling is done to increase the feasibility, cost-effectiveness, accuracy and manageability of a survey. This insight applies to this study, as it would have been impossible for the researcher to identify, contact and study the entire relevant population, as the time and cost implications would make the completion of the study difficult, if not impossible.

There are two main types of sampling methods: probability and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling, the probability that any element or member of the population would be included in the sample can be determined, but in non-

probability sampling, the probability cannot be specified, as elements have a probability that exceeds zero (Welman et al., 2005:56). Various sampling methods are discussed in more detail below.

7.7.3.1 Stratified random sampling

Durrheim (2006:136) points out that "stratified sampling is used to establish a greater degree of representativeness in situations where populations consist of subgroups or strata and to ensure that a sample adequately represents relevant strata, the sample is drawn from each strata (*sic*) independently". Babbie and Mouton (2011:191) explain that stratified sampling ensures that more appropriate numbers of elements are drawn from homogenous subsets of the population than simple selecting from the total population at large would allow. According to Strydom (2005a:200), stratified sampling is mainly used to ensure that the different groups or segments in a population are adequately represented in the sample.

After receiving the sampling frames, in other words, the lists of the names of social workers from each province, the researcher ensured that social workers from Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) were also represented in the sample by separating them from social workers from the Department of Social Development. She also checked that each province was represented in the sample. It must be noted that the number of social workers in the sampling frames from NGOs was very small, due to various challenges facing the sector, including limited resources. These two groups of social workers and the provinces are referred as strata in this study.

7.7.3.2 Simple random sampling

In simple random sampling, each member of a population has an equal and independent chance of being selected to be part of the sample (Salkind, 2012:96). Once a sampling frame has been established, to use simple random sampling, the researcher assigns a single number to each element in the list, not skipping any number in the process (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:190). Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:89) explain that the most common simple random technique

is the lottery technique: a symbol for each unit of the population is placed in a container and mixed well, then "lucky numbers" are drawn to constitute the sample.

Using this technique, in this study, five social workers from each of the nine provinces were randomly selected from each of the strata until the desired sample of 45 was reached.

7.7.3.3 Sampling challenges

It must be made clear that the selection of the sample using the above sampling methods was not without challenges. After the selection, it was found in the course of the research that some of the participants were not in fact implementing family preservation services, although, according to their job description, they were supposed to be implementing these services and were on the sampling frame. This was only discovered during the interviews. As a result, some interviews were not completed. In some cases, the number of interviewees per province was reduced to three.

The second challenge was that the researcher could not know before the interviews that 17 of the participants from the sampling frames had never actually attended any training on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.* It is important to note that the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* (Department of Social Development, 2007a) clearly mandates all provinces to provide capacity building and education on family preservation services and also to ensure the implementation thereof. The fact that this mandate was not carried out fully proved to be a very serious policy failure with regard to the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* (Department of Social Development, 2007a). In order to present as accurate a picture as possible regarding the *Manual,* the researcher was forced to exclude the data of these 17 participants from the empirical findings. A follow-up was done in order to replace these 17 participants who had not been trained with participants listed in the sample frame but originally not selected for the sample. The researcher found that the "replacement" participants could also not

form part of the research study, because most of them were also never trained on the *Manual*, and others were no longer working in the Social Development sector. It therefore became apparent that more participants could not be interviewed for inclusion in the research study.

Nevertheless, after interviewing participants from eight provinces, it was found that it was unlikely that new data would be elicited by interviewing anyone else, due to data saturation, so it was decided not to interview the sample from Gauteng. Thus the final sample was 20 of the initial full sample of 45.

With regard to the document sample, the researcher analysed only the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, therefore no sample or sampling method was required, as it was the only document involved.

7.8   DATA COLLECTION

Data collection refers to the important process of collecting information for a study, in this case, from the relevant institutions and implementers of social services, in order to improve service delivery. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:06), "mixed methods research implies collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data". The two methods of data collection implemented in this study were a checklist (quantitative data) and semi-structured interviews (qualitative data), as discussed below. These methods enhanced the reliability, validity and trustworthiness of the research, as explained below.

7.8.1   Quantitative data collection: the checklist

For this study, the researcher developed a checklist as a quantitative data collection method to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.*

Creswell and Plano Clark (2007:06) explain that the collection and analysis of quantitative data consists of statistically analysing scores collected on instruments, checklists or public documents to answer research questions or to

test hypotheses. Delport (2005:179) defines a checklist as a "type of questionnaire consisting of a series" of statements or themes. In order to analyse processes, influences and the outcomes of policy documents, Babbie and Mouton (2001:388) advise that "in content analysis, as in other research methods, the researchers must refine their conceptual framework and develop specific methods for observing in relation to that framework".

In this study, as recommended by Delport (2005:179), the checklist was designed to analyse whether the *Manual* was formulated in such a way that it meets the requirements for a policy document. In developing the checklist, the researcher used the *Draft National Family Policy* as a policy document that guided the development of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (refer to Chapter 6) and the literature review, particularly Chapter 5, which discusses the stages of a policy cycle. Gil's (1992:69-75) framework was also used as a guide in the development of the checklist, in line with a recommendation by Gray and Sewpaul (1998:12).

The checklist guided the researcher's interpretation of the text, and helped her to determine whether particular items of the *Manual* met the required criteria implied in the research question of the study, in terms of the availability or absence of variables which are characteristic of a policy document, as recommended by the *Draft National Family Policy* and literature. Quantitative data were thus collected using a checklist as the first phase of data collection process. The checklist is attached as Appendix C.

In research, reliability and validity of the findings are important. This is particularly important for quantitative research. Babbie and Mouton (2011:119, 122) describe reliability as a "matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object would yield the same result each time", and indicate that validity refers to the "extent to which an empirical measure adequately reflects the real meaning of the concept under consideration". These authors list three types of validity, namely, criterion-related validity, construct validity and content validity.

Discussing reliability and validity in quantitative research, Creswell (2014:160) explains that validity is about whether "one can draw meaningful and useful inferences from scores on the instruments", whereas reliability is about "determining whether there was consistency in test administration and scoring".

Regarding content analysis of existing documents, Babbie and Mouton (2011:393) point out that it has both advantages and disadvantages in terms of validity and reliability. One of the advantages is that because of the concreteness of the material being studied, it can be coded and recoded until a researcher is certain that the coding is consistent, but the disadvantage is that a researcher is not always aware of the degree of accuracy observed, if the document was not written for research purposes (Babbie & Mouton, 2011:393). Strydom and Delport (2005:317) mention different ways in which the validity and reliability of documents can be tested; one of the techniques recommended by these authors is to verify data by interviewing one (or more) of the people who were personally involved in the event (the creation of the document).

In this study, therefore, the researcher interviewed two officials from the Department of Social Development who were among the people responsible for the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. The main purpose of this exercise was to increase the validity and reliability of the meanings of the characteristics and descriptions included in the checklist.

7.8.2 Qualitative data collection: the semi-structured interviews

Interviewing is the predominant mode of data or information collection in qualitative research (Greeff, 2005:287). The qualitative data then consist of open-ended information that a researcher gathers through interviews with participants; the general, open-ended questions asked in interviews allow participants to supply answers in their own words (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007:06). In this study, the researcher used a semi-structured interview schedule to analyse the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*.

- 173 -

Semi-structured interviews are used to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about, or experiences or accounts of a particular topic (Greeff, 2005:296). Semi-structured interviews use a set of questions to guide conversation to remain more or less loosely with those questions. Semi-structured interviews give individual participants some freedom to raise and discuss what interests them or is important to them. In other words, researchers try to ask each participant the same set of questions, but also permit the conversation to flow more naturally, making room for the conversation to go in novel and sometimes unanticipated directions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006:125).

According to Welman et al. (2005:166), in semi-structured interviews a researcher usually has a list of themes and questions to be covered, but these may vary from one interview to the next. These authors explain that, instead of a fixed interview schedule, interview guides are used. Greeff (2005:296) uses the terminology more flexibly, calling a questionnaire written to guide an interview an interview schedule or guide. Such a guide provides a researcher with a set of predetermined questions that might be used as an appropriate instrument for engaging the participants and designating the narrative terrain.

In this study, the researcher conducted 37 semi-structured interviews to collect data about social workers' experiences regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in their respective provinces. As indicated in Section 7.7.3.3 above, the data of the 17 initial participants who were never trained on the *Manual* were excluded from the findings in the empirical chapter (Chapter 8). The researcher also excluded participants who were never trained, and some who were no longer employed by the Social Development sector when the follow-up was done in order to replace the 17 participants who received no training from the original sample frame. Thus the data of 17 participants could not be replaced, because suitable participants were not available.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2011:276), qualitative research should aim to be trustworthy. The basic issue in trustworthiness is whether "an inquirer can

persuade his or her audiences that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to or worth taking account of" (Babbie & Mouton, 2011:276). Other important elements of sound qualitative research are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. For Creswell (2014:206), trustworthiness involves believability based on coherence, insight, and instrument utility. De Vos (2005a:345) is of the view that trustworthiness in qualitative research depends on the responses to the following questions:

- How can we be reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context?
- How can we be sure that the findings are reflective of the subjects and the inquiry itself, rather than a creation of the researcher's biases or prejudices?

To meet the criterion of trustworthiness in implementing the qualitative research design, the researcher used confirmability, as described by Babbie and Mouton (2011:276). Raw data were recorded on audiotapes; field notes and audit trail notes were used throughout the study, and the instruments used were piloted prior to the main investigation. To enhance the credibility of the research study, the researcher discussed the research procedures and findings as a form of peer debriefing with several colleagues who were outside the context of the study. On the basis of this discussion, the decision to exclude the data of the 17 participants who never attended training on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* from the empirical findings was taken in order to ensure the integrity and trustworthiness of the empirical findings.

As indicated in the problem statement, the researcher was involved in the monitoring of family preservation services in the Department of Social Development for some years, and therefore had a professional interest in family preservation services. This interest was professional, based on her own learning, and she made a conscious effort to ensure that the scientific value of the research study was promoted and maintained throughout the research process.

7.9 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study is defined in the *New Dictionary of Social Work* (Terminology Committee of Social Work, 1995:45) as a process "whereby the research design for a prospective survey is tested". Thus a pilot study serves as a small-scale trial of all the aspects that a researcher plans to use in the main inquiry. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:155) define a pilot study as a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate. Leedy and Ormrod (2005:188) suggest that a researcher can save a great deal of time in the long run by fine-tuning questions before initiating data collection by asking a few volunteers to answer the questions in a pilot study.

The researcher formulated and conducted a pre-test of the semi-structured interview schedule with two social workers who possessed the same characteristics as the participants to be used in the main study. These pilot study participants did not form part of the main study. The pilot study helped the researcher to refine two questions in the interview schedule which were understood differently by the two social workers.

7.10 DATA ANALYSIS

Kruger, De Vos, Fouché and Venter (2005:218) state that the purpose of data analysis is to reduce data to an intelligible and interpretable form so that the relations of research problems can be studied and tested, and conclusions can be drawn. Durrheim (2006:52) cautions that data analysis issues should be carefully considered in designing a study, since the aim of data analysis is to transform information into an answer to the original research question(s).

Data analysis procedures can also be divided into qualitative and quantitative techniques. Quantitative techniques employ a variety of statistical analyses to make sense of data, whereas qualitative techniques begin by identifying themes in the data and relationships between these themes (Durrheim, 2006:52). Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were employed to analyse

the data collected in this study, because the study employed a mixed methods research approach. These two types of data analysis are discussed in more detail below.

7.10.1 Quantitative data analysis

In respect of quantitative data analysis, a number of authors identify a number of important factors, such as the number of variables being examined, the level of measurement of the variables, and the differences between descriptive statistics and inferential statistics (Babbie, 2008:443; De Vaus, 2003:203; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Neuman, 2000:313).

Coding in content analysis involves the logic of conceptualization and operationalization (Babbie & Mouton, 2011:188). After using latent coding, the researcher therefore employed quantitative data analysis methods to manually assess the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. Characteristics in the checklist were individually explained and interpreted.

7.10.2 Qualitative data analysis

Terre Blanche (2006:321) lists the following steps in analysing qualitative data:
- familiarisation with and immersion in the data by the researcher;
- the induction of themes;
- coding of the data; and
- elaboration, interpretation and checking.

De Vos (2005a:334) prefers Creswell's model of data analysis, which involves "data collection; data managing; reading and memoing; describing, classifying, interpreting; representing and visualizing".

In analysing the data, the researcher used Creswell's model of data analysis. According to De Vos (2005a:334), this model contains a "series of steps which include data collection and preliminary analysis". The first phase involves data analysis at the research site, while the second involves data analysis away from the site, following a period of data collection.

During quantitative data analysis, eleven characteristics were identified by means of checklist for discussion. The methodology for analysing the content of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* was latent coding. Neuman (2000:296) describes latent coding as a guide that assists researchers to interpret the text, and also determines whether certain items of the document answer the research questions by ascertaining the presence or absence of particular variables which are characteristics of the document. Babbie and Mouton (2011:399) contend that even if the research is coding latent content on the basis of overall judgements, it is necessary to represent the coding decision numerically. In this study, variables were therefore scored on the checklist as 1 (present) and 0 (absent). The quantitative data were mostly confirmed by the qualitative findings, because an explanatory research design was used in this research study.

The researcher conducted analysis at the research site, interviewing participants taking field notes and observing the non-verbal cues provided by participants, and away from the research site, interpreting the participants' responses and revisiting the interviews and notes.

The second phase involves managing data. Creswell (cited in De Vos, 2005a:336) explains that during this phase a researcher organizes the data into file folders, on index cards or computer files, and then converts them into appropriate text units. In this study, the researcher therefore organized the collected data and the field notes into sentences and transcripts in order to analyse the data. The information was then saved in computer files to make it more manageable.

Creswell (cited in De Vos, 2005a:336) suggests that, in the third phase, a researcher should read and write memos. In this study, for this phase, the researcher read the transcripts in their entirety several times, so as to enable her to describe, classify and interpret the data. Reading the transcripts in their entirety several times, enabled her to capture the essence of the participants' views, then classify and interpret the data.

Creswell (cited in De Vos, 2005a:336) explains that in the fourth phase, a researcher seeks to identify the salient themes, noting regularities of meanings held by the respondents that would then be reduced to a small, manageable set of themes to be written into the final report. When a researcher collects the information for interpretive analysis, the events or the things people say are experienced in a linear, chronological order. The induction of themes and coding breaks up this sequence, so that events or remarks that were distant from one another are brought close together (Creswell, cited in De Vos, 2005a:336).

In this study, the researcher therefore identified themes and organized them into a manageable set by applying a coding scheme to the various categories and themes. She also noted the regularities of meanings held by participants in order to classify and interpret the data in preparation for the final report.

Creswell (cited in De Vos, 2005a:336) concludes that in the fifth and final phase, a researcher presents the data, "packaging" what has been found in the form of text, tables or figures (visual images of the information), and a report on the findings. The final step is to assemble the interpretation. This is a written account of the phenomenon the researcher has studied, in all likelihood using thematic categories from subheadings in the analysis. In this study, therefore, the researcher presents qualitative data results in a written format in Chapter 8 and in the conclusions in Chapter 9.

7.11 CONCLUSION

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* was developed by the Department of Social Development in 2008, based on the *Draft National Family Policy* as a policy document. However, the researcher observed some inconsistencies and inadequacies in the interpretation of the concept of family preservation services among social workers in her interactions with these social workers in the different provinces. An in-depth literature study of the *Draft National Family Policy* (refer to Section 6.2) and the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (refer to Section 6.3) was done, using stages of the policy cycle and Gil's framework (1992) to provide valuable information with regard to the development of the quantitative

instrument. In line with her explanatory mixed methods research approach, the researcher gave a rationale for initiating the empirical study by starting with a quantitative approach. The content analysis of the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* by means of a checklist then led to qualitative data collection, based on on the quantitative results obtained in the first phase of the research study.

The quantitative and qualitative results obtained in the research study are presented in Chapter 8 of this report.

CHAPTER 8:
EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

8.1   INTRODUCTION

This study analyses the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b) and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and the implementation thereof, in order to make recommendations for the improvement of service delivery. As was indicated in Chapter 1, this chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of the empirical data obtained from the investigation. For the convenience of the reader, the chapter opens with a brief summary of the main points of the previous chapters relevant to the empirical study.

The empirical results are presented in two sections:

- Section 8.2 presents the **quantitative empirical results**, which were collected by means of the content analysis; and
- Sections 8.3 to 8.5 reflect the **qualitative empirical results**, which were collected by means of the semi-structured interviews.

The researcher presented the literature review in Chapters 2 to 6 to underpin her analysis of the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, as well as the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and the implementation thereof. The goal of the study was to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and the implementation thereof. The expected outcome of the study is to improve service delivery to families by ensuring that recommendations are made regarding the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, and also that social service professionals are empowered to render more effective and quality family preservation services. The research methodology which guided the research process was presented in Chapter 7. The choice of an explanatory mixed methods research approach was also motivated and thoroughly discussed – the approach allowed quantitative results

to be clarified and explained in more detail by following up with qualitative research. This was a useful strategy that allowed the researcher to gain a more complete understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2014:218).

The research question "How does the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* adhere to the requirements of a policy document?" is addressed in this chapter by means of content analysis in the form of the checklist. As indicated above, the quantitative results which were obtained through the checklist about the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* were further explained in detail by analysing the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and the implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.* The qualitative component of the study was guided by the second research question, namely "What are the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services?"*

8.2 QUANTITATIVE EMPIRICAL RESULTS: CONTENT ANALYSIS

8.2.1 Quantitative research methodology

As already indicated in Section 7.6.2, content analysis was chosen as a method, because Leedy and Ormrod (2005:142) see content analysis as a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes or biases, found in various disciplines. Moreover, Babbie and Mouton (2011:384) maintain that some topics are more appropriately addressed by content analysis than by any other method of inquiry.

In analysing the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, content analysis was deemed most suitable for this research study, because the researcher wanted to answer the first research question: "How does the *Manual on Family Preservation* adhere to the requirements of a policy document?" The content analysis and use of a checklist as the central data collection instrument allowed the researcher to identify the limitations and strengths of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.*

A checklist was designed based on the literature review, as set out particularly in Chapters 5 and 6. Gil's (1992:69-75) framework was also used as a guide in the development of the checklist. The checklist contained all the elements of the *Draft National Family Policy* and a general policy document to score the characteristic elements of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*.

The research findings obtained through content analysis are presented in this section. The discussion of the findings highlights important elements which were omitted from the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*.

Table 8.1, below, lists all the elements contained in the checklist and their corresponding responses. Numbers 1 to 11 in the first column of Table 8.1 sequentially number the contents of the *Draft National Family Policy* as a policy document. Among these characteristics (set out in the second column), the checklist includes all those items which are necessary to a well-formulated policy document. The third column contains descriptions of the characteristics to supplement the column on the characteristics, and reflects the extent to which the characteristics must entail these descriptions. Lastly, the scores column delineates the findings of the study which were obtained through the comparison of the criteria for the contents of the *Draft National Family Policy* and a standard policy document according to the theoretical requirements and the actual contents of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. Responses are marked as a "1" (the characteristic is present) or a "0" (the characteristic is absent).

Table 8.1: Scores obtained on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*

No	Characteristics	Descriptions	Scores
1	**Definition:** The *Manual* defines family preservation services objectively as a policy directive.	Clearly	0
		Operationally	0
		In measurable terms	0
2	**Aim:** The *Manual* specifically states the aim of family preservation services.	Clearly	1
		In broad terms	1
3	**Objectives:** The *Manual* specifies the objectives.	Clearly	0
		Specifically	0
		In measurable terms	0
		In an operational manner	0
4	**Theoretical framework:** The *Manual* stipulates how the development of the *Manual* is standardized according to the different theoretical frameworks cited in the *Draft National Family Policy*.	Life cycle	1
		Systems approach	0
		Social Development approach	0
5	**Characteristics:** The *Manual* indicates how the key interventions of the *Draft National Family Policy* are executed.	Family strengthening	1
		Enhancing family resilience and family preservation	0
		Focusing on families at risk and providing care to vulnerable members	1
		Engaging traditional and religious structures	0
		Provision of social services	1
		Peace and security programmes	1
		Human rights and democracy advocacy	0
		Linking family strengthening to the moral regeneration campaign	0
		Growing the economy and sustaining human development	1
		Employment creation	0
6	**Target group:** The *Manual* states whose circumstances or surroundings are the target of the change efforts.	Families at risk	1
		Families in crisis	1
		Families in transition	1

No	Characteristics	Descriptions	Scores
7	**Role players:** The *Manual* states critical role players required for the implementation of the family preservation services.	Relevant government departments	1
		Social service practitioners	1
		Volunteers	0
		Civil society	1
8	**Implementation instruments:** The *Manual* states the required tools for the implementation of family preservation services.	Budget	0
		Infrastructure / physical facilities	0
		Organizations	1
		Personnel	1
		Policy and legislative framework	1
9	**Process:** The *Manual* guides the implementation of family preservation services through a specific process cited in the *Draft National Family Policy.*	Identifying the needs and challenges of a family	1
		Recognising the resources that the family has	1
		Identifying family strengths and priorities	1
		Coordinating the roles of various agencies involved	1
		Identifying unmet needs, gaps and support	1
		Developing strategies for intervention	1
10	**Implementation challenges:** The *Manual* clearly indicates how it intends to respond to possible challenges during the implementation process.	Clients and coalitions	0
		Capacity	1
		Commitment	1
		Context	1
		Content of the policy	1
		Top-down approach	1
		Bottom-up approach	0
11	**Monitoring and evaluation:** The *Manual* lists individuals, groups or organizations which will participate in the monitoring and evaluation of services.	Target groups	0
		Programme managers	0
		Evaluation and research individuals	0
		Stakeholders	0

The responses reflected in Table 8.1, above, are individually explained and interpreted below. Elements in the checklist are reflected as the headings and subheadings which form part of the discussion of the section.

8.2.2 Characteristic 1: Definition

Policy documents are expected to define an issue under review in detail, using clear, operational and measurable terms, despite some differences in conceptualizing the policy process (Roux, 2000:115). The score in this study indicates that the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* does not meet this requirement.

8.2.2.1 *Formulation of definition*

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* presents several definitions of family preservation, because it refers to the identification of the needs of families and their members in order to prevent them from becoming dysfunctional. Furthermore, it indicates that all services to families with the focus on family strengths rendered by various government departments and civil society to help a family (health care, child and youth care, counselling, etc.) can be termed family preservation services. The *Manual* further refers to family preservation services as a movement, an approach, a philosophy, a perspective and a strategy. Thus, regarding these definitions, the researcher found some of the definitions too broad, which can create confusion for social workers in the implementation of family preservation services.

Jann and Wegrich (2006:45) highlight the importance of formulating a clear definition of a social problem, as they argue that the policy-making process requires a clear problem definition, and a social problem has to be defined in such a way that the necessity of state intervention is expressed. Thus, if the definition of family preservation services is not clearly defined, it could pose challenges during the execution of the programme.

8.2.2.2 *Operational definition*

Cloete and Meyer (quoted by Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:570) regard an operational definition as critical to the policy process because it determines stakeholders' influence in the policy process. The *Manual,* however*,* does not

include an operational definition of family preservation services, but only states that any services delivered to families should focus on

- "strengthening, sustaining and creating an enabling environment" for effective family functioning;
- "protecting vulnerable family members and preventing harm" from befalling them;
- supporting the "most vulnerable family members";
- ensuring that "families have access to essential resources and services"; and
- intervening to "prevent families from becoming dysfunctional" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:42).

The researcher found that the *Manual*'s definition of family preservation services is not operational, because the aspects that define family preservation services are too broad. Referring to an operational definition of a problem in the policy process, Roux (2000:115) says that "a problem can be defined as a significant and unwanted discrepancy", and in the case of the *Manual*, that does not apply.

8.2.2.3 Measurable definition

Fouché (2005:116) emphasises that the problem that a policy document wants to address should be defined in clear and measurable terms so that readers will understand what the focus of the services needs to be. The *Manual* defines family preservation services on four levels of service delivery, namely prevention, early intervention, statutory intervention, and reunification and aftercare services. This definition is in fact too broad to be measured; hence, the researcher concluded that the *Manual* does not present a measurable definition of the central term family preservation services.

8.2.3 Characteristic 2: Aim of the *Manual*

As a policy document, the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* states its aims clearly and broadly, as follows (cited verbatim):
- Keep families together and safe.
- Provide support mechanisms to families in order to be well-functioning and self-reliant.

- Keep families as the primary caregiver of family members.
- Improve the well-being of family members in their families and communities.
- Work with families at risk to prevent the removal of family members from the home.
- Support the strengths of families by improving the functioning of families so that the behaviour that led to a crisis, is less likely to occur again.
- Reunify families and family members who have been removed at some point. (Department of Social Services, 2008b:42)

The above explanation of the aim of the *Manual* is in line with the criterion proposed by Chambers (2000:79), who states that a goal is a statement, in general and abstract terms, of desired qualities in human and social conditions. A goal is also defined as the end toward which effort or ambition is directed to achieve a dream (Fouché & De Vos, 2005:105). The researcher found that the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* clearly defines what it wants to achieve with regard to the well-being of families. However, it is important to point out that the inconsistencies in the presentation of the aims in Modules 1 and 3, as discussed in Section 6.3.3, may cause confusion among the implementers.

8.2.4 Characteristic 3: Objectives of the *Manual*

A policy document is expected to list the objectives which are identified as most relevant in addressing the problem – even problem identification leads nowhere if clear objectives are not identified and formulated (Roux, 2000:116). However, in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, the objectives of the *Manual* are not identified at all and this can be viewed as a limitation of the *Manual*.

Objectives are the steps taken, one by one, realistically, at grassroots level, within a certain time span, in order to attain the dream (Fouché & De Vos, 2005:107). Roux (2000:117) also describes an objective as a short-term goal that can be deduced from an organization's mission, and that could be stated by means of a process of negotiation. The researcher argues that the failure to formulate and state the objectives explicitly in this policy document can lead to confusion with regard to the effective execution of family preservation services.

For Gil (1992:77), objectives constitute key criteria for the evaluation and the analysis of the effectiveness of policies.

Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:571) also caution that a statement of the problem leads nowhere if clear objectives are not identified and formulated. Based on the views expressed in the prior literature, the researcher concludes that effective execution of family preservation services becomes impossible if the objectives are not identified and formulated in clear terms, because social workers lack clear guidance regarding the way family preservation services need to be implemented. In this regard, then, the *Manual* is inadequate.

8.2.5 Characteristic 4: Theoretical Framework

The *Manual* should stipulate how it is formulated and standardized according to the different theoretical frameworks cited in the *Draft National Family Policy.* The *Draft Policy* recommends the life cycle, systems approach and social development as the most suitable theoretical frameworks to use in rendering services to families. By contrast, the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* recommends the family life cycle, a developmental approach, family preservation and an integrated approach. Thus, the life cycle is the only model that the *Draft Policy* and the *Manual* have in common.

8.2.5.1 Life cycle

The *Manual* aligns itself with the *Draft National Family Policy* in respect of the importance of the family life cycle. It states that the family life cycle promotes the creation and understanding of an ideal, desirable progression through life's stages and the provision of services that are appropriate for specific developmental stages. In the researcher's opinion, the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* does not distinguish clearly enough between the models used and the theoretical frameworks adopted. For example, the family life cycle is a useful model for family therapists, because it assists in the processes of understanding and assessing functioning, as well as of creating therapeutic strategies and interventions, by offering a set of guidelines for considering individual and family growth and development (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:110). The

family life cycle model is discussed in detail in Chapter 3 of this report. The developmental approach on the other hand, as stated in the *Integrated Service Delivery Model*, is "based on the strengths of the individual, group and community, it also recognises the capacity for growth and development" (Department of Social Development, 2005:5). This implies that service delivery to families has to be redesigned to suit the socio-economic development of each particular family and its members.

8.2.5.2 Systems approach

The systems approach is not mentioned as one of the theoretical frameworks in the *Manual*, but it is highly recommended by the *Draft Policy*. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (1998:20) assert that systems thinking is not necessarily directly translatable into specific counselling techniques, but they claim that it provides counsellors with a way to organize their thinking about people and the origins of people's dysfunctional behaviour. The researcher agrees that preservation of families could be researched from more than one theoretical perspective; however, the explicit selection of the most relevant theoretical framework is vital for contextual insight into the phenomenon of family preservation services. (System theory as a useful theoretical framework for family preservation services is discussed in detail in Chapter 2 of this report.)

The approaches and models mentioned in the *Manual* are different from the ones mentioned in the *Draft Policy.* They also differ from what some authors outline as family preservation models, namely, a crisis intervention model, a home-based model, and a family treatment model (*Evaluation of Family Preservation and Reunification Program*, 2001; Hepworth et al., 2002:382; Nelson et al., 1990:10). The researcher is therefore of the opinion that it would be to the benefit of the implementers of this *Manual* to distinguish between approaches and models in order to minimize confusion among implementers.

8.2.5.3 Social Development approach

The *Manual* does not specifically outline the social development approach as mentioned in the *Draft Policy*; however, the content of the developmental approach discussed in the *Manual* captures the elements of the social development perspective. Patel et al. (2012:5) regard developmental social welfare as a "pro-poor strategy" that promotes participation by marginalized people. Social development is defined by Estes (1998:2) as referring to the "processes through which people are helped to realize their full potential" and the resources that exist within them.

8.2.6 Characteristic 5: Characteristics of the *Draft Policy*

The *Manual* only lists six out of the ten programmes and actions listed in the *Draft Policy*, as indicated in the checklist. This implies that the *Manual* sees these six as key strategies in the implementation of family preservation services. The *Manual* adds two others, namely environmental sustainability and responsibilities of family members.

8.2.6.1 Family strengthening

The *Manual* sees family strengthening as an important feature of family preservation, as it focuses on identifying and building on existing family strengths. Family strengthening is also mentioned in the *Manual* as one of the key strategies in the implementation of family preservation services. This is in line with the *White Paper for Social Welfare* (Department of Social Development, 1997b), which states that the goal of child and family welfare services in social work is to maintain and strengthen the functioning of high-risk families.

8.2.6.2 Enhancing family resilience and family preservation

The *Manual* does mention enhancing family resilience and family preservation as one of the key strategies, but the content of the *Manual* does not refer to family resilience in discussing the developmental assessment of families. Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:11) describe family resilience as a "trait of those families

- 191 -

that have the ability to survive and regenerate, even in the midst of overwhelming stress, misfortune, hardships, and life-altering transition points".

8.2.6.3 Focusing on families at risk and providing care to vulnerable members

According to the *Manual*, protecting vulnerable families and their members should be prioritized. The *Manual* includes this characteristic of the *Policy* as one of the key strategies in family preservation services. The extent to which families define an event as a crisis reflects their value system and previous experiences in meeting a crisis (Eshleman & Bulcroft, 2010:493). Thus, assessment by a social worker would have to consider the value system and previous experiences of a family, as these would be useful in restoring a state of equilibrium in the family.

8.2.6.4 Engaging traditional and religious structures

The role of traditional and religious structures is not recognised as a key strategy in the implementation of family preservation services, but its relevance may be inferred when the collaborative model is discussed as one of the informal structures and part of an important network in strengthening families. The continued relevance of this aspect is confirmed by Van der Merwe et al. (2009:125), who express concern that the expectations that the State has of the religious sector can easily lead to a situation where FBOs are drawn into forming part of the agenda of the State, with the possible result that this could minimize the peculiar character, identity and social contribution of FBOs.

8.2.6.5 Provision of social services

The provisions of social services involve focusing on families with special needs, health, education and social security (United Nations, 2001). The *Manual* mentions controlling the main causes of morbidity and mortality, with a special focus on families infected and affected by HIV and AIDS as one of the aspects of providing social services. With regard to other elements, the concept of the provision of such services is embedded in the content of the *Manual* rather than explicitly stated in the key strategies, which can be confusing for implementers of the *Manual.*

8.2.6.6 Peace and security programmes

Safety improvement programmes for families and communities is one of the key strategies of family preservation services that is highlighted in the *Manual.* However, the details of programmes that promote peace and security are not explained in the *Manual*.

8.2.6.7 Human rights and democracy

The characteristic of human rights and democracy is emphasised in the *Draft National Family Policy* and it is mentioned as one of the principles of the *Draft Policy,* and also as a programme and action in the delivery of services to families. However, the *Manual* does not mention this aspect at all.

8.2.6.8 Linking family strengthening to the moral regeneration campaign

In one of the principles underpinning service delivery to families, the *Manual* states that "morals and values that enhance family life and that ensure the moral fibre of society needs to be restored and retained". The *Manual* does therefore refer indirectly to this aspect, but it does not include it among the key strategies of family preservation services. Discussing the value of moral regeneration in societies, Zastrow (2003:176) argues that socialization and regulation of sexual behaviour is regarded as one of the essential functions of society that help maintain the stability of society by ensuring that family members behave within the norms of society. Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:560) acknowledge the important role of the family with regard to socialization and instilling positive values, claiming that there is no single institution that has a greater influence than the family has in shaping the lives of its members.

8.2.6.9 Growing the economy and sustaining human development

The *Manual* mentions poverty alleviation as one of the strategies in the implementation of family preservation services, but it fails to discuss the practical steps that need to be followed to achieve poverty alleviation as an outcome. Benokraitis (2011:6) regards the family as an economic unit that provides financial security and stability to its members.

8.2.6.10   Employment creation

Employment creation becomes an important programme in the context of family preservation, particularly in poverty stricken families that exist in South Africa. The *Manual* does not mention this aspect as one of its strategies, but it states that service delivery to families needs to be redesigned according to the socio-economic development of the family, referring to the developmental approach (Department of Social Development, 2008a).

8.2.7 Characteristic 6: Target group

According to Gil (1992:80), for a policy document to be relevant and effective, it has to specify a clear target group. Most policies tend to be aimed primarily at specific groups in a society who constitute the target segment for the intended effects of the policy (Gil, 1992:80). The researcher found that the *Manual on Family Preservation Services,* in line with the *Draft National Family Policy,* explains clearly that it targets families at risk, families in crisis and families in transition.

8.2.7.1 Families at risk

The *Manual* defines families at risk as those "families that could be affected by poverty, which deprives them of resources and other social support", which in turn undermines the ability of the family to perform their expected functions. Thus, this includes "exposure to risks such as family violence and substance abuse" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:7).

8.2.7.2 Families in crisis

The *Manual* clearly stipulates that family preservation should focus on families at risk, and such families include those that have "experienced death, trauma, or other forms of loss, for instance, premature birth, the birth of a baby with a disability, multiple births, terminal illnesses or the incarceration of a breadwinner" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:8).

8.2.7.3 *Families in transition*

The *Manual* describes families in transition as families affected or dissolved through separation, divorce and death. When such events occur, "resources and support to family members, especially the most vulnerable and dependent, may cease to be available", leaving them vulnerable (Department of Social Development, 2008b:8).

8.2.8 Characteristic 7: Role players

There are many role players from local, provincial, national and international communities who participate in the public policy-making process. Groups that play a major role and are easily identifiable in the South African community are an elite group also referred to as the "think tanks", the government or public officials, the presidential organizations, legislature and interest groups (Mamburu, 2004:154). However, the *Draft National Family Policy* only mentions relevant government departments, social service practitioners, volunteers and civil society; while the Manual does not specify the actual role players.

8.2.8.1 *Relevant government departments*

The *Manual* indicates that the family preservation perspective in South Africa originated from the *Draft Interim Policy Recommendation* by the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk (1996b), which was established by the Cabinet in July 1995. Therefore, the Inter-Ministerial Committee had an influence in the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, which was the product of collaboration between the Departments of Social Development, Health, Education and the Police (Department of Social Development, 2008b:61). The Department of Social Development is playing a major role in the implementation of family preservation services, as the custodian of the *Manual.*

8.2.8.2 *Social service practitioners*

The *Manual* specifically states that the aim is to train social service professionals to deliver services to families. Also, during the consultation process, various stakeholders, which include provincial coordinators of the family programme,

national NGOs, FBOs and other social service professionals, were represented in the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:ii). Social service practitioners, as appointed officials, are seen as "receivers and manufacturers" of policy problems through their involvement with families and communities (Meyer & Cloete, 2000:105).

8.2.8.3 Volunteers

The *Manual* does not mention the role of volunteers in the implementation of family preservation services, despite the fact that the *Draft Policy* acknowledges and values the role played by volunteers. Meyer and Cloete (2000:105) argue that community participation in the policy process can only be achieved through the direct involvement of volunteers.

8.2.8.4 Civil society

Van Baalen and De Coning (2013:189) caution that only community representatives should participate in the management of the actual execution of a project, as the general public is not trained to make important technical and managerial decisions. The researcher found that the *Manual* does refer to civil society in the form of informal structures in communities, such as associations, community leadership structures and clubs.

Meyer and Cloete (2000:103) acknowledge the important role of civil society groups in the policy-making process. These authors explain that civil society has collective strength and the capacity to mobilise members at relatively short notice, and also engage in the public hearing processes in Parliament; in doing so, they stay in the frontline of agenda-setting. Similarly, Anderson (2000:113) asserts that civil society plays a major role in policy formulation, often going to the legislature with specific proposals for legislation.

8.2.9 Characteristic 8: Implementation instruments

In order for services to be implemented, implementation instruments need to be budgeted for. According to Jann and Wegrich (2006:51), these instruments

should include financial means, infrastructure or physical facilities, NGOs, personnel, policy and legislative frameworks. These authors emphasise the importance of allocating resources, for example, how are budgets distributed, and which personnel will execute a programme. Even the *Draft Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a) fails to mention the implementation instruments for the implementation of the policy, hence the omission of some of these instruments in the *Manual* as well.

8.2.9.1 Financial means

The *Manual* does not refer to any financial means to implement family preservation services. This implies that the implementation of family preservation services is left to the discretion of the Heads of Social Development in various provinces and the availability of funds or surpluses. The importance of resources in policy execution is well supported by Mamburu (2004:165), when he argues that any policy implementation to be effective, money has to be spent and employees need to be hired.

8.2.9.2 Infrastructure and physical facilities

No infrastructure is mentioned in the *Manual*. The researcher concludes that the existing provincial and district offices of the Department of Social Development will be used for the implementation of family preservation services.

8.2.9.3 Organizations

The *Manual* promotes a collaboration model which strongly emphasises the role of other service providers, as well as other stakeholders who are critical in the implementation of family preservation services. No specific organizations are mentioned, but the role played by NGOs and FBOs is indicated in the *Manual;* this role is not clarified, however.

8.2.9.4 Personnel

The *Manual* does refer to personnel, such as social workers and other social service practitioners from different NGOs and FBOs, who are critical to the

implementation of family preservation services (Department of Social Development, 2008b:62).

8.2.9.5 Policy and legislative frameworks

The formulation of the *Manual* is clearly contextualized within the legislative framework in South Africa, as well as the international instruments to which South Africa has been a signatory. Such legislative frameworks and instruments include the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, No 108 of 1996* (RSA, 1996), the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (United Nations, 1995) and the *Children's Act, No 38 of 2005* (RSA, 2005). Therefore the implementation of family preservation services targets the most vulnerable groups of the society, which include women, men, children, older persons and people with disabilities, as recommended by the various legislative frameworks.

8.2.10 Characteristic 9: Process

The implementation of family preservation services is guided by a process which needs to be communicated to all stakeholders rendering services to families, including NGOs and FBOs. The process followed, as set out in the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a) involves identifying the needs and challenges of a family; recognising the resources that the family has; identifying family strengths and priorities; coordinating the roles of the various agencies involved; identifying unmet needs, gaps and support; and developing strategies for intervention.

8.2.10.1   Identifying the needs and challenges of a family

The *Manual* regards identifying the needs and challenges of a family as important aspects that must be explored in the developmental assessment of a family. Tis is in line with the assessment process described by Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:65), who state that a family counsellor develops, modifies and, if necessary, discards hypotheses, and makes suitable interventions based on progressively refined appraisals of the family.

8.2.10.2   Recognising the resources that the family has

The framework for assessing family strengths stipulated in the *Manual* include the recognition of family resources, namely the economic level, the family support system, the intellectual abilities and coping capacities of the family. Lombard (2008:158) believes that a developmental approach advocates for the use of asset-based and non-discriminatory approaches.

8.2.10.3   Identifying family strengths and priorities

A family strengths approach is recommended by the *Manual*, which describes this approach as including capacities, abilities, skills and the vision of the family that need to be considered during the assessment phase. This implies that implementers of family preservation services need to use a developmental approach in delivering services to families. Such an approach is based on identifying the strengths of the family and also promotes growth and development of the family, as also explained in the *Integrated Service Delivery Model* (Department of Social Development, 2005:13).

8.2.10.4   Coordinating the roles of the various agencies involved

The *Manual* sees social workers as appropriate persons to coordinate the various roles of agencies involved in the implementation of family preservation services. It advocates for collaboration and a multi-disciplinary approach in the delivery of family preservation services. This is in line with the views of Zastrow (2003:177), who believes that, due to various challenges that families encounter in their life span, the involvement of several agencies is often necessary, because it is impossible for a single social worker to provide all the services required by a family.

8.2.10.5   Identifying unmet needs, gaps and support

Referring to the assessment phase, Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:65) state that a counsellor gains knowledge about a family as a result of a continuous interactive process involving the family's perception of the problem, the counsellor's analysis of that perception and subsequent interventions. This

implies that for effective identification of unmet needs of the family, interaction between a therapist and the family concerned has to be continuous. In Module 6, the *Manual* refers to a holistic developmental assessment of the family as a foundation for family preservation services, with regard to the identification of needs and gaps in service delivery to families.

8.2.10.6   *Developing strategies for intervention*

In Module 7, the *Manual* discusses in detail a family developmental plan, which is defined as "an agreement that is reached between the family, other significant systems and the service providers, and forms the basis for the delivery of services on all levels of service delivery" (Department of Social Development, 2008b:127). Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2002:101) argue that counsellors should develop strategies for intervention that are target-specific circumstances for that particular family. These authors phrase this point as a question, namely "what intervention, by whom, is most effective for this individual or family, with what specific problem and under which set of circumstances?". In line with the *Draft National Family Policy*, therefore, the *Manual* acknowledges the importance of developing strategies for intervention in order to alleviate vulnerability in families.

8.2.11 Characteristic 10: Implementation challenges

The *Manual* should address the implementation challenges which might surface during the implementation of family preservation services. It is not expected that it should address all the challenges for it to be effective, but it is appropriate to mention that some challenges might hinder the success of the implementation process if they are not addressed in time. Brynard (2000:178) stipulates that in order to make sense of the complexities of implementation, the five-C protocol has to be understood. The equivalent to the five-C protocol included in the checklist for the *Manual* includes clients and coalitions, capacity, commitment, context-free theory, and content of the policy. The checklist also adds a top-down approach and a bottom-up approach. The *Draft Policy* omits the implementation instruments, and similarly, the implementation challenges are also omitted in the *Draft National Family Policy*. Therefore the *Manual* cannot be expected to include

- 200 -

these implementation challenges if the *Policy* omitted them. The relevant findings are briefly discussed below.

8.2.11.1   Clients and coalitions

Clients and coalitions reflect the "importance of the government's forming coalitions with interest groups such as opinion leaders, and other outside actors who actively support a particular implementation process" (Brynard, 2000:185). Through the collaborative model, the *Manual* clearly advocates for an integrated approach in service delivery to families, although it does not specifically mention volunteers and their roles. This implies that services should be rendered in an integrated and holistic manner, which reflects the partnerships amongst government departments and between government and civil society.

8.2.11.2   Capacity

The *Manual* does indicate that social workers are expected to deliver family preservation services to families in collaboration with other social service professionals and practitioners. These include social auxiliary workers, child and youth care workers, psychologists, teachers and community workers. However, the *Manual* does not refer to detail regarding the process and the scale of capacity building or training of social service professionals who will be implementing family preservation services.

Brynard (2000:181) points out that "capacity of the public sector is seen in terms of general systems thinking as the structural, functional and cultural ability to implement the policy objectives of the government", in other words, the ability to deliver those public services aimed at raising the quality of life of a country's citizens which the government has set out to deliver, effectively, as planned, over time (in a durable way).

8.2.11.3   Commitment

Governments may have the "most logical policy imaginable, but if those responsible for the implementation are unwilling or unable to do so", little will change (Brynard, 2000:181). He points out that commitment is important, not only

at "street level", but at all levels through which policy passes. This is influenced by the four remaining variables, namely content, context, capacity, clients and coalitions.

The *Manual* indicates that social service professionals who are already delivering services to families and communities will be trained on family preservation services and will thereafter be the ones delivering these services.

8.2.11.4 Context

A "context-free theory of implementation is unlikely to produce powerful explanations" or accurate predictions (Brynard, 2000:180).According to Brynard (2000:180) "an institutional context, like the other four variables, is shaped by the larger context of the social, economic, political and legal realities" of the system. The importance of the larger context should not be underestimated, and it affects the implementation process, primarily via the institutional corridor through which implementation must pass. Thus the "institutional context of the relevant agencies" may hinder or help capacity enhancement (Brynard, 2000:18).

The *Manual* does acknowledge the relevance of other interventions that are used to preserve families, but it fails to provide the actual context with regard to the execution of family preservation services. Thus, the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* may be said to be based on context-free theory.

8.2.11.5 Content of the policy

The content of a policy is important, not only with regard to the means it employs to achieve its ends, but also in "its determination of the ends themselves and in how it chooses the specific means to reach those ends" (Brynard, 2000:179). Thus policy content may or may not provide for resources for capacity building.

The *Manual* does highlight the aims it wants to achieve, but specific objectives are not mentioned in the *Manual*. The researcher is of the opinion that objectives are the concrete steps that direct the execution of a programme. The fact that

objectives are omitted from the *Manual* may create some confusion amongst social workers as implementers of family preservation services.

8.2.11.6 Top-down approach

Top-down models emphasise "decision-makers ability to produce clear and explicit ("unequivocal") policy objectives, and control the implementation phase" (Pulzl & Treib, 2006:90). Jann and Wegrich (2006:52) argue that "intra- and inter-organizational coordination problems and the interaction of field agencies with the target group are the key variables" leading to implementation failure.

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* distinguishes between policy-formulators and the implementers, assuming that once the formal processes of receiving approval for implementation from the principals of the Department of Social Department have been completed, the implementation of family preservation should run smoothly, without any challenges. However, this is unlikely to happen in practice. The researcher is therefore of the opinion that a top-down approach should be combined with a bottom-up approach for service delivery to be effective, because both policy formulators and implementers need to be able to interpret and negotiate the best possible implementation plan based on the policy directive.

8.2.11.7 Bottom-up approach

According to Pulzl and Treib (2006:92), in the "late 1970s and early 1980s, bottom-up theories emerged as a critical response to the top-down school". Several of these studies showed that "political outcomes did not always relate sufficiently to the original policy objectives, the assumed causal link was thus questionable" (Pulzl & Treib, 2006:92). In essence, this approach suggests the need to study what is actually happening on the recipient level, and to analyse the real issues that influence the action on the ground.

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* is silent on the critical role that implementers can play, reflecting only a top-down approach to policy formulation and implementation.

8.2.12 Characteristic 11: Monitoring and evaluation

The *Manual* should list individuals, groups or organizations who will participate in monitoring and evaluating services. The researcher is of the opinion that good programmes are monitored and evaluated by all the participants mentioned. Cloete (2000:211) explains that policy evaluation or assessment is normally undertaken to provide a precise assessment of the nature and extent of the impact that can be expected of the services. Rossi et al. (2004:48) suggest that the planning process should pay explicit attention to the nature of primary stakeholders, namely the target participants, programme managers, contextual stakeholders and evaluation and research community. Thus, family preservation services should also be monitored and evaluated to assess the impact of services provided to a target group. The findings of this study regarding the participants in the monitoring and evaluation process mentioned in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* are set out below.

8.2.12.1   Target participants

The *Manual* does not indicate that the target participants participate in the monitoring and evaluation of family preservation services. The researcher would like to argue that excluding target participants from evaluating services that are expected to bring about changes in their own circumstances is a serious omission. Discussing the requirements for effective policy evaluation, Cloete (2000:222) states that in order for policy evaluation to be effective, "it should adhere to the principle of legitimacy", which means that it should enjoy the support of the main stakeholders involved in the policy issue, namely participants, target groups and funders.

8.2.12.2   Programme managers

The *Manual* does not indicate that any programme managers participate in monitoring and evaluating family preservation services. These employees are not involved in the implementation of the policy, but may have designed it, and could for that reason also be biased towards the policy (Cloete, 2000:229). However,

the researcher believes that programme managers can play a vital role in the evaluation process if they partner with external evaluators in conducting evaluations.

8.2.12.3   Programme staff

The *Manual* does not mention that any programme staff participate in monitoring and evaluating family preservation services, but the researcher regards their involvement as important, as they are the experts who understand the programme inside out. Nevertheless, Cloete (2000:229) cautions that "programme staff may be biased, have vested interests in positive results, may not be evaluation experts" and may be needed on other implementation jobs.

8.2.12.4   Evaluation and research community

The *Manual* does not indicate that evaluation and research individuals participate in the monitoring and evaluation of family preservation services. However, Anderson (2000:271) points out the "importance of independent evaluators and researchers in the policy evaluation process", because such individuals devote all or most of their time to performing evaluation studies, and also provide the general public with information, publicize policy success and failure, sometimes "act as advocates for unpopular causes, and occasionally provide representation for the unrepresented in the policy process, such as the aged who may be confined to negligently run nursing homes, or exploited migratory farm workers".

8.2.12.5   Stakeholders

The *Manual* sets out clearly the collaboration and coordination of family preservation services with various stakeholders (which may include government departments, NGOs and FBOs). However, the *Manual* does not specifically mention the way they are involved in the monitoring and evaluation process. For effective monitoring and evaluation of social programmes, various stakeholders should be involved (Cloete, 2000:222).

8.2.13 Conclusion on the quantitative findings

The findings discussed above reveal some limitations in the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*:

- an unclear definition of family preservation services;
- the omission of the objectives of the *Manual*;
- confusion with regard to the presentation of the aims;
- uncertainty with regard to the theoretical frameworks used which are also different from the ones recommended by the *Draft Policy*;
- different characteristics from the ones recommended by the *Draft Policy*;
- the exclusion of the critical implementation instruments, particularly human resources and financial instruments;
- a lack of clarity on the role of volunteers and on the process of providing capacity-building to social service professionals; and
- the lack of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation plan.

The stated limitations are critical in the execution and evaluation of family preservation services. The literature that has been reviewed in this study, as discussed in Chapter 5 of this report suggests that the characteristics that have been excluded should form part of a policy document. It is also necessary to point out that there are some characteristics that were omitted from the *Draft Policy*, which was used as the baseline document in the development of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. These include implementation instruments, implementation challenges and a clear monitoring and evaluation plan. It is therefore hardly surprising that the *Manual* fails to address all the elements of these characteristics, since the *Draft Policy* has also excluded them. This exclusion has been identified as gap in the *Draft Policy*.

Thus, in terms of the criteria for a good policy document, there is much to be done in order to develop and improve the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* to enhance its implementation.

8.3 QUALITATIVE EMPIRICAL RESULTS

This section presents the findings based on the qualitative data that were collected through the semi-structured interviews (see Appendix B).

8.3.1 Qualitative research methodology

As explained in detail in Chapter 7, the quantitative results which were obtained through the checklist about the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* were further explained in detail by analysing the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual*. As indicated in Section 6.3.5.4, Terre Blanche et al. (2006:273) state that a "qualitative study involves taking people's subjective experiences seriously as the essence of what is real for them, making sense of people's experiences by interacting with them, and making use of qualitative research techniques to collect and analyse information". Thus, in its broadest sense, a qualitative study refers to research that elicits participants' accounts of meaning and of their experiences. The qualitative part of this study focused on the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.* An explanatory mixed methods research design was used for the implementation of the research study. Within this design therefore, sequential timing was implemented, with the qualitative data collected and analysed during the second phase, as recommended by Creswell (2014:15).

The second research question that had to be answered was "What are the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*?" In order to answer the second research question, the researcher needed to clarify and explain quantitative results obtained through the content analysis regarding the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*.

Semi-structured interviewing was used as a data collection method in the execution of a phenomenological study. A semi-structured interview schedule

was used to analyse the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. Such a schedule relies on a particular set of questions and try to guide the conversation to remain more loosely with those questions, but give participants some latitude, and allow conversation to flow more naturally (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006:125).

The researcher conducted 37 semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data about social workers' experiences regarding the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in their respective provinces. The researcher intended to interview five social workers from each province (a target sample of 45), but in the end only interviewed 37 participants in eight provinces, because saturation point was reached before participants from Gauteng Province were included. The number was limited to 37 participants because some of the participants who were originally sampled were not implementing family preservation services, due to various challenges in their respective areas; therefore they had to be excluded. In the end, as discussed in Section 7.7.3.3, the data of only 20 participants were included in the empirical findings, because the rest of the participants were found not to have attended the training on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.* The researcher made an attempt to contact and interview more participants who were originally excluded from the sample but they were in the sample frame. Most of those participants were also not trained to implement the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, and others were no longer employed in the Social Development sector. These possible participants could therefore not be included in the study.

The research procedure and data analysis are discussed in more detail below.

8.3.1.1 Research procedure used

The procedure was the following:
- After receiving a list of social workers who were implementing the *Manual* in each province from family coordinators of the Department of Social Development, the researcher made appointments individually with the participants.

- The researcher introduced herself and gave the participants an opportunity to read the informed consent letters and subsequently sign them, if they agreed to be interviewed.
- Before commencing with the interview, the following aspects were highlighted: the use of the tape recorder; that there was no pressure to participate; that there were no correct or incorrect answers, and confidentiality and anonymity of the data.

8.3.1.2 Qualitative data analysis

In **analysing qualitative data**, the researcher adopted Creswell's model of data analysis. According to De Vos (2005a:334), this model contains a series of steps, of which the following were used:

- data collection;
- data management;
- reading and memoing;
- description, classification and interpretation; and
- representation and visualization.

A detailed description of research methods used in this study was presented in Chapter 7 of this report.

8.3.2 Introducing the participants

A sample of 20 participants was interviewed through the use of semi-structured interviews representing eight different provinces. The researcher did not include Gauteng in the population, as saturation point was reached by the time when the other eight provinces' interviews had been conducted. All the participants were qualified social workers who were involved with the implementation of family preservation services in their areas of work. Most of the social workers were from the Department of Social Development in the various provinces, and others were from NGOs in their respective provinces. Table 8.2, overleaf, shows demographics on the participants.

Table 8.2: Demographic information on the participants

Province	No	NGO SWK	DSD SWK	Experience in FP	Gender	Qualifications
Eastern Cape	3	1	2	2 – 3	F – 2 M – 1	BA (SW) – 2 MA (SW) - 1
Western Cape	2	0	2	1 – 2	F – 2	BA (SW) – 2
Northern Cape	3	1	2	1 – 3	F – 3	BA (SW) – 2 MA (SW) - 1
KwaZulu Natal	2	0	2	0 – 2	F – 2	BA (SW) – 1 MA (SW) – 1
North West	5	1	4	2 – 3	F – 5	BA (SW) – 5
Limpopo	2	1	1	0 - 3	F – 2	BA (SW) – 2
Free State	1	0	1	0 - 2	F – 1	BA (SW) – 1
Mpumalanga	2	1	1	1 - 2	F – 1 M - 1	BA (SW) - 2

The qualitative results are discussed in Sections 8.4 and 8.5 below.

8.4   DISCUSSION OF DATA ACCORDING TO THE DIFFERENT THEMES IN THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The researcher interviewed participants from eight different provinces. After the interviews were conducted, the researcher interpreted and classified the data according to the interview schedule. The 13 themes (see Table 8.3) formed the semi-structured interview schedule that guided the researcher in the empirical research process. It is important to note that only the data of the 20 participants who were employed in the Social Development Sector, were trained on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, and were also implementing family preservation services are analysed below.

Table 8.3: Themes and sub-themes

THEME	SUB-THEME(S)
Theme 1: Definition of the concept of family preservation services	
Theme 2: The aim of family preservation services	
Theme 3: The objectives of family preservation services	
Theme 4: Perceptions regarding the	

THEME	SUB-THEME(S)
quality of the formulation of the *Manual*	
Theme 5: The theoretical framework of family preservation services	
Theme 6: The process followed in enabling families to access family preservation services	
Theme 7: The process followed to assess the developmental needs of a family	
Theme 8: The process followed to develop a family developmental plan	
Theme 9: The intervention process employed during the implementation of family preservation services	• Involvement of other stakeholders
Theme 10: Views on the role of social workers in the implementation of family preservation services	
Theme 11: The availability of resources to support the implementation of family preservation services	• Insufficiency of funds
Theme 12: Experiences regarding the implementation process of family preservation services	
Theme 13: Views on training needs for social workers in the implementation of family preservation services	• The need for further training

The responses to these themes are discussed in detail below. Participants' answers are cited verbatim, where appropriate (highlighted by italics), to illustrate the thinking of the participants.

8.4.1.1 Theme 1: Definition of the concept of family preservation services

In exploring this theme, the researcher intended to determine whether social workers, as implementers of family preservation services, understood the meaning of this concept. The responses of 20 of the social workers who were implementing family preservation services reflected only a vague knowledge and understanding of the definition of the concept of family preservation services. These social workers indicated that they understood the term to mean just keeping families together, irrespective of circumstances. Their responses made this evident:

- *"It is a process of keeping families together and avoiding removal of any member of the family."*

- *"It is sort of a preventative measure to preserve families at all costs."*

- *"It is a way of making sure that families are kept together and ensuring safety of the family members."*

- *"It is a way of keeping families together, not necessarily staying together or physical unity, but keeping the structure and it extends beyond nuclear family."*

- *"To make sure that family stick together, as they are a focal point of society."*

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:10) presents various definitions of family preservation, implying that all services rendered by local departments or civil society to help a family (health care, child and youth care, counselling, etc.) can be termed family preservation services.

The researcher concludes that the definitions that are provided in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* are too broad, and therefore result in confusion about the concept of family preservation services.

8.4.1.2 Theme 2: The aim of family preservation services

This theme looked at whether social workers who are implementing family preservation services are knowledgeable about the aim of family preservation services. The responses of 18 of the participants reveal that most of them are familiar with the aim of family preservation services, although they could not clearly articulate it as outlined in the *Manual*:

- *"I think it is to make sure that we keep families well functional as the integral part of the community."*

- *"It is to keep the family together."*

- *"It is to preserve family life that family should be together, they have to care for one another."*

- *"It is to strengthen families and to preserve them, not to focus on placements as such, but to bring the family together."*

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- *"It is to ensure that families do keep together and also to strengthen family relationships."*
- *"It is to keep families together in peace, and also to make sure that whatever the intervention made by social workers is for the best interests of the children.*"

Two of the participants did not seem to be familiar with the specific aims of family preservation services. They responded as follows:

- *"What I have realized when families disintegrate, there is no harmony and there is no peace, everyone is living their own life."*
- *"I think the aim is to alleviate problems that are happening, like having people on the streets, high rates of divorce and high rates of children committing crime."*

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Development, 2008b:42) indicates that the aims of family preservation are, amongst other things, to keep families together and safe, to provide support mechanisms to families in order for them to function well.

In the researcher's opinion, the aims of family preservation services as described in the *Manual* are too numerous and the descriptions are too broad. This can cause confusion among social workers as implementers of family preservation services. The participants confused the aims of family preservation services with the objectives of the programme, which are not explicitly stated in the *Manual*. The importance of setting a goal is emphasised by Roux (2000:117), who explains that aims are an unrealized state not yet achieved by the members of an organization, but which they regard as desirable.

8.4.1.3 Theme 3: The objectives of family preservation services

The researcher intended to ascertain whether the social workers who are implementing family preservation services are aware of the objectives of family preservation services. The responses of 16 of the participants showed that they did not know the objectives of family preservation services, and others were of

the opinion that the objectives were the same as the aims. This became clear from responses such as the following:

- "*It is to keep families together and strengthen family relationships that are what I can think of.*"

- "*I am not sure, it is to keep families together, avoid removal of family members from their families.*"

- "*It feels like it is the answers I have given previously.*"

- "*If we can preserve the family, then we will be able to combat the crime in our society, it starts in the family first, then it can go to the community.*"

- "*It is to support the family to function, also to empower the family, but it also depends where you are at when you interact with the family, that will guide with the objectives of family preservation.*"

Four of the participants were confident that they understood the objectives of family preservation services when they shared the following:

- "*The objectives are to protect and use the strengths of the family and the community or anything at your disposal to preserve the family.*"

- "*The objective of family preservation is to engage with the family and make sure that the family is part and parcel of the agreements being done and if there are problems, the family should take part.*"

- "*The objective is to ensure that there are no disputes among family members and it is all about rendering counselling and mediation where there are disputes and identify the strengths of the family.*"

- "*I think objectives are the principles that underline or ground family preservation services and it is the grounding that gives us impetus to go forward and it shapes our thinking to have certain knowledge on how families need to function.*"

The researcher is of the opinion that because the objectives of the *Manual on Family Preservation* are not explicitly stated in the *Manual* it is difficult for social workers to understand the objectives of family preservation services; hence they confuse the concept of an "aim" with that of an "objective". Objectives are supposed to give direction on the implementation process. Therefore the

omission of the objectives in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* undermines many processes that could lead to successful implementation of these services.

Referring to the importance of clear objectives in a policy process, Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:57) argue that problem identification leads nowhere if clear objectives are not identified and formulated. Thus, policy analysis becomes impossible if the problem is not defined and the objectives of the process are not identified and formulated in clear terms.

8.4.1.4 Theme 4: Perceptions regarding the quality of the formulation of the Manual

This theme focused on ascertaining the perceptions of social workers as implementers regarding the quality of the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. The responses of 20 of the participants indicated that they thought the formulation of the *Manual* is clear and effective, and that they appreciate the way it has been conceptualized:

- *"I think as a basis, it puts things together, it coordinates and shapes one's thinking."*
- *"I will say it is well formulated, it's developed in [such] a way that it does not leave out some of the things that needed to be taken into consideration in family preservation services' matters. It's giving more information, uniformity and standardization of family preservation services."*
- *"I think the quality is good, the* Manual *has been formulated in a manner that captures all various aspects of what happens out there."*
- *"The content is very good, and very helpful to social workers."*
- *"It is well formulated, it does reflect to the way families are structured in our communities."*
- *"It was very easy for me to understand it, I think it [is] very practical."*
- *"It is good because it shows that research was done, there is more theoretic background given, instead of just highlighting what families are experiencing."*

The researcher would like to mention that the participants expressed their perceptions regarding the quality of the formulation of the *Manual* based on the general information presented on the *Manual*. The researcher would like to argue that the omission of the basic characteristics in a manual, namely, in this case a clear definition of family preservation services and objectives, is an indication that the quality of the formulation of the *Manual* might reflect some limitations as a policy document. Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:569) also acknowledge that policy formulation is a complex administrative process.

8.4.1.5 Theme 5: The theoretical framework of family preservation services

The researcher wanted to determine whether social workers implementing family preservation services understand the theoretical frameworks that underpin family preservation services. The responses of 20 of the social workers interviewed reflected some understanding of the theoretical framework outlined in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, although they also confused the framework with the ones mentioned in the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a), namely, a systems approach, the life cycle model and social development (Department of Social Development, 2008b:70). They indicated the following:

- *"A life cycle helps us to know where we are as a family."*
- *"I think it is all the approaches, like the systems approach and I am not sure about other approaches."*
- *"Family life cycle approach and systems theory."*
- *"…[a] systems approach as it emphasises the interaction among family members."*
- *"Life cycle and systems theory are the ones that are applicable to the family, though they are not visible in the implementation process*."

The theoretical framework mentioned in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* differs from those outlined by some authors as family preservation models, namely, a crisis intervention model, a home-based model, and a family treatment model (*Evaluation of Family Preservation and Reunification Program*, 2001; Hepworth *et al.*, 2002:382; Nelson *et al.*, 1990:10).

In the researcher's opinion, the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* does not distinguish clearly enough between the models and theoretical frameworks. For example, the family life cycle is a useful model for family therapists, because it assists in the processes of understanding and assessing functioning, as well as of creating therapeutic strategies and interventions, by offering a set of guidelines for considering individual and family growth and development (Becvar & Becvar, 2006:110).

The researcher acknowledges that there is no single theoretical framework that can be used to address all the needs of families, because of diversity, however, it would be to the benefit of the implementers of this *Manual* to follow clearly articulated theoretical frameworks in the execution of family preservation services that are informed by the *Draft National Family Policy*, also making a distinction between the approaches and the models. The reason for the researcher's view on this is that an approach influences a professional's decision-making in analysing human functioning processes (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:24). The responses of the social workers who participated in this study explicitly indicate that the theoretical frameworks in the *Manual* are not clearly outlined, with some resultant confusion.

8.4.1.6 Theme 6: The process followed in enabling families to access family preservation services

The participants were requested to explain the process that was followed in enabling families to access family preservation services in order to understand the extent to which family preservation services are accessible. The responses of 13 participants indicated that some families come to the offices of social workers and ask for family preservation services voluntarily. Some request services during advocacy campaigns in communities, and others are identified by volunteers through door-to-door campaigns and are then referred to social work offices. They explained the process as follows:

- 217 -

- *"We do have caregivers in the area who go door-to-door to campaign or market the services of the Department including family preservation and they refer difficult cases to social workers for intense interventions."*

- *"We have six volunteers and three community caregivers who go door-to-door identifying families that are at risk, and they would refer them to our offices."*

- *"I think they access services in three major ways, through advocacy, walk into the offices and request services. Lastly, it is through referrals especially from the farm areas."*

- *"We deal with cases which come to our offices, most of the time being self-referrals."*

- *"In my area, families access family preservation services through social disaster relief. As social workers we issue social distress [assistance] and provide families with counselling, which helps a lot in family preservation."*

- *"Some know where to find social workers, though others would first go to other Departments, like the Department of Justice, when they experience marital problems and our office would then receive such referrals from the Department of Justice."*

According to the researcher, it is remarkable to realize the important role played by the volunteers in assisting families to access family preservation services. The *Manual* does not identify and clarify the role of volunteers, as was indicated in the quantitative findings.

Berry (1999:199) refers to family preservation practice as home-based services. The researcher therefore understands that family preservation services are supposed to be mainly home-based, although office sessions are also allowed. It could be deduced from the responses of the participants that both home visits and office sessions are well used by the social workers, despite the challenges of high case-loads and limited resources.

It was also alarming to hear from seven of the participants that they were of the opinion that family preservation services are not easily accessible, due to the high case-loads among social workers, political interference, and also the fact that

priority is given to other programmes. This claim is supported by the findings of Strydom (2010:199), who explains that high case-loads are directly linked to a shortage of social workers, as well as the high turnover in NGOs. The participants commented as follows:

- *"It is actually not easy for families to access family preservation services because of the overload of cases among social workers. The priority is given to urgent cases."*

- *"The area is targeted through municipalities and it is politically motivated because we target people who have complained about lack of basic services to the politicians."*

The researcher concludes that the process outlined on the *Manual* regarding accessibility of family preservation services was correctly understood by the social workers implementing these services, but that the process itself leaves much to be desired.

8.4.1.7 Theme 7: The process followed to assess the developmental needs of the family

The participants were asked to explain the process that followed to assess the developmental needs of a family. All the participants reflected on their familiarity with the process of assessing the developmental needs of the family, and would even involve other stakeholders as indicated both in the *Policy* and the *Manual*:

- *"We first conduct a family conference and get all the family strengths, and then we work from the strengths and weaknesses of the family."*

- *"I use family life-cycle and then lead the family to identify their needs."*

- *"We follow [a] systems approach and also make use of the multi-disciplinary team and other role players."*

- *"I take a step to engage with the family, I would find out their strength and weaknesses and together we would draw up a plan and later evaluate it."*

- *"Firstly, I would engage the person with the problem, then from an individual I would engage the family as well as other stakeholders if there are perhaps problems with the children."*

- *"I think we usually look at the strength of the family and the weaknesses, we also look at the available resources and their support networks. But the main thing is the strength and the weaknesses and resources."*
- *"We do the initial assessment and sometimes we would do home visits and then come up with the interventions."*

The researcher is of the opinion that most social workers as implementers of family preservation services are following the recommended process of family developmental assessment as stipulated in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*.

In line with the above responses, Hafer and Stredler-Brown (2003:4) state that the best practices in family developmental assessment include family involvement, developmental appropriateness of assessment and a team approach. This implies that family developmental assessments in family preservation services should recognise the important role of the family in the assessment process, type and method of assessment, the needs and developmental stage of the family and collaboration with other relevant stakeholders.

8.4.1.8 Theme 8: The process followed to develop a family developmental plan

The participants were asked to explain the process they followed to develop a family developmental plan. The responses of 20 of the participants showed that they followed the *Manual*'s process of developing a family developmental plan well. They mentioned that the content has to specify the roles of the social worker, family and other role players. They admitted that at times it might not be possible to compile formal plans with families, but that tasks are negotiated and verbal agreements are reached. The participants explained the process as follows:
- "*The plan outlines the role of a social worker, the family, the extended family, even Chiefs in the community and we also look at the available resources that the family can utilize.*"

- *"When I develop a plan for the family, though each member has a role to play in the plan, it is a family plan, not for individuals, unless there is a need for an individual plan."*

- *"When developing a plan, we look at challenges and the tasks to be performed. We also make sure that we don't impose on the family, rather we work with them as partners. We also look at their strengths and weaknesses so that they can be taught new skills."*

- *"The plans, although we do not formally draft developmental plans, we do develop a way forward out of every family interaction and we would agree with the family on how to address any challenges they are facing and who is going to do what, in terms of roles and responsibilities of family members."*

McCroskey and Meezan (1998:62) suggest that family preservation workers should first assess a family and its support systems and then develop a service plan. The researcher notes that the participants are following the recommended process of compiling family developmental plans from the *Manual*, and even in instances where they are unable to compile formal plans, they are able to negotiate tasks that need to be performed by various role players and reach agreements.

8.4.1.9 Theme 9: The intervention processes employed during the implementation of family preservation services

This theme was explored to determine the perceptions of social workers regarding the required interventions on family preservation services. The participants reflected on various interventions used by social workers when implementing family preservation services. Some could clearly articulate the services that comprise of family preservation, while others were not certain. It is therefore important to acknowledge that only 17 of the participants could clearly indicate the interventions they used when implementing family preservation services. They stated the following:

- *"The intervention should take place according to the plan and then the social worker would have to link the family with the identified needed resources and then monitor the process through conducting family conferences."*

- *"Counselling services if people are going through some rehabilitation others will be referred to institutions, then after that we would look at reintegration and rehabilitation services."*

- *"In our area we usually deal with family disputes, at first you start with the person who brought the case and see if they can make other family members join as well. Then we can conduct six to ten sessions."*

- *"It is the family group conferencing, the individual counselling, couple counselling and the family therapy, we conduct parenting skills programmes, though marriage preparation and marriage enrichment are not done on a large scale."*

The above responses are in line with the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a), which mentions that social workers provide a wide range of family preservation services, including case management, advocacy, behaviour modelling and parent education, as well as concrete services. Furthermore, it involves ensuring delivery of appropriate services and programmes to the family, with social service practitioners using a collaborative model. Horchak-Andino et al. (2006:44) explain that family preservation services combine concrete and therapeutic services and skills-based teaching.

The responses of three of the participants suggested that they were confused and uncertain about the interventions they need to use when implementing family preservation services. This is clear from their responses:

- *"I am not sure, but I think, if it's families with children perhaps they have behavioural problems, we would look into parenting skills programmes and I will also give an opportunity to children to express themselves."*

- *"We supervise the family on regular basis to check how they are doing from the last time we spoke to them."*

- *"When there is a need for intervention with the children, we arrange that."*

The researcher attributes the confusion on interventions to the lack of clarity on intervention processes in the *Manual*. However, it is important to note Berry et

al.'s (2000:192) view regarding the nature of services in family preservation, namely that this approach allows caseworkers to do "whatever it takes" to reduce the vulnerability of families, which in essence means that an array of services are provided.

- *Sub-theme: Involvement of other stakeholders*
  Some participants were able to mention the importance of a collaborative model, which involves working with other stakeholders, while others did not respond on this:
  o *"... the schools, the local municipality officers and the Chiefs are useful stakeholders that we use. [In] some other community there are youth clubs and the church are some of the important resources that we use."*
  o *"Mainly it is the Department of Justice, the Department of Social Development, the SAPS, and there are existing forums within the sector namely, Children's Forum, Victim Empowerment Forum, and the Disaster Management Forum."*
  o *"Usually it will be health practitioners, and we have home-base carers, then there will be educators, depending on the case if it's a school child, others attend a church then we liaise with the church."*
  o *"We collaborate with psychologists, pastors, NGOs, caregivers, teachers in schools, the home base carers, those are the main stakeholders used."*
  o *"Legal advisors, divorce court, if one of the family members have issues about the property."*

As already indicated in Chapter 6, acknowledging the involvement of other stakeholders in delivering family preservation services, Zastrow (2003:177) admits that "it is impossible for all services needed by a family to be provided by a social worker". This implies that a social worker needs to refer and coordinate the collaboration process with other stakeholders in order to address the needs of families holistically.

8.4.1.10   Theme 10: Views on the role of social workers in the implementation of family preservation services

The participants were requested to explain their views on the role of social workers in the implementation of family preservation services. In their responses, 15 of the participants referred to the role of a social worker as vital in the implementation of family preservation services. However, they also acknowledged the need for social workers to be capacitated to present family preservation services in order to implement quality services. The participants mentioned the following:

- *"I think a social worker has a crucial role in terms of implementing family preservation services, especially when it comes to assessment, communication and appropriate interventions."*

- *"I would like to believe that the social worker is the first point of entry in a person's life when he or she [is] experiencing some crisis and how that person or community is assisted has a big impact in the lives."*

- *"Social workers are among the key role players in implementing family preservation, but I also wonder to what extent the social workers are equipped with regard to family relationships, especially with latest information or practical techniques or theories."*

- *"The social worker has an important role of assessing, educating and empowering the families."*

- *"The social worker needs to market the concept of family preservation and also make a follow-up on cases referred by volunteers from communities to intervene."*

Five of the participants felt that social workers are unable to render quality family preservation services because of the generic nature of their job. While others were also uncertain about the role of social workers in implementing family preservation services, as became clear from answers such as the following:

- *"The role of the social worker is important in family preservation, although we are not specializing we are doing generic work, sometimes, most of the time it is touch and go."*

- *"Most of the time, what is known as a stumbling block in social workers' implementing programmes effectively even this one of family preservation is the high case-load that social workers have."*
- *"The role of a social worker is to bring to the family the skills and the steps they can take and then look at the outcome product."*

The researcher realizes that there is no dedicated staff capacity for the implementation of family preservation services, and that can be included among the implementation challenges – resources are neither clearly stipulated nor made specifically available for the realization of these services. Even if most participants do realize the important role that social workers play in the implementation of family preservation services, unless human resources are specified in the *Manua*l, many challenges will remain in achieving the desired outcomes.

Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:571) argue that criticisms levelled against poor implementation of policies or policy gaps arise from various challenges. For the implementation of family preservation services to be effective, it is important for both those who formulate policy and those who implement it to collaborate and coordinate services in order to identify and address gaps in service delivery, thereby making use of the top-down and bottom-up approaches respectively (Jann & Wegrich, 2006:52; Pulzl & Treib, 2006:90).

8.4.1.11 Theme 11: The availability of resources to support the implementation of family preservation services

The participants were asked to explain in detail how family preservation services are funded in their areas of work. The answers of 17 participants indicated that there were no disaggregated funds allocated for family preservation services, while three participants stated that exact amounts of funds were available for family preservation services. The funding that is provided to NGOs was regarded as limited, and participants indicated that such funding was paid irregularly. They responded as follows:

- "*Resources are not enough: as an NGO the only funding that was received were only stipends for volunteers and the bookkeeper.*"
- "*I don't know because my NGO has not been funded until now.*"
- "*In our area we have FAMSA and they have very good parenting programmes which are the basis of family preservation services and [FAMSA] are funded by government. Though the funding is also not enough because it was cut by R400 000.*"
- "*The Department of Social Development is funding NGOs to implement family preservation services and also provide material assistance to indigent or poor families, but I don't know the details in terms of the amount.*"
- "*I cannot say there is a dedicated budget for family preservation services because social workers are doing generic work. There are usually no funds put aside for family preservation services.*"
- "*What normally happens is that our province decides on the programmes to be funded and it is usually R100 000 per programme and family preservation is currently funded in three areas.*"
- "*Family preservation is not properly funded and most of the time we use volunteers who are not empowered enough themselves to render family preservation services.*"

The researcher views the above responses as indicative of the fact that dedicated resources have not been allocated for the implementation of family preservation services, which has serious repercussions for the effective implementation of any programmes. This also indicates that the implementation of family preservation services is not prioritized with regard to the allocation of resources. In line with the above responses, Rushefsky (1996:12) argues that the mere adoption of a solution is seldom sufficient to achieve a policy goal, because programmes require funding. As in the other phases of the policy process, budgeting is a multifaceted process that involves many actors at different levels of government.

- **Sub-theme: Insufficiency of funds**
  Most participants doubted that funds available are sufficient. They stated the following:

- 226 -

- o *"It is not funded enough. But I don't want to complain."*
- o *"Certainly not. It compromises the quality of the programme itself. So I think this is why some of the professions will not be aware 'what is family preservation'."*
- o *"...they are not funded enough, the Department gives what they can afford."*
- o *"They are not funded, that is the challenge, there is currently no funding, since the introduction of family preservation service I would say the challenge has been funding to make sure that the services are rolled out to all social workers and stakeholders."*
- o *"No, it's not enough for it to be successful because there is a need to make follow-ups in each and every case."*

The researcher notes that there is a need to clearly articulate appropriate resources in the formulation of the *Manual* (people, funding, and facilities) to implement family preservation services.

8.4.1.12 Theme 12: Experiences regarding the implementation process of family preservation services

In their responses, the 20 participants stated that family preservation services are not implemented as they are supposed to be, because of high case-loads and other operational demands on the social workers who are supposed to implement these services:

- *"It is a good programme if it is followed up to the core but the problem is that there are few implementers and most of the time the programme relies on volunteers."*
- *"At least there is progress since we have our volunteers. They conduct door-to-door visits and refer cases to social workers when required."*
- *"Family preservation services are very important, but the way we deal with families, we never make follow-ups and even the assessments that we conduct are not thorough at all."*
- *"We are caught up in many things. We operate in a crisis mode constantly. The fact that we are not specializing, we end up concentrating on urgent cases and not delivering quality services."*

- *"It is a good model that should be implemented by all government departments and NGOs. It should build the country if implemented properly."*
- *"The implementation has not been what it should be, because not all social workers know what is expected of them regarding family preservation and there are limited resources allocated to it."*
- *"Family preservation services are implemented, but we are not implementing family preservation correctly because when it comes to families, we only concentrate on awareness campaigns."*

Mamburu (2004:165) points out that policy implementation means that money is spent, laws are enforced, employees are hired and plans of action are formulated. If employees who are hired are unable to deliver according to policy objectives, that will result to policy failure. The researcher therefore believes that it is vital that family preservation services be prioritized through dedicated professionals if the desired outcomes are to be achieved.

This view is also held by Jann and Wegrich (2006:51), who state that the ideal process of policy implementation would include the specification of programme details, for example, how and by which agencies or organizations the programme should be executed, how the law or programme should be *interpreted*, and how *resources* should be allocated, and which personnel will execute the programme.

8.4.1.13   Theme 13: Views on training needs for social workers in the implementation of family preservation services

The responses of all 20 of these participants indicated that they attended training on family preservation services. They also indicated the need for a refresher training course in order to keep up with the new developments in the field of family preservation:

- *"I attended training on family preservation services and I also had to roll it out but we never made any follow-ups with regard to refresher courses to those social workers. I also feel that I do need a refresher course and I think that they might be new developments."*

- *"I attended the training and it improved my knowledge and skills, but because of new developments, I will always need further training, it is easy to think that you know everything meanwhile there is a lot that is happening."*
- *"I cannot remember the first training that I attended, but the* Manual on Family Preservation Services *opened my mind."*
- *"I attended the training and it really helped me a lot. But I still feel that there is a need to roll the training out."*
- *"I received the training and I also rolled it out though I was facilitating only a small part of the* Manual *as other facilitators were doing other sections. I don't think training is ever enough and I would recommend a short course on family preservation at least every month."*
- *"I attended the training and it assisted me a lot. I am not sure at this point if I need more training, but what I would like is that all the implementers come together and share challenges and solutions in service delivery."*

From the responses of the social workers who are implementing family preservation services, it became evident to the researcher that at least these 20 participants attended the training on family preservation services in 2008 and are of the view that it supported them with the implementation of family preservation services.

- ***Sub-theme: The need for further training***
  It became evident during the interviews that even the participants who were trained on the *Manual* were also in need of further training. Most were of the opinion that training should be an ongoing process, due to new continuous developments in family preservation services:
  - *"I think training is always important, there will be new developments, if you are not trained you will sit there and think you know everything, meanwhile there is a lot that is happening."*
  - *"I as a person do not need training, but there is a need to roll it out to others."*
  - *"Training makes the implementation easy, I think it would assist us very much in the programme."*

The importance of training or building capacity among implementers in order to enhance the implementation of a policy is stressed by Brynard (2000:178), who emphasises that "commitment is crucial, because governments may have the most logical policy imaginable, but if those responsible for carrying it out are unable to do so, little will happen". The researcher agrees, because it would be impossible for the implementers to implement the policy directives of family preservation services if they do not receive any ongoing training to keep abreast with new developments in the field of family preservation.

8.5   DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

In the quantitative data analysis in Section 8.2, a total of 11 characteristics that were identified by means of the checklist were discussed. The methodology for content analysing the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* involved latent coding. Neuman (2000:296) describes latent coding as a guide that assists researchers to interpret a text and also determines whether certain items of the document answer the research questions through the presence or absence of variables which are characteristics of the document. Babbie and Mouton (2011:399) contend that even if the research does code latent content on the basis of overall judgements, it is necessary to represent the coding decision numerically. In this study therefore, variables were scored on the checklist as 1 and 0 for their presence or absence respectively.

The sample for this research was drawn from eight provinces with the exception of Gauteng. Diverse experiences regarding the formulation and the implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* were found. Both quantitative and qualitative results are discussed in this section.

8.5.1   Definition

According to Roux (2000:115), policy documents are expected to define an issue under review in detail, using clear, operational and measurable terms. Jann and Wegrich (2006:45) also emphasise the importance of formulating a clear

definition of a social problem. For Fouché (2005:116), the problem that a policy document wants to address should be defined in clear and measurable terms so that the reader will understand what the focus of the services needs to be. The quantitative results indicated that the definition of family preservation as presented in the *Manual* is too broad to be measured, and therefore is not clear and operational. This finding was also confirmed by the experiences of the social workers who were interviewed. Through qualitative findings, it was found that most social worker's responses regarding the definition of family preservation reflected a vague understanding, as they could not define the focus of their services beyond "keeping families together" or "preserving" families. The researcher attributes this vague understanding on the broad definition of family preservation services as presented in the *Manual*. Thus the manner in which the *Manual* defines family preservation may cause confusion among implementers of family preservation services.

8.5.2 Objectives

Emphasising the importance of specification of objectives, Gil (1992:77) states that the objectives of social policies constitute key criteria for the evaluation of their social significance and the analysis of their effectiveness. Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:571) also caution that a statement of the problem leads nowhere if clear goals and objectives are not identified and formulated. The quantitative results revealed that the objectives are omitted in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. However, the qualitative findings indicated that the social workers conflated the stated aims with objectives (they states the aims when they were asked about the objectives) and four social workers confidently tried to formulate their own objectives. The confusion among these social workers regarding the objectives confirmed the quantitative findings. The researcher is of the opinion that objectives are supposed to give direction to the implementation process. Therefore, the omission of explicit objectives in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* undermines many processes that could lead to the successful implementation of these services.

8.5.3 Theoretical framework

Gil (1992:79) points out that "once the objectives and value premises of a policy are clarified, theories or hypotheses underlying policy strategy should be made explicit". In the quantitative data analysis, it was found that the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* recommends the family life cycle model, a developmental approach, family preservation and an integrated approach. By contrast the *Draft National Family Policy* recommends the life cycle model, a systems approach and social development as the theoretical frameworks to be considered in rendering services to families. Thus, the life cycle is the only model that the *Draft Policy* and the *Manual* have in common.

Not surprisingly, then, the responses of most participants showed a lack of clarity on the theoretical frameworks mentioned in the *Manual*, because some spoke of a systems approach, which is only mentioned in the *Draft Policy*, while others also referred to theories that are not even listed in the *Manua*l. Only a few participants mentioned the family life cycle model, which is in the *Manual.* Given that the *Draft Policy* is the key document that informed the development of the *Manual*, these differences with regard to the theoretical frameworks have the potential to pose challenges to the implementers of family services.

Some authors propose and/or discuss different models for family preservation services which are also different from the *Manual,* namely a crisis intervention model, a home-based model, and a family treatment model (*Evaluation of Family Preservation and Reunification Program*, 2001; Hepworth et al., 2002:382; Nelson et al., 1990:10).

The *Manual* also fails to distinguish clearly between a model and a theoretical approach. For example, the family life cycle is a useful model for family therapists, because it assists in the processes of understanding and assessing the functioning of families. A theoretical approach on the other hand, refers to the way the professional person will think and approach a person, family or system (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:24). For example, the developmental approach focuses on "the strengths of the individual, group or community and it recognizes

- 232 -

the capacity for growth and development" (Integrated Service Delivery Model, Department of Social Development, 2005:5). The *Manual* refers to a model and a theoretical approach as if they were the same concept. Kerlinger (quoted by De Vos, 2005b:39) explains that the difference between a theory and model is that "a model springs from theory" as they bear a number of important similarities. It is therefore vital that a distinction be made between the models and the theoretical frameworks for the benefit of the implementers.

8.5.4 Implementation instruments

The quantitative analysis showed the *Manual* does not refer to any specific human resources, infrastructure or financial means of implementing family preservation services. The participants also reported that no disaggregated funds are allocated for family preservation services. The funding provided to NGOs was regarded as limited, and participants indicated that such funding was paid irregularly. Brynard, Cloete and De Coning (2013:148) indicate that capacity with regard to policy implementation obviously refers to the availability of and access to concrete and tangible resources (human, financial, logistical and technological resources). Regarding implementation instruments, Rushefsky (1996:14) argues that there needs to be an organization with appropriate resources (people, funding, and facilities) to carry out the implementation process. Mamburu (2004:165) mentions financial and human resources, as well as plans of action as important aspects for policy implementation.

It is of great concern that, when participants were asked about their experiences of the implementation of family preservation services, and about the accessibility of family preservation services to families, most participants stated that family preservation services are not implemented as they are supposed to be. They attributed this failure to implement these services properly to high case-loads and other operational demands on the social workers. Some participants mentioned that family preservation services are not easily accessible due to high case-loads among social workers and the fact that priority is given to programmes other than family preservation services. These findings are in line with Strydom (2010:195) pointed out – the referred to "a further obstacle to the implementation of

preventative social services … a lack of people power, which is linked to the fact that there is insufficient funding of welfare services". The issue of high case-loads is directly linked to a shortage of social workers, as well as high turnover among social workers in NGOs (Strydom, 2010:199).

8.5.5   Training and capacity building

As one of its aims, the *Manual* states that it seeks to "train social service professionals to deliver services to families from a family preservation perspective". In order for the programme envisaged by the developers of the *Manual* to be implemented efficiently, the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* (Department of Social Development, 2007a:52-57) mandates the roll-out of appropriate training and education by all provinces. Thus all social service professionals are mandated to implement family preservation services as stipulated by the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* and the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a).

The qualitative data analysis revealed that there was a very serious policy gap with regard to the implementation of the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services (*Department of Social Development*, 2007a)*. The researcher found that 17 participants out of the 37 who were initially interviewed had never attended any formal training on family preservation, even though they were instructed to implement such services in practice. As explained in Section 7.7.3.3, due to this limitation, these 17 participants' data were excluded from the empirical findings, because including their data might present skew conclusions regarding the formulation and implementation of family preservation services. Other potential participants listed in the sample frame could also not be included in the research study because they were also not trained on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.* The need to exclude such a large number of participants because they had not been trained on the *Manual* indicates a serious gap with regard to the training and capacity building of the intended implementers of family preservation services.

Only 20 participants indicated that they had attended training on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. Some wanted a refresher training course in order to keep up with the new developments in the field of family preservation. Rushefsky (1996:14) cautions that policies and their intentions are very often changed or even distorted if they are not interpreted for those who must implement them. Similarly, Jann and Wegrich (2006:51) assert that an ideal process of policy implementation would include the proper interpretation of the policy or programme. The researcher agrees with the views of these authors because proper training on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* for all the implementers would minimize implementation challenges and increase efficiency and effective implementation of family preservation services.

8.5.6   Role players

There are many role players who participate in the public policy-making process and the eventual implementation. The *Draft National Family Policy* mentions relevant government departments, social service practitioners, volunteers and civil society. The quantitative results show that the *Manual* does not refer to the important role of volunteers in the policy-making process, but the qualitative results confirmed the role of volunteers with regard to possible beneficiaries' access to family preservation services in communities. Most participants indicated that families who need to access family preservation services are often identified by volunteers through door-to-door campaigns and are then referred to social work offices. Meyer and Cloete (2000:105) assert that community participation in the policy process can be achieved through the direct involvement of ordinary members of the community, who can be considered volunteers. Thus, the exclusion of the role of volunteers is a serious gap.

8.5.7   Monitoring and evaluation

Cloete (2000:211) indicated that policy evaluation refers broadly to the process of finding out about a public policy in action, the means being employed to implement it and the objectives being served. According to Pulzl and Treib (2006:90), policy-making is supposed to contribute to problem-solving or at least

to a reduction of the problem load. Rossi et al. (2004:48) advise that early in the planning process, evaluators should give explicit attention to the nature of the primary stakeholders. The findings of this study indicate that the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* does not refer to a monitoring and evaluation plan for family preservation services and the *Manual* has also omitted the primary stakeholders who are supposed to play a significant role in the evaluation process.

8.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has recapped the research methodology used in this research before presenting the quantitative and qualitative findings. The content analysis that produced the quantitative findings of the study revealed that the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* has a number of limitations. These limitations were confirmed by the data gathered in semi-structured interviews with 20 social workers. These limitations are an unclear definition of what family preservation services entail, some confusion on the theoretical frameworks or models which are supposed to guide family preservation services, the omission of explicit objectives from the *Manual*, a lack of clarity on the process of resource allocation with regard to finances, the role of volunteers, and high case-loads, which are linked to a shortage of social workers, a lack of continuous training of social service professionals, and a lack of clarity on a monitoring and evaluation plan.

In the next chapter, the conclusions and recommendations regarding the research study are presented, and areas where the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* can be improved are also pointed out.

CHAPTER 9:
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1   INTRODUCTION

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Department of Social Develop-ment, 2008b) was developed by the South African Department of Social Development as one of the mechanisms to implement the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a)*.* From 2008 to 2009, social service professionals were trained on the *Manual* in all the provinces. This is in line with the *Norms and Standards Policy on Developmental Social Welfare Services* (Department of Social Development, 2007a), which clearly mandates all provinces to provide capacity building and education on family preservation services and also ensure the implementation thereof.

In this chapter, the researcher draws conclusions and recommendations based on the empirical findings discussed in the previous chapter. The content analysis through the checklist and semi-structured interviews provided valuable information which can be used to improve the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. The researcher also indicates whether the goal and objectives of the study have been achieved, and presents conclusions and recommendations, first, with regard to the **quantitative empirical findings** on the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* (Section 9.3.1), and, second, with regard to the **qualitative empirical findings** on social workers' experiences regarding the formulation and implementation thereof (Section 9.3.2).

9.2   RESEARCH GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this study was to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and the implementation thereof.

The researcher achieved this goal by meeting the following four objectives, as discussed below.

9.2.1 Objective 1

The first objective was theoretically conceptualising the following aspects which are central to family preservation services:

- systems theory, which regards the family as a functioning unit in which members solve their problems, make their own decisions and achieve collective goals;
- the family life cycle model, as a way to understand the different challenges that families encounter in their lifetime;
- the conceptualisation of family preservation services as used in different ways in various programmes;
- the stages of the policy cycle and situating the *Manual on Family Preservation Services;* and
- an overview of the *Draft National Family Policy* and the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* as fundamental documents in the study;

The researcher discussed family **systems theory**, which sees a family as a functioning unit in which members solve their problems, make their own decisions, and achieve collective goals, as a vital approach in preserving families. Referring to the importance of a theoretical framework among practitioners, Prochaska and Norcross (2003:5) argue that without a guiding theory clinicians would be vulnerable, directionless creatures bombarded with literally hundreds of impressions and pieces of information in a single session. Benokraitis (2011:32) advises that practitioners use more than one theoretical framework because reality is complex and family issues are diverse. Preservation of families can also be considered from more than one theoretical framework, but selecting the most relevant theoretical frameworks is vital for contextual insight into the phenomenon.

Family dynamics were also analysed according to the phases of **the family life cycle model**. The literature focused on the family life cycle model as a way to

understand the different challenges that families encounter in their lifetimes. The notion of a family life cycle is based on the premise that families go through a process from birth, through growth, to decline and death. A useful way of conceptualizing the family life cycle is to look at ways in which families must alter their attitudes in order to adapt to each stage.

Furthermore, **family preservation** was conceptualized. Various programmes use family preservation in different ways. For example, some programmes specifically employ the term to denote family services that are family-centred and crisis-oriented. It also has distinct characteristics, such as being delivered in the home, being intensive in nature, of short duration, as well as focusing on family strengths. In particular, the *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a) describes family preservation as services to families that focus on family strengths in order to strengthen family systems as a way of keeping them together as far as possible.

Chapters 5 and 6 also formed part of the literature review. Chapter 5 discussed the **stages of the policy cycle**. It focused on the policy-making process, which can be broken up into a series of stages, including the identification of the problem, the estimation of the problem, the calculation of the risks, costs and benefits of each possible solution, the selection of solutions, the implementation of the selected option, the evaluation of results and, finally, the termination of policies based on the conclusions reached by its evaluation. Chapter 6 presented an **overview and summary of the *Draft National Family Policy* and the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*** as fundamental documents in this study. The limitations of both the *Draft National Family Policy* and the *Manual on Family Preservations Services* were exposed in this chapter, with reference to the literature. Chapters 5 and 6 are therefore the main chapters that were used, with Gil's (1992) framework, as a guide for the development of the quantitative data collection tool used in this study, namely the checklist.

9.2.2 Objectives 2 and 3

The second and third objectives were analysing, by means of an empirical study, the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation thereof.

The research approach used to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation thereof was a mixed methods research approach, which consisted of both quantitative and qualitative components. The use of two datasets provided a complete understanding of the research problem, as the quantitative results were clarified and supplemented by the qualitative data. An explanatory mixed methods research design was chosen as the most suitable design for the research study. Sequential timing within the explanatory mixed methods design, with the quantitative data collected and analysed first, followed by the quantitative data allowed for the qualitative results to build on the quantitative results. Conducting qualitative results on the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* enabled the researcher to clarify and discuss the implications of some of the limitations of the *Manual* identified in the first phase.

9.2.3 Objective 4

The fourth objective was formulating conclusions and making recommendations regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in order to enhance service delivery to families.

Objective 4 is addressed in the next section of this chapter, in which the conclusions and recommendations are presented.

9.3   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The empirical process was an enriching and fruitful experience for the researcher. The following research questions were formulated for this study:

- How does the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* adhere to the requirements of a policy document?
- What are the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*?

In considering the empirical results, the researcher can confirm that the research questions have been answered. In respect of the quantitative data, the findings revealed limitations in the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. These limitations are an unclear and broad definition of what family preservation entails, some confusion on the theoretical frameworks and models which are supposed to guide family preservation services, the omission of explicit objectives from the *Manual*, a lack of clarity on the process of resource allocation with regard to finances, on the role of volunteers and on a monitoring and evaluation plan.

The qualitative data collected also exposed an unclear definition of family preservation and the related services, confusion due to the omission of explicit objectives, a lack of clarity on a theoretical framework underpinning services, a lack of dedicated implementers for family preservation services, as social workers reported high case-loads which are linked to a shortage of social workers, and poor coordination of ongoing training and capacity-building on family preservation services. A lack of clarity with regard to financial resources is another challenge that has a negative impact on effective implementation of family preservation services.

The conclusions and recommendations are discussed below under each of the themes which formed the structure of the data gathered in both the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study.

9.3.1 Quantitative study: content analysis

This section focuses on conclusions and recommendations based on the findings obtained by means of a checklist designed to evaluate the elements of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, as indicated in the previous chapter.

The conclusions and recommendations are presented according to the identified characteristics of a well-formulated policy document.

9.3.1.1 *Characteristic 1: Definition*

Policy documents are expected to define an issue under review in detail, using clear, operational and measurable terms, despite some possible differences in conceptualizing the policy process (Roux, 2000:115). The following **conclusions** were reached about the definition of family preservation services:

- The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* does not meet the requirements of providing a clear definition, because the concept is not defined in clear, operational and measurable terms. The definition provided is too broad and vague, and is therefore difficult to operationalize.
- The researcher also found that some of the definitions of other key terms are too broad and can create confusion for social workers in the implementation of family preservation services.

Recommendation: Gil (1992:76) argues that the way policy issues are defined is crucial, and if care is not taken it could limit policy analysis and the development of policy alternatives. It is therefore highly recommended that a revision of the *Manual* should include a clear and measurable definition of family preservation and the services associated with it, as this will enhance the execution of the programme, and will also provide this definition to social workers as implementers of family preservation services.

9.3.1.2 *Characteristic 2: Aim of the* Manual

According to Chambers (2000:79), a goal is a statement, in general and abstract terms, of desired qualities in human and social conditions. With regard to family

preservation services, Hurley et al. (2012:1003) state that the primary goal of family preservation services is to improve parenting skills and family functioning in order to prevent out-of-home placements. The following conclusions were reached regarding the aim of family preservation services:

- The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* clearly defines what it wants to achieve with regard to the well-being of families.

- Repetition and inconsistencies regarding the presentation of the aims in Modules 1 and 3 may cause confusion among the implementers.

- Social workers tend to read the aims as if they were objectives.

Recommendation: It is recommended that repetition and inconsistencies with regard to the presentation of the aims of family preservations be corrected in the revised *Manual*. If an aim is referred to as the end toward which effort or ambition is directed towards as stated by Fouché and De Vos (2005b:105), then it has to be clearly presented.

9.3.1.3 *Characteristic 3: Objectives of the* Manual

A policy document is expected to list the objectives which are identified as most relevant in addressing the problem. Objectives are the steps to be taken one by one, realistically, at grassroots level, in order to attain the goal(s) (Fouché & De Vos, 2005:107). Regarding the omission of explicit objectives from the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, the following **conclusions** were reached:

- No explicit objectives are provided in the *Manual*.

- Effective execution of family preservation services becomes impossible if the objectives are not identified and formulated in clear terms. This also implies that the goal of family preservation cannot be realized.

- Social workers as implementers of family preservation services lack guidance regarding the way family preservation services need to be implemented.

Recommendation: Referring to the importance of specifying the goals in the policy process, Gil (1992:77) says that objectives constitute key criteria for the evaluation of their significance. Therefore, it is recommended that the objectives of family preservation services be clearly articulated in a revision of the *Manual*

and that they be provided to social workers for more effective performance of family preservation services.

9.3.1.4 Characteristic 4: Theoretical framework

The *Draft National Family Policy* that underpins the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* recommends the life cycle, systems approach and social development approach as suitable theoretical frameworks for rendering services to families. The *Manual* recommends the family life cycle approach, a developmental approach, a family preservation approach and an integrated approach. The following **conclusions** were reached on the theoretical framework(s) regarding family preservation services:

- The life cycle is the only model in common between the *Draft Policy* and the *Manual*.

- The *Manual* does not distinguish clearly between a model and a theoretical approach. For example, the family life cycle is a useful model for family therapists, because it assists in the processes of understanding and assessing the functioning of families. A developmental approach, on the other hand, is "based on the strengths of the individual, group or community" and it acknowledges the capacity for growth and development, according to the *Integrated Service Delivery Model* (Department of Social Development, 2005:5). Thus a developmental approach influences, for example, the way a practitioner may view and make decisions regarding the challenges faced by families. The *Manual* refers to a model and a theoretical approach as if they were the same concept.

Recommendation: The researcher recommends that a clear theoretical framework be included in a revision of the *Manual*, as it would be to the benefit of the implementers to follow clearly articulated theoretical frameworks in the execution of family preservation services. The reason for the researcher's recommendation on this is that a theoretical framework influences professionals' ways of thinking and therefore their decision-making, for example, in analysing human functioning processes (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2002:24). Kerlinger (quoted by De Vos, 2005b:39) explains that the difference between a theoretical

framework and a model is that "a theory springs from theory", as they bear a number of important similarities. It is therefore important for the revised *Manual* to distinguish clearly between a theoretical framework and models for the effective implementation of family preservation services.

9.3.1.5 Characteristic 5: Characteristics of the Manual

As indicated in the previous chapter, the *Draft National Family Policy* that underpins the *Manual* identifies ten characteristics that are instrumental in the implementation of family preservation services, referring to them as programmes and actions as highlighted in the checklist. A clear distinction between a policy and a programme is made by Eshleman and Bulcroft (2010:561), who state that a family policy includes a set of goals or objectives for families, while a programme contains practical applications used to achieve the policy goals. The following **conclusions** were drawn regarding the *Manual*:

- The *Manual* only lists six of the ten characteristics listed in the *Draft Policy*.
- The *Manual* refers to these six characteristics that are similar to the ones in the *Draft Policy* as key strategies in the implementation of family preservation services. The *Manual* lists an additional two, namely environmental sustainability and responsibilities of family members.

Recommendation: There should be proper alignment with regard to the characteristics that are instrumental in the implementation of family preservation services; the *Manual* should include the same characteristics as the *Draft Policy*, as it is also an important policy document regarding services to families. This alignment is particularly important if the goals and objectives of a family policy are to be achieved (Eshleman & Bulcroft, 2010:561).

9.3.1.6 Characteristic 6: Target group

For a policy document to be relevant and effective, Gil (1992:80) suggests that it has to specify a clear target group. With regard to the *Manual* the following conclusion was reached:

- The *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, in line with the *Draft National Family Policy*, clearly explains its targets, namely, families at risk, families in crisis, and families in transition.

9.3.1.7 Characteristic 7: Role players

There are many role players who participate in the public policy-making process – in this regard, the *Draft Policy* that underpins the *Manual* mentions relevant government departments, social service practitioners, volunteers and civil society organizations. The following **conclusions** were drawn:

- The *Manual* indicates clearly that a number of role players are involved in the formulation and implementation of the *Manual*.

- Unlike in the *Draft Policy*, no mention is made of the critical role of volunteers in the implementation of family preservation services. Thus, the omission of volunteers in the *Manual* is a serious one, considering their critical role in the policy-making process and in development of communities.

Recommendation: Meyer and Cloete (2000:105) emphasise the role of volunteers in the policy implementation process, as they explain that community participation in a policy process can only be achieved through the involvement of volunteers in the communities concerned. Volunteers play a very important role in the policy-making process, particularly in the implementation. Therefore their role should be acknowledged in a revision of the *Manual*.

9.3.1.8 Characteristic 8: Implementation instruments

In order for services to be implemented efficiently and effectively, implementation instruments need to be budgeted for, which should include financial means, infrastructure or physical facilities, NGOs, personnel and policy and legislative framework (Rushefsky, 1996:14). The following **conclusions** were reached regarding the implementation instruments for family preservation services:

- The *Manual* does not refer to any financial means or infrastructure relating to the implementation of family preservation services. This implies that the implementation of family preservation services is left to the discretion of the Heads of Social Development in the various constituencies. Jann and Wegrich

(2006:51) emphasise the importance of allocating resources, for example, showing how budgets are distributed and which staff has to execute a programme.

- The collaboration model, which strongly emphasises the role of other service providers as well as other stakeholders who are critical in the implementation of family preservation services, is mentioned in the *Manual*. However, no specific mention is made of the role of NGOs and FBOs.

Recommendation: Mamburu (2004:165) points out that policy implementation involves that money is spent, laws are enforced, employees are hired and plans of actions are formulated. It is therefore strongly recommended that implementation instruments be clarified in any revisions of the *Manual*, and that the role of the NGOs and FBOs be clearly outlined, as it will assist these organizations in contributing meaningfully to the implementation of policies. This is in line with the argument of Van der Merwe et al. (2009:125), who describe the place and role of the religious sector in the sphere of social welfare and social development, and who point out that the State expects the religious sector to make a meaningful contribution in resolving social issues, although the sector's specific role is not clearly defined.

9.3.1.9 Characteristic 9: Process

The implementation of family preservation services is guided by a process, which is clearly outlined in the *Draft National Family Policy*. Regarding the process of implementing family preservation services, Strydom (2012:194) explains that these services are aimed at stabilizing a crisis situation, and social work services focus on improving the coping skills of a family, while also improving the family's use of formal and informal resources. The following conclusions were therefore reached:

- The *Manual* recognises and emphasises the process of implementing family preservation services, as outlined in the *Draft Policy*.

9.3.1.10   Characteristic 10: Implementation challenge

A document such as the *Manual* is expected to address the implementation challenges which might surface during the implementation of family preservation services (Gil, 1992:81). However, it is not expected that it should address all of the challenges for it to be effective. Thus, with regard to the implementation challenges of family preservation services, the following **conclusions** were reached:

- Although the *Manual* lists the aims of family preservation services, with regard to what it wants to achieve in terms of the policy content, but specific and explicit objectives are omitted.

- The fact that objectives are omitted from the *Manual* creates some confusion amongst social workers as implementers of family preservation services.

- The *Manual* is also silent on the critical role that can be played by implementers in evaluating family preservation services, based on best practices. The *Manual* therefore supports only a top-down approach in policy formulation and implementation, excluding a bottom-up approach.

Recommendation: The crucial role of objectives has already been discussed in this study. It is therefore merely reiterated here that the objectives of family preservation services need to be outlined, as the omission of objectives creates some confusion and challenges among the implementers. A bottom-up approach should also be included in the *Manual* to acknowledge the critical role that those who must implement the policy play in the process of policy implementation. Brynard et al. (2013:139) point out that the focus of a bottom-up approach is "those who are charged with carrying out policy rather than those who formulate and convey it". Thus, greater involvement by implementers will assist in interpreting the policies to respond effectively to the local needs of communities.

9.3.1.11   Characteristic 11: Monitoring and evaluation

A services manual should list individuals, groups or organizations that will participate in the monitoring and evaluation of the services (Rossi et al. 2004:48). Cloete (2000:211) explains that policy evaluation or assessment is normally undertaken to provide a precise assessment of the nature and extent of the

impact that can be expected of services. Therefore, the following **conclusions** were reached regarding the monitoring and evaluation of family preservation services:

- In order for policy evaluation to be effective, it should adhere to the criterion of legitimacy, which means that it should enjoy the support of the major stakeholders involved in the policy issue, namely, participants, target groups and funders (Cloete, 2000:222). The exclusion of the target group from evaluating the services that are expected to bring about changes in their own circumstances is a serious omission in the *Manual*.

- The *Manual* does not indicate the critical role of programme managers, programme staff, researchers and evaluators in the monitoring and evaluation of family preservation services.

- The *Manual* indicates clearly that there has to be collaboration and coordination of family preservation services with various stakeholders, which may include government departments, NGOs and FBOs. However, it does not specifically mention their specific roles with regard to the implementation of family preservation services or how these organizations would be involved in the monitoring and evaluation process.

Recommendation: The researcher strongly recommends that a revision of the *Manual* should acknowledge and identify the important role of various stakeholders in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of family preservation services. It is also recommended that the role of the target group as recipients of the services should be specified in the *Manual,* as this will enhance their trust and confidence in the implementation of family preservation services. For effective monitoring and evaluation of social programmes, various stakeholders should be involved (Rossi et al. 2004:48).

9.3.2 Qualitative study: data collected through the semi-structured interviews

In this section of the chapter, the researcher presents the conclusions and recommendations regarding the qualitative responses obtained from the interviews with 20 social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. The data are discussed according to the different themes in the interview schedule.

9.3.2.1 Theme 1: Definition of the concept of family preservation services

Based on the responses of participants regarding the definition of the concept of family preservation services, the following **conclusions** can be drawn:

- The *Manual* presents various definitions of the concept of family preservation services, but these are too broad, thereby creating confusion among social workers as implementers of family preservation services.
- Roux (2000:115) states that a policy document is expected to define the issue under review in clear and measurable terms, despite possible differences in conceptualizing the policy process. This means that if the *Manual* does not define the concept of family preservation and the associated services in clear, measurable terms, it is difficult for implementers to understand and clearly define family preservation services.

Recommendation: The researcher recommends that the social workers should be provided with a clear and precise concept of family preservation services. Planning and implementation of services could be disrupted if the key concepts are not well defined (Gil, 1992:75).

9.3.2.2 Theme 2: The aim of family preservation

The following **conclusions** emerged from the participants' responses regarding the aim(s) of family preservation:

- The responses of most participants reflected familiarity with the aim(s) of family preservation. However, they could not clearly articulate the aims and the understanding of it as outlined in the *Manual*.

- Unclear articulation of the aims of family preservation may have been caused by the fact that the *Manual* listed six aims, which can create uncertainty. Also, the repetition in the presentation of the aims in Modules 1 and 3, as mentioned in Section 6.3 of this study, may have contributed to the confusion.

Recommendation: The researcher recommends that the *Manual* define only one long-term aim with regard to family preservation services, which could also serve as its main aim, and then list others as sub-aims. The importance of specifying a long-term aim is emphasised by Roux (2000:117), who defines an aim as an unrealized state not yet achieved by the members of an organization.

9.3.2.3 Theme 3: The objectives of family preservation services

The omission of the objectives of family preservation services from the *Manual* has led to the following **conclusions**:

- Social workers as implementers of family preservation services perceived the aims of the *Manual* as objectives, while these were the goals of the programme. There was thus no indication of the operationalization of the goal of the programme.

- As objectives are supposed to give direction on the implementation of family preservation services, the omission of objectives hinders many processes that could lead to successful execution of services.

Recommendation: The researcher recommends that the objectives of the *Manual* be formulated explicitly and be provided to social workers. Tshishonga and Mafema (2010:57) caution that problem identification leads nowhere if clear objectives are not identified and formulated.

9.3.2.4 Theme 4: Perceptions regarding the quality of the formulation of the *Manual*

The perceptions expressed by the social workers who participated in the study regarding the quality of the formulation of the *Manual* led to the following **conclusions:**

- The manner in which the *Manual* was formulated was mostly appreciated by social workers.

- The limitations exposed in the quality of the formulation of the *Manual* as a policy document, namely unclear definitions and the omission of objectives, reflect a compromise on the quality of the formulation.

Recommendation: It is strongly recommended that a clearly articulated definition of family preservation services and the inclusion of specific objectives be considered in the revision of the *Manual* to improve the quality of the *Manual*. A number of authors see a clearly articulated definition and objectives as critical in the policy process (Gil, 1992:75; Roux, 2000:117; Tshishonga & Mafema, 2010:570).

9.3.2.5 Theme 5: The theoretical framework of family preservation services

Based on the responses of the social workers who participated in the study regarding the theoretical framework of family preservation services, the following **conclusions** were reached:

- It was a challenge for social workers to articulate the theoretical framework underpinning family preservation services. As a result, some could only highlight the family life cycle model, which is not a theoretical framework, but a model.

- Social workers could therefore not differentiate between a theoretical approach (the developmental approach) and a model (the family life cycle).

- The researcher concluded that the confusion stems from the formulation of the *Manual*. The *Manual* does not differentiate between a theoretical approach and a model; instead, it combines them as if they are the same concepts.

Recommendation: The researcher recommends that future versions of the *Manual* should follow a clearly articulated theoretical approach for the execution of family preservation services which should also be provided to social workers as implementers of services. A theoretical framework influences a professional's thinking and decision-making in analysing human processes (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1998:20). Therefore, using clearly articulated theoretical frameworks would be beneficial to the implementers and eliminate confusion. Furthermore, it would provide the implementers with an opportunity to deliver evidence-based services, as they would be able to work from a solid base in the form of their frame of reference in rendering family preservation services.

9.3.2.6 Theme 6: The process followed in enabling families to access family preservation services

Based on the responses of the social workers who participated in the study regarding the process followed for families to access family preservation services, the following **conclusions** were reached:

- Families are able to access family preservation services, relying on self-referral to the offices of social workers, door-to-door campaigns by volunteers, advocacy campaigns, and referrals from other departments.
- It is not always easy for families to access these services, due to the high case-loads of social workers and limited resources.
- According to Berry (1999:199), family preservation practice is an intensive, home-based, family-centred model which is delivered to the family home. This is not always the case with family services in South Africa, because human and financial resources are lacking.

Recommendation: Although the correct processes are being followed with regard to families' accessing of family preservation services, it is recommended that consideration be given to the case-loads of social workers rendering family preservation services in order for them to be able to prioritize these services. The provision of more human and financial resources should also be considered. Strydom (2010:195) has previously referred to the shortage of social workers and

high case-loads as obstacles to the implementation of family preservation services.

9.3.2.7 Theme 7: The process followed to assess the developmental needs of the family

The following **conclusions** were reached regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual* on the process to be followed to assess the developmental needs of families:

- Most social workers are familiar with the prescribed process of assessing the developmental needs of the families in the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and they are following it.

- Some of the social workers interviewed were not at all familiar with the process of assessing the developmental needs of the families. The researcher is concerned about the nature of the actual assessments that are conducted with the families, whether they are developmental in nature or not, if some of the implementers are not even familiar with the prescribed process. According to Hafer and Stredler-Brown (2003:4), family developmental assessment includes family involvement, developmental appropriateness of assessment and a team approach. This indicates that social workers need to conduct developmental assessments with families, and failure to do so can lead to the implementation of inappropriate interventions.

Recommendation: It is recommended that a framework on assessing the developmental needs of the family be included in the revision of the *Manual* to guide social workers with regard to the exact process to be used. This is important especially because some social workers are not familiar with the process to assess the appropriate developmental needs of families and to improve service delivery. The best practices in family developmental assessment include family involvement, developmental appropriateness of assessment and a team approach (Hafer & Stredler-Brown, 2003:4).

9.3.2.8 Theme 8: The process followed to develop a family developmental plan

The responses of the social workers interviewed showed that all participants are familiar with the process of developing a family developmental plan and are following it. The following **conclusions** were therefore reached:

- Social workers are familiar with the development of the family developmental plan and are using it effectively despite the various challenges that they face in their areas of work, which include high case-loads and the prioritization of other programmes by social workers over providing family preservation services.

Recommendation: It is recommended that the case-loads of social workers implementing family preservation services be considered in the revised *Manual*. Strydom (2010:205) also reported in her findings that "the heavy workloads of social workers were another aspect" hampering family preservation services. In order to improve service delivery to families, family preservation services should be prioritized with regard to resources, particularly to vulnerable families.

9.3.2.9 Theme 9: The intervention processes employed during the implementation of family preservation services

The *Draft National Family Policy* (Department of Social Development, 2008a) underpinning the *Manual* mentions that interventions for family preservation services include a wide range of services, namely, case management, advocacy, behaviour modelling and parent education, as well as concrete services. The following **conclusions** were reached regarding the intervention processes employed by social workers in the implementation of family preservation services:

- Most of the social workers were clear with regard to the types of interventions they should employ when rendering family preservation services, but three of the social workers were unable to differentiate family preservation services from broader social work services that they render to families and communities.
- The researcher attributes the confusion on interventions employed when delivering family preservation services to the unclear definition of the concept

of family preservation services in the *Manual*, and the omission of objectives from the *Manual*.

- In her paper "The progress of child protection in South Africa", September (2006:71) concludes that

  …the overhaul of child protection services in South Africa demands serious intervention from the highest levels of government and these include adequate numbers of child protection workers who are appropriately trained and fiscal investment to create a functioning and responsive system.

- Horchak-Andino (2006:44) explains that family preservation services include the following service components: they target families in crisis, are home-based, are available 24 hours a day, involve intensive and comprehensive intervention (five to 20 hours a week, as needed), combine concrete and therapeutic services and skills-based teaching delivered by the same worker, allow workers to have small caseloads (two to four families), and are usually short-term (four to eight weeks). Most of the social workers were unable to list these interventions, conforming that these points are not explained in the *Manual.*

Recommendation: As it has been highlighted earlier in this chapter, clear definitions, as well as the objectives, of family preservation services need to be provided in revisions of the *Manual*. The researcher also recommends that guidance and support need to be provided to social workers for effective implementation of family preservation services. This can contribute to an improvement in service delivery. Discussing intervention processes employed in family preservation, Horchak-Andino et al. (2006:44) say that they combine concrete and therapeutic services as well as skills-based teaching. Hurley et al. (2012:1003) explain that family preservation services employ a variety of techniques to assess and harness the strengths of family members (for example, the use of non-blaming and non-shaming language and practices), while also supporting their attempts at changing and learning new skills. Discussing the components of comprehensive child and welfare services, September (2006:69) highlights the following important aspects (cited verbatim):

- Broad support for all families through primary prevention programmes to prevent dysfunction and the need for intrusive services.
- Assistance to families in need whose problems are less acute and where child abuse or neglect is not involved.
- The provision of child protection services to families in which serious abuse and / or neglect of children has been identified.

9.3.2.10 Theme 10: Views on the role of social workers in the implementation of family preservation services

Most social workers viewed the role of a social worker as very important in the implementation of family preservation services. As a result, the following **conclusions** were reached:

- Although the role that social workers play is regarded as vital, the researcher realizes that there is no dedicated capacity for the implementation of family preservation services in South Africa. This can explain some of the implementation challenges, because resources are not clearly stipulated in the formulation of the *Manual* or available for the realization of services.
- Most of the participants realized the important role of social workers in the implementation of family preservation services, but unless human resources are prioritized in the formulation of the *Manual*, challenges in achieving the desired outcomes of a family preservation services will remain.

Recommendation: For effective implementation of family preservation services, it is recommended that both policy formulators and implementers collaborate with each other and coordinate services in order to identify and address gaps in service delivery. Pulzl and Treib (2006:95) warn that transformation of policy goals into action depends upon the interaction of a multitude of actors with separate interests and strategies; hence, these authors give more weight to processes of coordination and collaboration among various stakeholders.

9.3.2.11 Theme 11: The availability of resources to support the implementation of family preservation services

The quantitative findings revealed that there is no clarity in the *Manual* regarding the resources that should support the implementation of family preservation

services in the formulation of the *Manual*. The responses of the social workers who participated in the study led to the following **conclusions** regarding the availability of resources:

- The responses of most participants showed that there are no disaggregated funds allocated for family preservation services, and therefore most participants were unable to stipulate amounts.

- According to September (2006:69), "child protection systems often suffer because of a lack of political support and financial resources".

- The funding that is provided to NGOs was reported to be limited and irregular, and it is often reduced on an annual basis.

- The researcher concludes that the responses of the social workers are consistent with the quantitative findings that resources were not allocated specifically for the implementation of family preservation services, which has serious repercussions for the effective implementation of such programmes.

- The above also implies that the implementation of family preservation services was never prioritized with regard to the allocation of resources, even during the formulation phase of the *Manual*.

Recommendation: Family preservation services should be prioritized with regard to the allocation of resources in a revised *Manual*. Acknowledging the importance of resources for effective implementation of policy goals, Rushefsky (1996:12) points out that funding is required for effective implementation of programmes.

9.3.2.12 Theme 12: Experiences regarding the implementation process of family preservation services

Based on the responses of social workers regarding their experiences of the process of implementing family preservation services, the following **conclusions** were reached regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual*:

- Most social workers are not implementing family preservation services as they are supposed to, because of high case-loads and other operational demands on the social workers who are supposed to implement these services.

- This conclusion confirms September's (2006:69) finding that

> …the high caseloads of social workers do not allow for long-term specialised or intensive family preservation services and services are further restricted by limited transport budgets and the lack of accessible service points, which severely impacts upon rural families and children.

- Mamburu (2004:165) cautions that policy implementation means that money has to be spent, laws enforced, employees hired and plans of action formulated. If employees who are hired are unable to deliver according to policy objectives, it will result in policy failure. The researcher therefore concludes that it is vital that family preservation services be prioritized through dedicated professionals if the desired outcome is to be achieved and that should be included in the revisions of the *Manual*.

Recommendation: It is strongly recommended that formulators of the *Manual* prioritize both human and financial resources for family preservation services, as this might affect proper implementation of family preservation services. If no dedicated funds are allocated, execution cannot take place successfully. Strydom (2010:205) also mentions that "lack of funds in the organisation to maintain programmes" is one of the obstacles that hamper effective implementation of family preservation services.

9.3.2.13 Theme 13: Views on training needs for social workers on family preservation services

Based on the responses of the social workers who participated in the study regarding their views on training needs on family preservation services, the following **conclusions** were reached:

- Although the 20 social workers interviewed whose responses were included indicated that they attended training on family preservation services, they also indicated a need for refresher training courses in order to keep up with the new developments in the field of family preservation.
- Brynard (2000:178) mentions the importance of training or building capacity among implementers in order to enhance the implementation of a policy – even the best policy will fail if those responsible for implementing it are unable to do so. The researcher shares this sentiment, because it would be

impossible for social workers to implement the policy directives of family preservation services if they do not keep themselves abreast with new developments in the field of family preservation.

Recommendation: The revisions of the *Manual* should clearly stipulate how training and capacity-building with regard to family preservation services are to be addressed. The researcher also recommends that continuous training be provided at least on an annual basis to keep implementers abreast with new developments in the field of family preservation. Brown and Neku (2005, quoted in Strydom, 2010:195) state that "a lack of resources such as supervisors and in-service training" is an obstacle to the delivery of services.

9.4   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research focused on the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation thereof. Further research on the following research themes can have value for social work regarding family preservation services:

- **Formulation and implementation of family preservation services**

  The challenges facing South African families necessitate urgent reconsideration of the effective formulation and implementation of family preservation services. Evaluation of the formulation and implementation process of family preservation services with a bigger sample could be a valuable research topic. An analysis of best practices and the challenges thereof with regard to the formulation and implementation of family preservation services would provide further insight on the efficiency of the formulation and the implementation of these services. The focus of such a study would not be to determine what the content of family preservation services should be, but rather whether the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* is an adequate policy document. Therefore, further research should be done with regard to an evaluation and/or in-depth revision of the content of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*.

- **The impact of family preservation services**

Family preservation services target various kinds of families, and vulnerable families are prioritized for services. However, since the commencement of the implementation of family preservation services, there has been no study that has attempted to evaluate the impact of these services from the intended beneficiaries' perspective. Therefore, a research study with a larger sample focusing on the impact of family preservation among South African families is recommended.

9.5   ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The goal of the study was to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation thereof. The researcher achieved this goal by the accomplishment of the objectives, as summarised in Table 9.1.

Table 9.1: Accomplishment of the study objectives

No	Objective	Achievement
1	• Theoretically conceptualizing the following aspects which are central to family preservation services: o systems theory, which regards the family as a functioning unit in which members solve their problems, make their own decisions and achieve collective goals; o the family life cycle model as a way to understand the different challenges that families encounter in their lifetime; o the conceptualisation of family preservation services as used in different ways in various programmes; o the stages of the policy cycle and situating the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*.	This objective was achieved as reflected in the literature review presented in Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.
2	Analysing the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services.*	This objective was accomplished by means of the presentation of quantitative findings in Chapter 8, and the further discussion in Chapter 9.

3	Analysing the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services,*	This objective was accomplished by means of the presentation of qualitative findings in Chapter 8, and the further discussion in Chapter 9.
4	Formulating conclusions and making recommendations regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in order to enhance service delivery to families.	This objective was achieved by means of a summarized presentation of findings, conclusions and recommendations in this concluding chapter.

9.6   SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The *Manual on Family Preservation Services* needs to be revised, after which thorough training of social workers would have to be facilitated to implement family preservation services better. The following key changes need to be made to the *Manual* and communicated by the Department of Social Development:

- adding a clear and measurable definition of family preservation services;
- adding explicit objectives for family preservation services;
- clearly articulating frameworks and models, and differentiating between theoretical approaches and models for the benefit of implementers;
- aligning the characteristics listed in the *Draft National Family Policy* with those listed in the *Manual* in order to interpret and implement the *Policy* effectively, thereby minimizing confusion among the implementers of family preservation services;
- clarifying the role of volunteers in the implementation process;
- clarifying the provision of implementation instruments for family preservation services, namely human and financial resources, as well as training and capacity-building for the implementers;
- including and clarifying a bottom-up approach to enhance coordination and collaboration between policy formulators and implementers; and
- clarifying a monitoring and evaluation plan for family preservation services.

9.7 SUMMARY AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above goal and objectives provided the framework for the research questions, namely:

- How does the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* adhere to the requirements of a policy document?
- What are the experiences of social workers regarding the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*?

The researcher has recommended the inclusion of six items in future versions of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*, namely a clear and measurable definition of family preservation services, objectives, a clearly articulated theoretical framework, a list of volunteers and their roles, a list of human and financial resources, and a clear monitoring and evaluation plan for family preservation services. However, the researcher takes cognisance of the fact that the revision of the of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* will not necessarily improve service delivery – solid training of implementers needs to be seriously considered, as well as various creative methods in which resources can be mobilized at a local level by implementers.

During the interviews, social workers exposed the confusion that exists on the definition of the concept of family preservation services, objectives, and the theoretical framework underpinning services, the limited human and financial resources that result in high case-loads among social workers, and the fact that training and capacity-building are not prioritized.

It was therefore recommended that a clear and measurable definition of family preservation be provided in the revisions of the *Manual*, and that the objectives of the *Manual* be formulated and provided to social workers to eliminate the confusion that exists. The use of clearly articulated theoretical approaches for the execution of family preservation services is recommended, as it would benefit the social workers as implementers of family preservation services. Making available dedicated and clearly specified human and financial resources for the efficient implementation of family preservation services is recommended. Continuous

training would benefit implementers of family preservation services, so it is also strongly recommended that all social workers who have to implement family preservation services attend at least one basic training course on family preservation services. The prioritisation of family preservation services due to the important role these services can play in preserving the family as a unit is essential.

The researcher believes that the research questions have been addressed by the research and that the answers to these questions have provided insight into the formulation and implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*. However, further research with a larger sample size is recommended.

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APPENDIX A:
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Our Ref: Z Mosoma **Faculty of Humanities**
Tel: (012) 420-2559 **Department of Social Work & Criminology**
E-mail:

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

THE INFORMED CONSENT FOR RESPONDENTS

Name of Researcher :   Ms Zodwa Mosoma
Address   **:**   P.O. Box 83446
                            Doornpoort, 0012
Name of institution :   University of Pretoria
Title of the study: The formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in South Africa and the experiences of social workers regarding the implementation thereof

I (full name) …………………………………….do hereby give consent to participate in a research study as a respondent after I have satisfied myself with the following (Please tick whichever is applicable):

.... I fully understand the purpose of the study, namely to analyse the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* and to explore the experiences of social workers regarding the implementation thereof.

.... I will be asked to respond to questions regarding the formulation and the implementation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in my area of work.

.... This study will not expose me to any form of emotional and physical harm.

.... There are no physical and mental benefits which I will receive after participating in the study.

.... I have the freedom to withdraw from participating in this study at any point of time.

.... A tape recorder will be used to record my responses. This data will not be utilized to cause any harm to myself and it will be treated confidentially.

Should I have questions and concerns regarding this research project, I can call the researcher Ms Zodwa Mosoma at: 012-312 7187 or 084 899 5978.

I understand my rights as a research subject, and I voluntarily consent to participate in this study. I also understand what the study is about and how and why it is being done. I will receive a signed copy of the consent form.

_____   _____
Respondent's signature   **Date**
_____   _____
Researcher's signature   **Date**

Department of Social Work & Criminology   Tel: Number 00 27 12 420 2325/2030   www.up.ac.za
University of Pretoria   Fax: Number 00 27 12 420 2093
PRETORIA 0002
Republic of South Africa

APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Faculty of Humanities
Department of Social Work & Criminology

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

RESEARCH TOPIC

The formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services* in South Africa and the experiences of social workers regarding the implementation thereof

THEMES

The researcher will cover the following ***themes*** in interviews with respondents:

1. Definition of the concept of family preservation services

2. The aim of family preservation services

3. The objectives of family preservation services

4. Perception regarding the quality of the formulation of the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*

5. The theoretical framework of family preservation services

6. The process followed in enabling the families to access family preservation services

7. The process followed to assess the developmental needs of the family

8. The process followed to develop a family developmental plan

9. The intervention processes employed during the implementation of family preservation services

10. Views on the role of social workers in the implementation of family preservation services

11. The availability of resources to support the implementation of family preservation services

12. Experiences regarding the implementation process of family preservation services

13. Views on training needs for social workers in the implementation of family preservation services.

APPENDIX C:

CHECKLIST

Checklist for the *Manual on Family Preservation Services*

No	Characteristics	Descriptions
1	**Definition:** The *Manual* defines family preservation services objectively as a policy directive.	Clearly
		Operationally
		In measurable terms
2	**Aim:** The *Manual* specifically states the aim of family preservation services.	Clearly
		In broad terms
3	**Objectives:** The *Manual* specifies the objectives.	Clearly
		Specifically
		In measurable terms
		In an operational manner
4	**Theoretical framework:** The *Manual* stipulates how the development of the *Manual* is standardized according to the different theoretical frameworks cited in the *Draft National Family Policy.*	Life cycle
		Systems approach
		Social Development approach
5	**Characteristics:** The *Manual* indicates how the key interventions of the *Draft National Family Policy* are executed.	Family strengthening
		Enhancing family resilience and family preservation
		Focusing on families at risk and providing care to vulnerable members
		Engaging traditional and religious structures
		Provision of social services
		Peace and security programmes
		Human rights and democracy advocacy
		Linking family strengthening to the moral regeneration campaign
		Growing the economy and sustain human development
		Employment creation
6	**Target group:** The *Manual* states whose circumstances or surroundings are the target of the change efforts.	Families at risk
		Families in crisis
		Families in transition

No	Characteristics	Descriptions
7	**Role players:** The *Manual* states critical role players required for the implementation of the family preservation services.	Relevant government departments
		Social service practitioners
		Volunteers
		Civil society
8	**Implementation instruments:** The *Manual* states the required tools for the implementation of family preservation services.	Budget
		Infrastructure / physical facilities
		Organizations
		Personnel
		Policy and legislative framework
9	**Process:** The *Manual* guides the implementation of family preservation services through a specific process cited in the *Draft National Family Policy*	Identifying the needs and challenges of a family
		Recognising the resources that a family has
		Identifying family strengths and priorities
		Coordinating the roles of various agencies involved
		Identifying unmet needs, gaps and support
		Developing strategies for intervention
10	**Implementation challenges:** The *Manual* clearly indicates how it intends to respond to possible challenges during the implementation process.	Clients and coalitions
		Capacity
		Commitment
		Context
		Content of the policy
		Top-down approach
		Bottom-up approach
11	**Monitoring and evaluation:** The *Manual* lists individuals, groups or organizations which will participate in the monitoring and evaluation of services.	Target groups
		Programme managers
		Evaluation and research individuals
		Stakeholders

APPENDIX D:

SUBMISSION TO REQUEST APPROVAL
TO CONDUCT A NATIONAL RESEARCH STUDY