



*An exploration of the
parenting experiences of a
mother bullied as a child*

Stephanie Riekert

*An exploration of the parenting
experiences of a mother bullied as a child*

by
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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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(Educational Psychology)**

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Thank you also to God, for being here and inspiring me to deliver this research project with sensitivity and empathy.



Declaration

I, Stephanie Riekert (student number 25202198), declare that this mini-dissertation titled:

An exploration of the parenting experiences of a mother bullied as a child

which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Educationis at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

S. Riekert

August, 2009



And a woman who held a babe against her bosom said, Speak to us of Children.

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,

Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them,

But seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

The Archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,

And He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far. Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies,

So He loves also the bow that is stable.

Kahlil Gibran

Summary

An exploration of the parenting experiences of a mother bullied as a child

by

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This narrative research project aimed to explore the parenting experiences of a mother bullied as a child. Data collection involved using two transcribed, unstructured, and in-depth interviews to obtain the mother's oral history, as well as a narrative that was written by the mother. During an inductive analysis of the mother's narratives, *themes* were identified regarding her experiences of bullying. These themes were organised as *concepts* pertaining to her lived experiences, feelings, and reactions of these bullying experiences. The themes were organised into *factors* pertaining to the circumstances/facts/conditions of her bullying experiences, namely the emotional impact, her self-esteem and identity, her personal characteristics, and her parenting style. Three *spheres*, each representing a section in the mother's life, were then identified as her family sphere, social sphere, and parenting sphere. Firstly, it was found that the mother presents with a profile similar to that of a bully victim, yet with important

differences pertaining to her own childhood context, and her construction of the term bullying. Secondly, it was also found that there exists a thematic link between the mother's childhood experiences and her parenting experiences. Finally, it was found that the mother's childhood bullying experiences culminated into the mother's own and unique parenting style.

KEYWORDS

- Oral history
- Narrative research
- Mother
- Child
- Bullying
- Bully perpetrator
- Bully victim
- Bully victim profile
- Bullying experiences
- Parenting
- Parenting experiences
- Parenting styles



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Chapter One

INTRODUCTORY OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This research project aims to explore the parenting experiences of a mother bullied/victimised¹ as a child by her father and her peers. The first assumption of this project is that the mother may present a profile specific to that of a bully victim because of her bullying experiences during childhood. The second assumption is that there may be a thematic link between early childhood bully victimisation and subsequent parenting experiences later in life. The third assumption is that the mother may present with a specific parenting style as a result of her bullying experiences during childhood.

The point of departure is that bullying affects a person's development in such ways that a possible profile of a bully victim² may emerge. Several factors may constitute the profile of a bully victim, such as his/her family context, emotional and social experiences, his/her self-representations, his/her personality and the impact of the trauma caused by the bullying.

Considering a possible bully victim profile, it may be that a person who has been bullied can either be predisposed to become sensitive and submissive in his/her relationships,

¹ For the purpose of this study, the terms "bullied" and "victimised" are synonymous, as several authors describe being bullied as a process of victimization. These terms and the meaning of it will be fully explored in Chapter Two.

² The researcher of this project is fully aware of the fact that the term "bully victim" suggests labeling. By reflecting on this concept, it should be made clear that it is not the intention of the researcher to demean, exclude or to create a stereotype (Greene, 2001). According to Hudak (2001), the politics of labeling may cause segregation that is hurtful to the individual and in the context of bullying which already has the effect of isolating the individual, it is not the purpose of this study to alienate the participant further. In fact, the researcher of this project does not want to focus on the mother as a bully victim, but rather to explore her experiences as a person being bullied. It is however difficult in the context of the literature not to refer to a "bully victim," as this is the discourse of all the research that has been investigated to conduct this research. An awareness of this discourse will thus guide the study away from labeling towards a deeper understanding of the "true self" (Hudak, 2001) of the participant, rather than the "bully victim". Further, the underlying need of research to identify, classify and categorise is a universal human trait (Asher, 2001), and it is for the purpose of identification only that the term "bully victim" will be used.

or aggressive and dominant. It may also be possible for a person who has been bullied to be able to act assertively and set boundaries within interpersonal relationships.

Whichever interpersonal style a bully victim may adopt, it may shape the future experiences of his/her relationships with others and self. Consequently, for this individual as a parent, a specific parenting style may manifest itself within the parameters of the individual's experiences should he/she take on a bully victim role. It is therefore argued that a delicate confluence of several factors may constitute the bullied individual's profile and consequently, the parenting style of such an individual.

1.2 BECOMING AWARE OF THE PROBLEM

During my work experience as a teacher and intern psychologist, my personal contact with people who were bullied evoked a few burning questions regarding whether a specific bully victim profile exists. My involvement in a specific community has led me to a mother requesting parental guidance concerning her daughter, whom she said "bullied" her. In the process of referral to a clinical psychologist/family therapist, it became known that the mother was bullied as a child by her father and her peers.

My reflections on our conversation led me to consider the possibility of the mother adopting the role of a bully victim. Is a specific bully victim profile applicable to this mother? Could this mother's experiences as a bullied child be related to her experiences as a parent? Is it possible that her experiences as a bully victim could have culminated into a specific parenting style? Did she experience bullying as a once off traumatic event or as a continuous traumatic experience? What could the impact of this traumatic experience be on her subsequent emotional and social development? Do the emotional and social effects of being bullied have a bearing on her parenting style? These reflections motivated me to investigate the parenting experiences of this mother being bullied as a child, since she might have developed a specific bully victim profile that might be a barrier to effective parenting in her current situation.

An exploration of the experiences of this mother being bullied during childhood may provide me with a deeper insight into the effect of early intimidation and victimisation on

her subsequent parenting style during adulthood. Important variables to consider would be – for how long was she bullied? Does she present certain traits of a person vulnerable to bullying? Is it possible that her early bullying experiences prompted the development of certain personality traits? Does she present with the emotional and social consequences of bullying? What was the nature of her family context, and how did this context contribute to her vulnerability to being bullied?

These questions may possibly be best answered by exploring the mother's narratives about her experiences as a bully victim and as a mother. A thematic exploration of these narratives will shed more light on the experiences of the mother as a bullied victim, as well as how it relates to her experiences as a mother. A further exploration of the narratives may possibly show a specific parenting style as a consequence of her experiences.

1.3 RELEVANCE, RATIONALE AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

According to Martin (2005), 9 percent of children are bullied and 7 percent of children are bullies themselves. According to this researcher, bullying affects one out of every three learners in the United States of America. In South Africa, the University of the Free State found that 55.8% of teachers bullied learners verbally and 50.31% of the respondents (teachers) admitted that they have bullied learners physically. More than 32% of learners reported that their fellow learners physically harmed them, and a further 11.21% reported that they were physically harmed at least once a week. From the cohort of teachers, 24% of teachers reported physical abuse by their learners, 33% were victims of indirect verbal bullying, and 18% were sexually harassed by learners in their respective schools (News24, 2006).

Bullying is an age old phenomenon that is ridiculed by many people as being “part of life” or “it happens in many schools” or “such is life” and so forth (O'Moore & Minton, 2004). The statistics clearly illustrate that bullying behaviour is not a normal and natural phenomenon that should be ignored. It is a real and daily problem that has a disturbing influence on most children in South African schools. Everyone is affected by bullying –

teachers and learners; and it is spreading out to become a global, societal problem (Olweus, 1993). It is therefore important to study this phenomenon to counteract attitudes such as the popular pre-1970s attitude that this atypical behaviour is a “natural phenomenon among adolescent boys” which does not deserve any attention (O’Moore & Minton, 2004). These authors are of the opinion that the bully phenomenon only started gaining attention in the early 1970s.

Recent research on bullying behaviour focuses on the identification of bullies and their victims (Cornell & Brockenbrough, 2004), the characteristics of bullies and their victims, the elements of the bullying-phenomenon, social learning and behaviour, the consequences of intimidation and victimisation (McCabe & Martin, 2005), as well as the intervention strategies schools, parents and learners can follow to end the bullying phenomenon (Conoley & Goldstein, 2004; Olweus, 1993; Roland, 1989). Little or no research is done on how victimisation at the hand of a bully during early childhood transforms into a specific parenting style of the bully victim later on in life.

In the context of this research project, I found it necessary to explore the impact of the bullying phenomenon on a person as a parent. This project therefore focuses on the bullying experiences during the childhood of this mother and thus seeks to understand in a narrative way how it influenced her parenting experiences. Also, this project aims to relate the experiences as a bully victim with the experiences as a parent, and to explore the consequential parenting style culminating because of these experiences. The mother’s experiences are explored by looking into her experiences in her context. This context is determined by the parent’s own family experiences, emotional processing, her representation of herself and others, social experiences as well as the experience of being chronically traumatised by bullying and her experiences as a parent. (Rivers, Duncan & Besag, 2007:27-28, 137-138; Sgarzi & McDevitt, 2003:103, 250-251; Wenar & Kerig, 2006:240-257).

I believe this study will not only contribute to the body of knowledge on the topic of bullying as a phenomenon, but also to assist practitioners to become more aware of the effect of bullying on parents and children. Furthermore, the findings emanating from this

research project may contribute to improved therapeutic intervention and parent education with clients who have been bullied during childhood.

Finally, I believe, for a better society to evolve in our current times, it is necessary to explore different ways of improving the family unit, starting with parenting, as this is the very foundation society rests upon. Since different meanings and connotations might be ascribed to concepts central to this study, key concepts are now defined within subsequent paragraphs in order to enhance uniform conception among readers of this text.

1.4 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.4.1 Parenting and parenting experience

The Dictionary Unit for South African English (2008) defines parenting as the act of raising children, and the term experience as the observation of or practical acquaintance with facts or events. Martin and Colbert (1997) construe parenting as an important human experience of adults following the process of giving birth, protecting, nurturing and guiding their offspring on a physical, cognitive, emotional and social level. This experience supposedly changes people on many different levels (emotionally, socially and intellectually) thus having an impact on all participants and bystanders, who are the child, the parent and society as a whole.

Bigner (1998) defines the parent-child relationship as one of the most fulfilling of human experiences and a challenging opportunity for personal growth and development for the parent. In addition, the significant and intimate relationship between a parent and a child can be construed as being unique in its biological and psychological meaning and it is an essential relationship that ensures the survival of the child. Each person has an effect and influence on the behaviour of the other in a bidirectional³ relationship. This relationship is then an important experience as it shapes the destiny of the child and the parent.

³ Bidirectional can be defined as “functioning in two directions” (The Dictionary Unit for South African English, 2008).

1.4.2 Mother

For the purposes of this study, the concept 'mother' is defined as a female parent having the human experience of childbirth and child rearing through protecting, nurturing and guiding the child on a physical, cognitive and social level. In-so-far her personal changes on an emotional, social, and intellectual level, she is a participant of this process by being acquainted with her experience of bringing up her child.

1.4.3 Child

For the purposes of this study, the concept 'child' is defined as an immature person under the age of 18 (Children's Act, 2005). This definition applies to the mother's childhood experiences, as well as parenting of her own offspring (her child).

1.4.4 Bully victim

A person is defined as a bully victim when he/she was repeatedly intimidated by negative bullying behaviour (Olweus, 1993). The bully victim role can thus be defined as the role a person undertake within the intimidating context caused by the repetitive aggressive behaviour of a bully (Baron & Byrne, 2003).

Baron and Byrne (2003) further define a bully as an individual who acts aggressively towards another individual. The aggressor usually possesses more power than the person being bullied. A power imbalance forms the basis of the interaction (personal, social or physical) between the bully and his/her victim and is answered by the victim's inability to act assertively within such situations (O'Moore & Minton, 2004).

1.4.5 Parenting styles

Reder and Lucey (1995) describe the concept 'parenting style' as a two-way process, characterised by reciprocal parent-child interaction as the central theme. Differing relevant skills and important functions of parenting are classified as the existence of two types of behaviour that parents exhibit towards the child, **parent-child centered**

behaviour (smiles, imitations, ignoring of negative behaviour, positive touch and attention and encouragement). In contrast to this behaviour, is **parent-child directive behaviour** (demands, using the “no” word, teaching, questioning, critique and negative touch).

Martin and Colbert (1997) state that parenting should ideally take place within an emotionally warm, nurturing and accepting context. Consequently two dimensions of parenting behaviour which are based on parental warmth or responsiveness and parental control or demands evolve (Cornell, & Frick, 2007; Driscoll, Russel, & Crockett, 2008; Jackson-Newsom, Buchanan, & McDonald 2008; Martinez, & Garcia, 2008; McGillicuddy-de Lisi, & De Lisi, 2007; Stright-Dopkins, Gallagher, & Kelly, 2008; Turkel, & Tezer, 2008). Parenting styles can thus be characterised according to different patterns of parenting behaviour (Jackson-Newsom et al, 2008).

The above section reflected the main concepts pertaining to this study. Below follows the problem statement, including the working assumptions of the research project. The purpose of this research project, as well as the paradigmatic perspective, theoretical framework and research design will also be considered in subsequent paragraphs.

1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The research questions guiding this study can be formulated as follows:

- In which way is the mother’s personal profile similar to that of the bully victim profile?
- How do the mother’s narrated childhood bullying experiences link thematically with her narrated parenting experiences?
- How do the themes of the narrated experiences culminate into a specific parenting style?

1.5.1 Working assumptions

The first working assumption of this project is that a specific bully victim profile may emerge as a result of the mother’s bullying experiences during childhood. The second

assumption is that there may be a thematic link between early childhood bully victimisation and subsequent parenting experiences later in life. The third assumption is that the mother may present a specific parenting style because of her bullying experiences during childhood.

1.6 PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the profile⁴ of the mother through her narratives regarding her bullying experiences as a child, and her parenting experiences. The study also aims to explore the parenting experiences and parenting style of a mother bullied during childhood and to explore the effect it had on her parenting style. This is necessary in order to gain better understanding of the participant as a parent.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Paradigm

This research follows an interpretivistic and social constructionist paradigm perspective. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) differentiate clearly between these approaches: interpretivism treats people as products of their feelings, thoughts and experiences (subjective reality); the social constructionist approach treats people as products of systems of meaning that exists on a social level rather an individual level (objective reality). Terre Blanche et al (2006:278) define the social constructionist approach as one in which *signs and images have powers to create particular representations of people and objects that underlie our experience of these people and objects*. Social constructionist therefore place emphasis on the symbolic interpretation of signs, images and language as a way of constructing reality.

From within interpretivism it is possible to understand people's subjective experiences by interacting with them and to listen to their narratives by using qualitative methods. It

⁴ The term 'profile' refers to the mother's family, emotional and social context, her self-concept and her personality traits.

focuses on the power of language and expression in order to understand the social world. It makes use of first hand information in order to understand phenomena in its context, in which the researcher is a primary instrument in collecting and analyzing the data. According to this approach, meaning is derived by trying to understand the human phenomena in context (Terre Blanche et al, 2006).

...within this tradition (Interpretivism) the aim of the human sciences is defined as understanding (not explaining) people; people are conceived, not primarily as biological organisms, but firstly and foremost as conscious, self-directing, symbolic human beings. In fact, phenomenologists emphasise the dis-analogy between social and natural phenomena... The phenomenologist emphasises that all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their (life) worlds. We continuously interpret, create and give meaning to, define, justify and rationalise our actions (Mouton, 1998:28).

From the preceding excerpt on interpretivism, it is therefore clear how these two approaches are connected to symbolism and meaning making. For the purpose of this study, it is then assumed that an individual's reality and thus experiences are both shaped by his/her feelings, thoughts and experiences as well as the systems of meaning. An individual functions not as an island, but within a context of systems (Babbie & Mouton, 2001), therefore both approaches are suitable for the purpose of this study.

1.7.2 Research design

The research project uses a qualitative case study design. Qualitative research uses methods that try to describe and interpret people's feelings and experiences in human terms. The focus is on people's subjective experiences that direct the attempt to understand the power of ordinary language and expression (Terre Blanche et al, 2006).

The research design is based on an individual, intrinsic case study as it can be seen as an exploration of an in-depth analysis of a bounded system, and because it can be seen as a process, activity or experience of a specific individual (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2002; Strydom & Delport, 2002). An intrinsic case study is used when the researcher wants to gain insight into a specific case of interest

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 447; Strydom & Delpont, 2002). Berg (2003) states that the purpose of an intrinsic case study is to understand the intrinsic aspects of the subject, and cannot be used to test and understand an abstract theory, or to develop new theoretical explanations. Stark and Torrance (2005) confirm Berg's opinion that the case study is an approach to research that focuses on the social interaction and construction of meaning. By using a case study the researcher attempts to get involved with the complexity of social activity in order to understand the meanings an individual attaches to his/her life. The case study is specific, descriptive and inductive in order to enlighten the researcher on the issue that is being explored. The rationale for choosing a case study is embedded in the need to give an in-depth description and analysis of the mother's parenting experience in order to facilitate better understanding for this case (Cresswell, 2007).

1.7.3 The participant

The participant is a mother who, by her own account, experienced bullying as a child, and who is currently experiencing bullying as a parent.

1.7.4 Selection method

Purposeful selection is informative about a specific subject (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001), and took place during a referral procedure in a Gauteng community. The mother disclosed that she was experiencing relationship difficulties with her daughter. She also revealed that she was bullied as a child. During the first conversation, I referred the mother to a clinical psychologist who is a specialist in systems therapy. A year later I approached the mother regarding this research project. The mother voluntarily agreed to participate in the research project to explore her experiences of her being bullied as a child, and her experiences of parenthood.

1.7.5 Role of the researcher

My role as researcher is to act as a human instrument through which the thoughts, feelings, knowledge, and experiences of my participant can be explored. This will take

place in a directive, and reflective process (Patton, 2002), within the boundaries of the ethical guidelines as provided by the HPCSA, and the University of Pretoria. I will actively collaborate with my participant, in order to stay aware of my own personal background and how it influences my retelling the narratives of my participant in the research findings (Creswell, 2007).

1.7.6 Data collection and analysis

The data collection method for this case study involved a narrative, qualitative method. An unstructured one on one interview will be used for the collection of data. The unstructured interview is also called an in-depth interview, and broadens and formalises conversation (De Vos et al, 2002: 298). The purpose is not getting answers to questions, but to gain understanding of the mother's experiences and the meaning she attaches to her experiences. It is focused, discursive and allows the researcher and participant to explore a specific issue. An in-depth interview allows the researcher to explore a person's perceptions, opinions, facts, predictions and reactions (De Vos et al, 2002:298). Berg (2003) suggests that a single, lengthy interview can provide the researcher with enough information to give answers to the specific research questions that were asked.

During the interview, narratives will be used as a method of data collection, as told by the mother. The procedural implementation of this research project entails the collection of stories (self-narratives) about the research participant's unique experiences, i.e. being bullied as a child, and being bullied as a parent – in terms of chronology and meaning making (Creswell, 2007:54). As the data collection method is an unstructured interview, an oral history (reflections on events and the causes and effects of it) is chosen as the type of narrative study. The interview will be audio-recorded and transcribed in order to analyse the narratives of the mother. In addition to the oral narratives, a written narrative will be provided by the mother pertaining to three bullying incidents in her life.

1.7.7 Report of findings

Apart from finalising a research report, the findings will be discussed in the form of a feedback session with the mother. The results and research findings will be summarised in a research article for the purpose of publishing this article in an accredited academic journal.

1.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical boundaries will be respected as suggested by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Pretoria (2005). The ethical rules of the HPCSA, as well as the ethical rules of the division Psychology will be honored. In the case of this mother, the following rules will be observed:

- Anonymity of the participating parent as respondent;
- Informed voluntary participation;
- Voluntary withdrawal by the research participant from the research project at any time;
- No monetary compensation is involved;
- Safety in participation;
- Trust.

1.9 Programme of investigation

Chapter One is an introductory orientation and discusses the relevancy of the problem. Also the problem analysis, the problem statement and the purpose of the research project is discussed. The theoretical framework and paradigm is explained, as well as an explanation of the research methodology, and the method of data collection.

Chapter Two is a literature study in which the bully victim profile as constituted by different factors is discussed. The consequences of bullying and the different parenting styles are discussed.

Chapter Three explains the research methodology.

Chapter Four the reports on the results and findings.

Chapter Five discusses a review on the research project, as well as the limitations and benefits of the study.

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Chapter Two

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In light of the argument that bullying has a traumatic effect on a bullied victim, the concept bullying and bullying as a traumatic experience, will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs. The different factors contributing to a person's vulnerability to be bullied will be explored in order to gain a better understanding of the impact bullying has on a person. Since little or no research has been done on how victimisation at hand of a bully during early childhood transforms into a specific parenting style of the bully victim later on in life, the latter section of this chapter will be dedicated to a discussion on the various parenting styles.

2.2 BULLYING

In order to clarify the bully phenomenon, this discussion is introduced by a clarification of two parallel concepts, i.e. the person who bullies (or bully perpetrator), and the person being bullied (or bully victim).

2.2.1 The bully perpetrator

Baron and Byrne (2003) define a bully as an individual who acts aggressively towards another individual. In the relationship between the aggressor and the victim, the aggressor has more power than the person being bullied. A bully is a person who demonstrates his/her power over a specifically targeted individual who becomes the bully victim.

2.2.2 The bully victim

An individual is seen as a bully victim when he/she is repeatedly intimidated by negative bullying behaviour (Olweus, 1993). The bully victim is an individual who adopts the role of the victim within an intimidating context that is caused by repeated aggressive bullying behaviour (Baron & Byrne, 2003).

2.2.3 Bullying behaviour

Baron and Byrne (2003) explain that bullying behaviour is a pattern of repeated aggressive behaviour towards another. It is thus, as mentioned, a demonstration of the bully perpetrator's power over a specific targeted bully victim. In keeping with Baron and Byrne's definition, O'Moore and Minton (2004) define bullying behaviour as unsolicited aggressive behaviour that is forced upon an individual. A power imbalance usually forms the basis of bullying behaviour (whether it is personal, social or physical), and is answered by the person's inability to act assertively within such situations.

In concurrence with the lack of assertive behaviour, bullying is described by Smith and Sharp (1994) as the repeated, spiteful and systematic abuse of power in social groups characterised by imbalanced power relations, coupled with deficient supervision to regulate these imbalances. This indicates that bullying does not only take place between two people in a bully-victim relationship, but also in groups, i.e. between a group and a person, or between two groups.

According to Rivers et al (2007), bullying takes on many forms, such as **direct-physical aggression** (hitting, pushing, kicking), **direct-verbal aggression** (name-calling, labeling, threatening), and **indirect or relational aggression** (telling tales, spreading rumors, social isolation). In addition, Tattum (1993) lists five forms of bullying, namely physical bullying, verbal bullying, gesture bullying, extortion bullying and exclusion bullying. Whereas physical, verbal and gesture bullying might be familiar to the readership, extortion bullying is marked by obtaining something such as money or

information from somebody using force, threats, or other unacceptable methods. Exclusion bullying is marked by alienation of the bully victim from the social group.

Rivers et al (2007) furthermore report that the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) in the United States defined bullying as behaviours that constitute harassment, intimidation, taunting and ridicule. According to the NCSL hate or bias and ignorance or fear motivates bullying behaviour which can be instilled through cultural norms, peer pressure or even a desire to retaliate against another perpetrator. Initiation rituals, gendered or sexualised harassment also constitute bullying behaviour. Rivers et al (2007) mention that there are common factors that should be considered when defining bullying behaviour:

First of all, there should be a discernable pattern of behaviour, which is repeated over time, with the intention of inflicting injury or discomfort on one or more students by one or more others. Secondly, there should be a perceptible imbalance between the perpetrator and the victim, thus allowing one student to domineer the other (Rivers et al, 2007:5).

Based on the preceding excerpt, one can view bullying as the relationship in which one person or more deliberately and repeatedly hurt another in either a physical or an emotional way, and in which one or more persons have more power than another does. This type of relationship could exist in any context (family, social, scholastic, etcetera) of the bully victim.

Tattum (1993) offers a far more comprehensive definition of bullying by focusing on the behavioural aspects of bullying. This researcher defines bullying as a willful and conscious desire to hurt another individual, thereby causing the 'hurt' individual to experience elevated levels of stress. This definition emphasises that bullying represents a well-considered type of interpersonal exploitation that is in violation of the accepted global ethics. Tattum (1993) furthermore states that a bully perpetrator does not need to be physically present to cause distress to a bully victim. Hence it is evident that the bully victim might suffer from stress-related symptoms resulting from this type of interpersonal exploitation, even in the absence of the perpetrator.

...he or she may not sleep or want to go to school, (may) suffer from an upset stomach or headaches, (may) avoid threatening places like toilets where the bully or bullies may frequent. Stress is a debilitating condition which can adversely affect a person's ability to concentrate, work or give their best (Tattum, 1993:8).

From the preceding excerpt, it is evident that the trauma of being bullied could have a severe effect on a person's social, physical, and occupational functioning. It is therefore deemed important to further explore bullying as a traumatic event to the person being bullied.

2.3 BULLYING AS A TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE

Bullying might have severe consequences for the person being bullied, which could cause serious emotional, psychological, and social consequences. According to Sgarzi and McDevitt (2003), and Kelloway, Barling, and Hurrell (2006), being seriously victimised at hand of a bully might resemble a traumatic experience, and could cause a set of symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). PTSD is a debilitating condition that can occur after any terrifying incident(s):

The individual has persistent symptoms of anxiety or increased arousal that were not present before the trauma. These symptoms may include difficulty falling or staying asleep that may be due to recurrent nightmares during which the traumatic event is relived, hypervigilance, and exaggerated startle response. Some individuals report irritability or outbursts of anger or difficulty concentration or completing tasks.

(American Psychiatric Association, 2000:464).

Terr (in Allen & Lauterbach, 2007) defines two types of childhood trauma, namely Type I (single incident) and Type II (repeated and prolonged) incidents, which can result in PTSD. It is thus proposed that a once-off experience such as physical and emotional assault (as forms of bullying) could be classified as Type I trauma, whereas repetitive and enduring kinds of assaults due to bullying could be classified as Type II trauma.

These types of childhood trauma may have severe emotional consequences for the bully victim. Sgarzi and McDevitt (2007) as well as Allen and Lauterbach (2007) even postulate post-traumatic reactions such as the development of acute stress disorder,

dissociative amnesia, and/or major depressive disorder. Learned helplessness, victims' inability to protect themselves when exposed to frequent abuse over an extended period of time, may also develop (Sgarzi & McDevitt, 2007).

These consequences cause the person to be unable to avoid or resist interpersonal victimisation associated with bullying. Anxiety, social withdrawal, irritability, and sleep disturbances may also be associated with the traumatic experiences of being bullied (Sgarzi & McDevitt, 2007; Tattum, 1993). In addition, Sgarzi and McDevitt (2007) indicated the tendency towards suicidal ideation and/or attempted suicide among female bully victims in particular. In addition to this, Dyart and Teggart (2007) reported on self-harm as an expression of anxiety and depression amongst bully victims. Rivers et al (2007) state that a person who has been bullied would develop PTSD, although if a person experiences a particularly violent or emotionally hurtful episode or episodes, symptoms associated with PTSD are more likely to develop. These symptoms might cease over time.

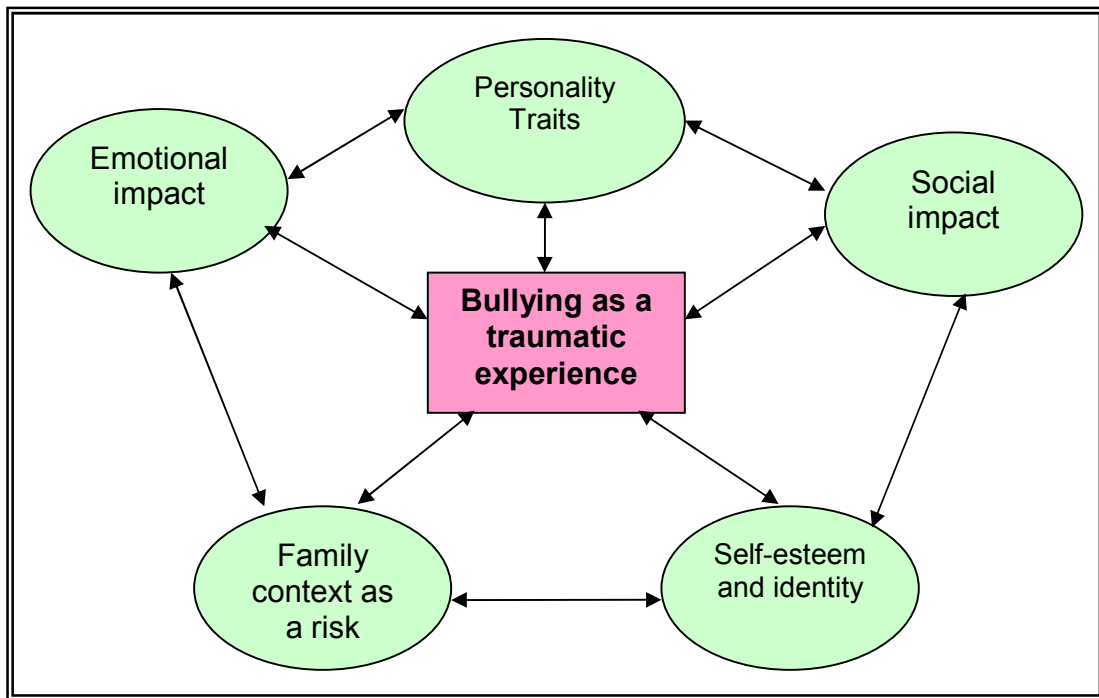
Based on the preceding research findings, it is evident that bullying could be viewed as a traumatic experience. This type of trauma may cause a decline in overall functioning among bully victims. In order to explore the impact of bullying as a traumatic experience, a multifactor model⁵ will now be discussed in order to enhance understanding of the bully victim's subjective experiences.

2.4 THE MULTIFACTOR MODEL OF THE BULLYING PHENOMENON

A comprehensive multifactor model of the bullying phenomenon will now be discussed. At the core of this model, is the impact of the trauma on a person being subjected to bullying.

⁵ This multifactor model was the result of a reflective process regarding the literature review. Themes emerging from the literature study was organised and clustered according to the five categories as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 *The multifactor model of bullying*



As depicted in Figure 2.1 above, the multifactor model of bullying illustrates how trauma that follows exposure to bullying behaviour may affect a person’s personality traits (personality development / formation or the moulding of one’s personality). Furthermore, the multifactor model of bullying eloquently illustrates that the bully victim may suffer emotionally, socially and intra-personally (self-esteem). The family context of the bully victim should also be considered in-so-far as this context might predispose the individual to be vulnerable to being bullied. The model meaningfully illustrates the interconnectedness of these variables. These variables are now discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

2.4.1 Personality traits

According to Sgarzi and McDevitt (2003), bully victims share the same basic personality traits resulting from scarring of their social intelligence and the tendencies towards social isolation. Lawson (1994) identifies two types of bully victims namely the *passive victim* and the *provocative victim*. Lawson (1994) describes the passive victim to be quiet,

timid, anxious, lacking in positive self-esteem and adequate self-assertion; the provocative victim presents as a hot-tempered, aggressive individual creating situations where conflict could easily arise.

In keeping with the preceding findings, Tattum (1993) summarises several bully victim profiles offered by various authors. Tattum concludes that most authors described bully victims to be anxious and insecure as well as cautious, sensitive and quiet. This description is in accordance with Lawson's (1994) passive victim profile. According to Lawson, in children a passive victim profile can manifest itself as poor concentration and low self-confidence. The provocative victim tends to be attention-seeking and challenging (Tattum, 1993). Olweus (1978) further concluded that children who were bullied often present characteristic clusters of symptoms, namely anxiety, passivity, fear of being aggressive and a lack of self-assertion, coupled with relative physical weakness. Karatzias, Power and Swanson (2002) find that in terms of personality factors, higher levels of negative affectivity as well as ego weakness (negative self-esteem) were present among bully victims. High levels of negative affectivity might cause a person to act aggressively and provocatively, which is in accordance with Lawson's definition of the provocative victim.

These characteristics may predispose individuals to be more vulnerable to bullying. Bullying as a debilitating traumatic experience may contribute to the development of a set of characteristics – either reinforcing the already fixed characteristics, or causing the bully victim to develop protective traits that may serve as future barriers against victimisation.

Allen and Lauterbach (2007) conducted a study on Type I (single incident) and Type II (repeated and prolonged) trauma in order to examine the personality traits of adult survivors of Type I and Type II trauma. They successfully identified the link between childhood trauma and the presence of certain personality traits in adulthood. According to their study, any type of childhood trauma, might cause an individual to exhibit higher levels of neuroticism⁶ and an openness to new experiences when compared to

⁶ Neuroticism as a trait consists of anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability (Pervin & John, 1997).

individuals who were not traumatised. Their participants tended to score higher on measures of tension, nervousness, irritability, insecurity, and emotionality. Psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety (neuroticism) were found to be co-morbid with PTSD. They concluded that these personality traits that were developed because of traumatic childhood experiences might leave them vulnerable for re-victimisation.

In contradistinction with Allen and Lauterbach (2007), who found that certain personality traits can be associated with early childhood trauma, Glaso, Matthiesen, Nielsen and Einarsen (2007) found no general victim profile, although victims of prolonged trauma tended to be more neurotic, less agreeable, conscientious and extraverted than non-victims. They associated emotional instability and introversion⁷ with exposure to trauma. Hence, ego weakness (lower levels of self-esteem) could be associated with bully victims due to trauma stemming from being bullied (Karatzias et al, 2002).

One can conclude from the preceding literature review that a bully victim may present with certain personality traits that form part of the bully victim profile. Considering that emotional instability and neuroticism are personality traits that could be linked to prior emotional experiences, it seems necessary to explore the impact of trauma associated with bullying on the bully victim's emotional life.

2.4.2 Emotional impact

Rivers et al (2007) support the belief that there are long term negative implications for the emotional well-being of victims of bullying such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and post-traumatic stress in adulthood. The early onset of depression in these

⁷ It should be noted that introversion is not a "bad" trait per se – it is associated with conscientiousness, trustworthiness, and ability to adhere to long-term commitments. Social withdrawal on the other hand, could point towards childhood trauma. A socially withdrawn individual might present the following characteristics:

- A believe that others would be hurt, angry, or in some way offended if he/she should refuse a request or uphold a contrary opinion;
- A believe that he/she would not be able to deal with anger, therefore exhibits a phobic avoidance of anger;
- An avoidance of conflict by submitting to the wants of others;
- A tendency to please and gain approval from others in his/her interpersonal relationships;
- Believes he/she is vulnerable because he/she has to rely on others to recognise and satisfy his/her needs (Naudé, 2009).

persons may be linked with eating disorders and the onset of bipolar disorder in later years. Rivers et al (2007) report that social exclusion is a good predictor of these problems, and that loneliness and a reduction in self-worth may leave a permanent mark on the personality (see above section). Extreme emotional distress caused by active rejecting, being passively neglected, and being ignored by others can magnify the loneliness of a victim of bullying. Verbal, social, and psychological forms of bullying can cause the victim to have suicidal thoughts and equal potency to modes of physical aggression. A downward spiral in self-esteem and confidence may contribute to the person being more vulnerable and at a greater risk, which intensifies the emotional effects. The following emotional reactions have been identified by Rivers et al (2007), and Johnson, Hofoll, Hall, Canetti-Nisim, Galea and Palmieri (2007), namely powerlessness, hopelessness, uncertainty, feeling trapped, guilt, shame, fear, anxiety and even the loss of identity.

Hunter, James, Boyle and Warden (2007) report bully victims to experience a power imbalance regarding their peers, resulting in a perception that no coping strategies will work when dealing with the bullying situation or the effects thereof. This in turn causes feelings of powerlessness in social situations. Further, feelings of depression influences their social experiences in as such it contributes to attributions of victimisation and persecution. Feelings of depression also increase when a girl who is a bully victim perceives the bully to be more popular or physically stronger. This relates to the impact that negative emotions associated with bullying may have on the person's social experiences, which will be discussed in the next section.

Kelloway et al (2006) considered the impact that two types of appraisal (harm or loss appraisal and threat appraisal) have on a bully victim. These forms of appraisal trigger negative emotions such as fear, anxiety, and sadness in the bully victim.

According to Lawson (1994), bullying can cause anxiety and depression. Anxiety often manifests in the following telltale signs:

An unhappy and frightened child may revert to earlier patterns of behaviour...some will become more dependent, and start clinging to mum again. Younger children may literally wet themselves during the day with anxiety, while older children may wet the bed. Thumb-sucking, nail-biting, overeating,

stammering and habits like chewing clothing or bedding are all signs of anxiety which may be caused or contributed by bullying (Lawson, 1994: 33).

This indicates that dependence, fear manifested as bedwetting, nervousness and odd behaviour are but some of the impacts bullying has on a bully victim. In addition to this, Lawson (1994) offers that symptoms associated with depression, such as tearfulness, difficulty in concentrating, loss of appetite may be present as consequence of experiencing bullying. Furthermore, the author warns to take depression seriously, whether there are threats of suicide or not. Self-harm, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts are some of the common behavioural consequences of a bully victim's emotional experiences of anxiety and depression (Dyart & Teggart, 2007). Aluede, Adeleke, Omoike and Afen-Akpaيدا (2008) find that adults who had been bullied as children reported emotional loneliness, which influences their ability to maintain and form close relationships with others.

The preceding findings clearly illustrate how bullying affects the emotional well-being of the bully victim in the long run. It also indicates typical emotional responses a bully victim may present with. In subsequent paragraphs, the impact that negative emotions (such as depression and anxiety) have on the social life of the bully victim will be discussed.

2.4.3 Social impact and interpersonal skills

Bullying is a phenomenon that seeks to destroy a person's connectedness with others (Rigby, 2003). According to a study conducted by Frisen et al (2007), bully victims tend to be viewed as "different" from their peers, giving rise to the experience of being socially isolated (Aluede et al, 2008) and thus being an easy target for bullies. Andreou (2000) discovered that bully victims experience low social acceptance. This may enforce social isolation and vulnerability to bullying.

Dyer and Teggart (2007) found the most common impact of being bullied was absenteeism and withdrawal from fun and social activities due to anxiety about being bullied at school and at the fun and social activities. According to Lawson (1994),

withdrawal is one of the behavioural consequences of being bullied, and affects the social life of a child as he/she might find it difficult to do anything positive, spending most of his/her time at home. Escapism into a fantasy world (watching television or playing computer games) where he/she does not need to socially interact with others, is preferred to social activities such as family outings, out-of-school activities or visiting friends. This goes together with a fear of going to school, contributing to social isolation, and scholastic difficulties (Lawson, 1994).

According to Sgarzi and McDevitt (2003), persons experiencing bullying usually are perceived as being unlikely to defend themselves or retaliate when confronted by those who bully them. Furthermore, bully-victims tend to react out of emotion in a bullying situation, eliciting probable re-victimisation, as the bully targets children who react by crying or aggressive behaviour (Genzale, 2008). Lawson (1994) mentions that a child who is being bullied may resort to aggressive behaviour, and even bullying behaviour him/herself, in order to get rid of their frustrations and pent-up anger or to re-establish a power imbalance (also Hunter et al, 2007). Smith, Talamelli, Cowie, Naylor and Chauhan (2004) report bully victims to have a self-perception of peer relationship difficulties. They tend to have fewer friends in school, are absent from school more than non-victims and are also likely to be involved with bullying others as well as being bullied.

Schafer et al (2004) report that the long lasting effects of bullying regarding social relationships, have a severe impact even into adulthood, where bully victims tend to be fearful of other people even though they long to have close relationships with other people. Bully victims tend to want either less closeness, or more closeness than others might want to have, supporting the idea that the prolonged experience of being deprived of peer support lowers the level of trust others. Therefore, it causes the victim to narrow his/her friendship circle due to the lack of trust in others due to fear or worry of getting hurt. The victim also tends to befriend others in similar situations. This may be a predictor of having difficulties in maintaining and establishing relationships as an adult, whether it is friendship based or romantic.

According to the exploration of the literature, it is evident that a bully victim's personality traits as well as the impact bullying has on a person's emotional well-being, are contributing factors to the social difficulty a bully victim may experience. The typical social reactions of bully victims can therefore be added to the bully victim profile. It is important to note that all of the bully victim's interpersonal relationships are consequently affected by bullying – even their relationships with their children.

Schafer et al (2004) report that having difficulty in forming and maintaining relationships have a negative impact on a person's self-esteem. A discussion of the impact of failing relationships on the self follows in subsequent paragraphs.

2.4.4 Self-concept: Self-esteem and identity

Engler (1999) defines self-concept in Rogerian terms as an internalised object of perception – it is how a person perceives his/her self. The self as perceived, includes a person's values that are taken over from other people rather than the actual experience. Some experiences will even be introjected or internalised from important others (Engler, 1999). When a person experiences bullying, it has an impact on how a person internalises certain experiences, therefore affecting the person's self-perception.

Lawson (1994) proposes that children who have doubts about themselves would fall easy prey to the bully perpetrator. Furthermore, bully victims may feel that they are not good enough, or worse, try to change who they are in order to avoid falling prey to bullies. They might even become painfully self-conscious about their appearances. A depreciation of self-esteem or ego-weakness is but one of the consequences that Lawson (1994) identified, particularly when associated with physical bullying. Persons who have been bullied *can be left with a lifelong low self-esteem and confidence* (Lawson, 1994: 18). By finding it difficult to believe that others will accept them, they take on the identity of a shy, anxious or withdrawn person.

Aluede et al (2008) found in their study that the psychological scars left by bullying often endure for years, especially negative self-esteem that continues into adulthood. Schafer et al (2004) report that adults who were bullied at school found it difficult to feel good

about themselves as adults, indicating that bullying results in a negative (low) self-esteem.

Lawson (1994:24) is of the opinion that

Feeling good about yourself starts within the family, and all children need at least enough positive input from parents to balance the negative side of their relationship – praise for what they do right as well as criticism for what they do wrong. Some parents find this hard to give, especially if they were made to feel worthless by their own parents.

One can therefore assume from the preceding excerpt that the foundation of a person's self-concept is laid during childhood experiences – whether it may be positive, or negative. In addition to experiences at school, one should also keep in mind the experiences a child has at home, and that negative, traumatic family experiences may predispose a person with the vulnerability to be victimised at school. The preceding literature review further indicates that a bully victim may typically present with low self-esteem and a self-concept based on traumatic childhood experiences that have been internalised by the bully victim. This may affect a person's relationships and emotional well-being not only in adulthood per se, but also parenthood. This then leads me to discuss the context of the family in which the child finds him/herself.

2.4.5 The family context

Sgarzi and McDevitt (2003) report that bully victims are close to their parents and described these parents as potentially overprotective. According to Pretorius (1998), parents who are overprotective and overly involved in their children's lives, do underestimate the child's role in the process of growing up. These parents tend to keep their child from socializing with other children, thus causing the child to be infantile in comparison to the peer group. The overprotected child experiences difficulty to attain self-assertion within social situations and among peers; hence, the overprotected child tends to befriend younger children. The younger children remain helpless, dependent, passive and are susceptible to bullying.

Genzale (2008) reports that if children experience conflict in their homes, particularly where one parent tends to win the conflict, they may develop bully-like behaviours, i.e. either becoming a bully, or fall vulnerable to being bullied. Genzale (2008) ascribes this to the strong power imbalance within the home context.

Nation, Vieno, Perkins and Santinello (2008) found in their study that bully-victims were likely to allow their parents make decisions on their behalf, and less likely to participate in decision-making. This suggests that by not allowing children to make their own decisions, the parents are modeling bullying behaviour whereby the child accepts the role of a bully victim. Lawson (1994), who states that bullying at home could become a risk factor if a parent cannot distinguish the fine line between firmness and bullying, supports this viewpoint. In such cases where parents overstep the line, parents may be modeling to the child that bullying is acceptable as long as one remains in a position of authority. The child may then either take on the role of a bully (by modeling his or her parents behaviour) or a victim (accepting the role of being bullied else where, such as in school). Siblings will tease and bully each other as well, and can set the stage for a person to assume the victim role (Lawson, 1994). A child, whose sibling is bullying him/her, can be vulnerable within other situations, as it affects a child's self-esteem and identity formation in- so-far that it may predispose a child to become a potential target for bullying behaviour. This indicates the interrelatedness of self-esteem and family context in a bully victim.

Based upon the preceding research findings, three types of family situations can be identified namely **power imbalances between parents and child** (Genzale, 2008 & Nation et al, 2008), **overprotective parents** (Sgarzi & McDevitt, 2003), and **sibling bullying** (Lawson, 1994). Figure 2.2 will present a summary of these parenting styles.

Figure 2.2: Family situations that may leave a child vulnerable to bullying

Family Situation	Consequences
Power imbalances between parents and child	This situation leads to children adopting either the role of the parent who wins (the bully) or the one who loses (the victim). In homes where parents cannot distinguish the fine line between firmness and bullying, a child may adopt the role of a victim in situations inside the family sphere as well as the social sphere. In some homes parents make all the decisions for the child, thus modeling a bully-victim relationship to the child (Genzale, 2008; Nation et al, 2008).
Overprotective parents	These children are close to their parents who tend to overprotect them, and keep them from having friends. They tend to befriend younger children because they have difficulty asserting themselves with their peers. They act helpless, dependent, passive and are susceptible for bullying (Sgarzi & McDevitt, 2003).
Sibling bullying	In a family situation where sibling bullying takes place, a child may become susceptible for bullying in other spheres of his/her life as well. This may also lead a child to develop a low self-esteem (Lawson, 1994).

Finally, Lawson (1994) reports that if a bully victim does not receive emotional support or assistance, he/she may carry this negative emotional burden for the rest of his/her life. This may affect adult life, marriage, child rearing practises, and mental health. As parenthood is an important focus of this study, the next section will explore the different parenting roles that adults could assume, by discussing the different types of parenting styles.

2.5 PARENTING STYLES

Reder and Lucey (1995) conceptualise parenting styles as a two-way process wherein reciprocal interaction between child and parent is central. Different parenting skills and important functions of parenting are classified according to the existence of two types of behaviour that parents exhibit towards the child, for example *parent-child centered behaviour* (smiles, imitations, ignoring of negative behaviour, positive touch and attention and encouragement), and *parent-child directive behaviour* (demands, using the “no” word, teaching, questioning, critique and negative touch). Consequently two

dimensions of parenting behaviour which are based on parental warmth or responsiveness on the one side of the parenting continuum, and parental control or demand on the other side of the parenting continuum evolve (Cornell & Frick, 2007; Driscoll et al, 2008; Jackson-Newsom et al 2008; Martinez & Garcia, 2008; McGillicuddy-de Lisi & De Lisi, 2007; Turkel & Tezer, 2008; Stright-Dopkins et al, 2008). Parenting styles can therefore be categorised according to the different patterns of parenting behaviour a person presents with (Jackson-Newsom et al, 2008).

Based on these two dimensions, or patterns of behaviour, three parenting styles namely Authoritative parenting style, Authoritarian parenting style, and Permissive parenting style emerge. These parenting styles were explored by a leading researcher in this field, Diana Baumrind (Martin & Colbert, 1997). Further research in this field determined a fourth parenting style, which was termed Uninvolved/Neglectful parenting style (Martin & Colbert, 1997). These parenting styles are presented on a two dimensional continuum (see Figure 2.3), where parental control is presented on the x-axis, and parental warmth and responsiveness is presented on the y-axis of the figure.

Each parenting style can be defined and classified according to parenting behaviour (the two dimensional continuum), the child's experience of the parenting style, and the effects it has on the child's development.

Figure 2.3 Dimensions of parenting as presented by Martin and Colbert (1997)

X - AXIS

Y - AXIS		Parental control	
		Controlling / Demanding	Uncontrolling / Undemanding
Parental warmth and responsiveness	Warm / Responsive	AUTHORITATIVE PARENT	PERMISSIVE PARENT
	Aloof / Unresponsive	AUTHORITARIAN PARENT	UNINVOLVED PARENT

According to Figure 2.3, parenting behaviours can be classified as being controlling or uncontrolling, as well as aloof or warm. By keeping in mind the typical impact bullying has on a bully victim’s relationships, especially the relationship between a bully victim and his/her offspring, one may be able to predict the type of parental behaviours a bully victim may present with. These behaviours can subsequently be plotted on the above figure in order to discover the bully victim’s parenting style. The next section will discuss each parenting style as presented in Figure 2.3, as well as parenting styles that have been identified by other researchers.

2.5.1 Authoritative parenting style

Parents who set firm rules that are developmentally appropriate, and provide justifications to the child for these rules, employ this parenting style. They solicit input

from their children and are nurturing, yet authoritative. These parents enforce the rules by setting clear boundaries and limits. They are warm, nurturing, and involved with their children, yet are demanding as well. Warmth, affection, and explanation form part of this democratic approach, marked by respect for the rights and needs of both the parents and the children. The characteristics of children raised in this manner tend to be socially competent, energetic, friendly and curious (Driscoll et al, 2008; Martin & Colbert, 1997; McGillicuddy-de Lisi & De Lisi, 2007; Pretorius, 1998).

2.5.2 Permissive parenting style

Parents who are high on warmth and low in control have a permissive parenting style. They allow their children to regulate their own behaviour, and are generally non-controlling and non-threatening – avoiding to make demands such as expecting the child to do household chores or having a curfew. They rarely impose limits and infrequently discipline the child. They have a warm and accepting approach towards their children and offer unconditional support. Too much freedom is developmentally inappropriate for very young children and can encourage behaviour that is impulsive and aggressive (Martin & Colbert, 1997; McGillicuddy-de Lisi & De Lisi, 2007; Pretorius, 1998).

2.5.3 Authoritarian parenting style

The authoritarian parenting style emerges when parents are high in control but low in warmth. They expect the child to follow an absolute set of standards placed by the parents, without questioning the standards. They often rely on force to elicit their children's cooperation and are largely unresponsive/alooof towards the needs and rights of their children. They value obedience, discourage verbal give and take with their children, and strictly enforce rules. The consequential effects are moody, unhappy, fearful, withdrawn, non-spontaneous, and irritable children (Driscoll et al, 2008; McGillicuddy-de Lisi & De Lisi, 2007; Martin & Colbert, 1997; Pretorius, 1998).

2.5.4 Uninvolved parenting style

Also known as rejecting-neglecting parents, these parents do not engage their children often, either in discipline or in encouragement of personal development. This parenting style has been criticised to be the most unsuccessful type of parenting style. Lax and uncontrolling parents, who reject their children and who do not have the time and energy for them, are usually found to experience stress and difficulties in dealing with life's problems. Uncaring neglect causes the child to become resentful and hostile, lacking both socially and academically. These children are more likely to engage in delinquent antisocial acts during adolescence (Driscoll et al, 2008; McGillicuddy-de Lisi & De Lisi, 2007; Martin & Colbert, 1997; Pretorius, 1998).

In addition to the above four parenting styles, McGillicuddy-de Lisi and De Lisi (2007) identified a fifth parenting style namely the non-confirming parenting style. This parenting style will be discussed in the following section.

2.5.5 Non-conforming parenting style

Non-conforming parents value their children's individuality and encourage them to think independently, express themselves and regulate themselves rather than enforcing rules on them (McGillicuddy-de Lisi & De Lisi, 2007). In addition to these parenting styles, Pretorius (1998) identified five more parenting styles, which will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

2.5.6 Warm parenting style

Parents engage in a warm emotionally close you-and-me relationship with the child. Parents are loving and supportive towards the child and accept the child as an individual. Childrearing is the main priority for these parents. They are sensitive towards the needs, problems, and feelings of the child. Intensive and positive communication focuses on provision of stimulation, space and opportunity for the child's optimal development. Children are encouraged to socialise and this type of parenting style predisposes the child to the development of a positive self-concept (Pretorius, 1998).

2.5.7 Dominant parenting style

These parents are too involved, domineering, and controlling towards the child. Parents are over-meddling, give too much help and protection, and make decisions for the child. They tend to have very high expectations of the children and enforce very strict rules. Children are not allowed to have their own opinions and parents ensure the child stays dependent on them. Complete obedience is expected and they tend to supervise the child's activities with no room for independence. Consequently, social development lacks the appropriate level of maturity. They struggle to form positive relationships, and are depressive by nature. They tend to be dependent on authority, and thus have little opportunity to make personal choices. Low self-esteem, helplessness, and low self-worth are consequences of such a parenting style (Pretorius, 1998).

2.5.8 Involved parenting style

This parenting style is characterised by warmth and dominance. The parent adopting this style has a good relationship with the child and tries to prevent the child from making mistakes, even if it happens to be negative to the child's autonomy formation. This leads to the parents underestimating the child's ability to function independently. It goes hand in hand with "over-mothering," where too much physical nurturing takes place, as well as the mother keeping the child infantile by offering too much help and nurturing. These parents tend to prevent the child from becoming independent.

Children raised by such a parenting style feel smothered and the child's development and independence are stunted. Opportunities for the child to socialise are not enough. It is possible though that a child experiencing this type of parenting style may develop appropriate social skills despite the lack of opportunities to attain and practice these skills. On the other hand, the possibility exists that a child reared in this manner may consequently not reach his/her full potential as everything is being done for the child (Pretorius, 1998).

2.5.9 Neglectful parenting style

This particular parenting style can be characterised by a cold and neglectful approach. The parent, who does not show any interest in the child, is therefore neglectful towards the child. The primary needs of the child are not met and subsequently the child tends to develop an overpowering need to feel loved and accepted. A lack of guidance as well as a permissive “letting go” attitude, form part of the behavioural pattern of neglectful parents. These parents tend to punish their children by not providing them with love. The consequences of this loveless relationship are far reaching. Children can become asocial and do not develop their full potential. This may lead to feelings of worthlessness and a negative self-concept (Pretorius, 1998).

2.5.10 Harmonious parenting style

This parenting style can be better described as an educational situation rather than a parenting style. Families with such a parenting style rarely have the need to address conflict. Although these parents seem to be in control, they have no need to exercise their control as the children do what is expected of them. Children seem to do tasks independently and from own accord, rather than because the parents expect it. An atmosphere of unity exists among the family members. Pretorius (1998) is of the opinion that it is not because the parents are extraordinary, but because the children are – these children make childrearing easy for the parents. Children of this parenting style usually are considerate, cooperative and tend to become self-actualised. These children have high self-concepts and feel loved and accepted by their parents (Pretorius, 1998).

As can be seen from the above section on parenting styles, ten different parenting styles have been identified by different researchers. Knowledge on the parenting styles enables me to explore and compare the mother’s parenting style with these parenting styles.

2.6 SYNOPSIS

In this chapter, I have clarified what I mean when I refer to bully perpetrator and a bully victim, as well as what is meant by bullying behaviour. It has also been indicated in this chapter that a person can experience bullying as a trauma, which can cause several devastating and debilitating effects on a person's personality, social and emotional development, as well as self-esteem and identity. I have also explored the different parenting styles adults may adopt.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the rationale of the study as well as the paradigmatic approach of this research project. A discussion of the research methodology and design, as well as the ethical considerations involved in the methods, will be provided.

The literature study conducted in this chapter confirmed that early childhood bullying has a traumatic effect on a bully victim later in life. Through the literature, a bully victim profile emerges that comprises of different factors rendering a person vulnerable to future bullying. A person who experienced bullying may consequently experience intra- and interpersonal difficulties in adulthood. The latter section of Chapter Two focused on several types of parenting styles an adult (parent) may adopt. In the next chapter, I will present the reader with an overview of the research methodology implemented in this study.

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Chapter Three

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

As this case involves a mother who experienced childhood bullying, it is important to consider the different ways one may adopt when exploring her situation. In this chapter, I would like to present the paradigm and research approach I followed. The chosen paradigm ensured an approach that facilitated respect and responsibility towards the case of my participant, who was willing to narrate some of her most painful life experiences to me.

Thereafter I would like to introduce the research design used to gain understanding of this case. This involved a qualitative approach. This section will also explain the data collection methods, which were an oral history and a written narrative on the life story of the mother. The purpose of the latter section is to present the reader with a sensitive way of analysis, interpretation, and presentation of the data collected. An introduction of the research questions will guide the reader towards the discussion of the research paradigm and research methods.

3.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions guiding this study can be formulated as follows:

- In which way is the mother's personal profile similar to that of the bully victim profile?
- How do the mother's narrated childhood bullying experiences link thematically with her narrated parenting experiences?
- How do the themes of the narrated experiences culminate into a specific parenting style?

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The research was guided by the interpretivistic and social constructionist paradigmatic perspective. I chose these paradigms as they suit the type of research best and because it forms part of the framework in which I viewed my participant. I believe it is imperative not only to look at this mother and the meaning she constructs regarding her experiences, but also to view her as a whole person being part of systems that influence her life. Although these two paradigms use different lenses to view a person, I believe them to be complementary. An explanation of these two paradigms will follow.

Terre Blanche et al (2006) clearly differentiate between these paradigms: interpretivism treats people as products of their feelings, thoughts and experiences (subjective reality); the social constructionist approach treats people as products of systems of meaning that exists on a social level rather an individual level (objective reality).

Social constructionists views people and objects to be represented by signs and images. These representations have the powers to shape our experience of reality (Terre Blanche et al, 2006). By using interpretivism it is possible to understand people's subjective experiences by interacting with them and to listen to their stories by using qualitative methods. It focuses on the power of language and expression in order to understand the social world. It makes use of first hand information in order to understand phenomena in its context, in which the researcher is a primary instrument in collecting and analyzing the data. According to this approach, meaning is derived by trying to understand the human phenomena in context (Terre Blanche et al, 2006).

...within this tradition (Interpretivism) the aim of the human sciences is defined as understanding (not explaining) people; people are conceived, not primarily as biological organisms, but firstly and foremost as conscious, self-directing, symbolic human beings. In fact, phenomenologists emphasise the dis-analogy between social and natural phenomena... The phenomenologist emphasises that all human beings are engaged in the process of making sense of their (life) worlds. We continuously interpret, create and give meaning to, define, justify and rationalise our action (Mouton, 1998: 28).

As suggested by the preceding excerpt, Interpretivism therefore focuses on the meanings an individual will assign to his/her experiences (Jansen, 2004). According to Jansen (2004:10), this means that the understanding of an individual's *social context, conventions, norms and standards of a particular person or community are crucial elements in understanding human behaviour.*

For the purpose of this study, it is therefore assumed that the mother's reality and therefore experiences are both shaped by her feelings, thoughts and experiences as well as the systems of meaning that constitute her contexts. An individual therefore cannot function on his/her own as the individual forms part of a context of the systems (Babbi & Mouton, 2001). It is therefore appropriate to use both approaches as the mother's experiences are influenced by both her subjective experiences as well as her exposure to her own context of systems.

3.4 RESEARCH APPROACH

Following interpretivist and social constructionist paradigms, I used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research uses methods to describe and interpret peoples' feelings and experiences in human terms. The focus is on peoples' subjective experiences that direct the attempt to understand the power of ordinary language and expression (Terre Blance et al, 2006). In addition, qualitative research aims to elucidate human environments and human experiences within a variety of conceptual frameworks (Hay, 2005). This brings forward some critique on the validity of qualitative research as the researcher forms part of the participant's environment and experiences, just as the researcher's own self comes with his/her own environment and experiences.

Critique against qualitative research is rooted in the arguments that qualitative research could be seen as an assembly of stories and personal expressions that are subjected to researcher bias. The lack of reproducibility and generalisability due to the personal involvement of the researcher is another concern (Mays & Pope, 1995). Despite the critique, it is necessary to take into consideration that qualitative research include a diversity of methods in which philosophical assumptions on reality, goals and valid data collection methods varies (Clark, 2002).

The strengths of qualitative research is rooted in the assumption that it acknowledges that reality is multiple, subjective and that it is construed on a mental level by individuals. In addition, qualitative research allows the researcher to gain a deeper look into the research participant's subjective and unique experiences, in contradistinction to the existence of an absolute meaning. The conclusions usually are part of an interactive process that focuses on the meaning and understanding of the case, situation or phenomenon that is being explored (Grosson, 2003).

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.5.1 The case study

This research design is based on an individual, intrinsic case study as it can be seen as an exploration of an in-depth analysis of a bounded system, and because it can be seen as a process, activity or happening of a specific individual (De Vos et al, 2002; Strydom & Delpont, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). An intrinsic case study is used when the researcher wants to gain a better understanding of a specific case. The purpose of a case study is to describe a case of which one has an intrinsic interest, not to understand an abstract construct or a generic phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Strydom & Delpont, 2002). Therefore, this design was chosen in order for me to better understand the mother.

Berg (2003) states it is important to undertake an intrinsic case study because it illustrates a specific tendency, characteristic or problem. The role of the researcher is not to test abstract theories or to understand it, or even to develop new theoretical explanations, but to understand the intrinsic aspects of the specific participant (Berg, 2003). Stark and Torrance (2005) agree on this stance and are of opinion that the case study is an approach to research in which social interaction and the social construction of meaning is the root of investigation. It attempts to identify and describe the social reality as constructed by social interaction. A case study is thus specific, descriptive, inductive and heuristic – it attempts to enlighten the reader's views on an issue (Stark & Torrance, 2005).

In addition, Berg (2003) described the intrinsic case study as a methodological approach using different data gathering techniques. According to Strydom and Delpont (2002), the case study is an investigation and description by using detailed and in-depth data gathering methods, including multiple sources of information that is rich in context. According to Stark and Torrance (2005), one of the greatest strengths of the case study is that it gives a rich description of a phenomenon in order to reflect the participant's perspective. Therefore, in this study a rich description of the mother case can be achieved as it is open for new discoveries, and it serves as source of insight and hypotheses for subsequential research (Berg, 2003; De Vos et al, 2002).

There are several strengths pertaining to the usage of case studies (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). The results can be reported in simple language, making it easy to read, and therefore attracting a wider community of readers. Although the results of a case study are easy to understand, it is rich in meaning that may have been missed in larger groups of participants. The case study illustrates and focuses on the unique characteristics of the case, and therefore increases insight into similar cases. It does not need a research team and, finally, it is held in high regard concerning the participant's reality.

In contrast to these strengths are the weaknesses as identified by Cohen et al (2000), who are of opinion that extrapolarisation of the results may not always be valid as it is not open for cross controlling. It is also exposed to observation bias. Furthermore, case studies have certain limitations, for example: problems with validation of information, cause and effect is difficult to tests, and generalisations cannot be made of single case studies (De Vos et al, 2002).

The rationale for choosing a case study was embedded in the need to give an in-depth description and analysis of the mother's parenting experience in order to facilitate better understanding for her case (Cresswell, 2007). In addition to the choice of an intrinsic case study, an explanation of the usage of a narrative research approach as an approach towards the data gathering method will follow.

3.6 METHOD OF SELECTION

Purposeful selection is informative about a specific subject (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001), and took place during a referral procedure to a clinical psychologist / family therapist in a Gauteng community. The mother disclosed that she was experiencing difficulty with her relationship with her daughter. It came to light that the mother was bullied as a child. The mother voluntarily agreed to participate in a research project to explore her childhood bullying experiences and parental experiences. The research design is thus based on a case study of a selected mother who was bullied as child.

3.7 DATA GATHERING

I gained understanding about Sarah⁸, married to George and mother of Sally, her only child, through two methods of storytelling. One method was an oral history that took place over two conversations⁹ concerning Sarah's bullying experiences as a child and her parenting experiences. These conversations were then transcribed. The other method was a written narrative comprising three bullying incidents in her life.

The two unstructured one-on-one interviews and the written narrative were used for the collection of data. The unstructured interview is also called an in-depth interview, and broadens and formalises conversation.

The data collection method for this case study involved a narrative method. During the interview, narratives were used as a method of data collection. An in-depth interview therefore allowed me to explore the mother's perceptions, opinions, facts, predictions, and reactions (De Vos et al, 2002: 298). Berg (2003) suggests that a single, lengthy interview could provide the researcher with enough information to give answers to the specific research questions asked. These narratives focused on the mother's individual experiences, in chronological order according to the meaning of her stories (Creswell, 2007:54). According to De Vos et al (2002:298), the purpose of the interviews and

⁸ For reasons of confidentiality and to protect the mother's identity, pseudonyms will be used to refer to the mother (Sarah), the daughter (Sally), and her husband (George).

⁹ Each conversation was approximately two hours long and took place over a period of two weeks.

written narratives is not getting answers on questions, but gaining deeper understanding in the experiences of the participant and the meaning he/she attaches to his/her experiences. It is focused, discursive and allows the participant and researcher to explore experiences.

Narrative inquiry as a method of data collection is a method the researcher can employ in order to understand the experiences of a participant. Collaboration and social interaction give the participant the opportunity to relive and retell the stories of the experiences that make up his/her life: *narrative inquiry is stories lived and told* (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000:20). According to Bloom (2002), narrative research and inquiry has three theoretical goals:

- It focuses on the participant as a primary source of data;
- it focuses on narratives as a setting from which the research can produce social review and support; and
- it is concerned about the deconstruction of the participant as a humanistic concept.

As memoirs form the core of this mother's narratives (Ritchie, 2003), an oral history as a data collection method was implemented in the unstructured interview and will be discussed next.

3.7.1 Oral History

Ritchie (2003) describes an oral history to be focused on gaining personal memories and commentaries through recorded interviews. In addition, Yow (2006) describes an oral history as a process in which the participant's motivations, feelings, fears, hopes, and aspirations becomes clear. According to Ritchie (2003), the **life history** in the form of an "**oral memoir**" is the type of life history this research project used. In an oral memoir, the features of the life history include the mother's telling of her own story. In accordance with Ritchie (2003) and Yow (2006), Bogdan and Bilken (2003:56) describe and oral history/life history as *extensive interviews with one person for the purpose of collecting a first person narrative*.

Ritchie (2003) also refers to the oral history as an autobiographical account wherein the participant shares his/her life, from childhood to present. Life histories further give the interviewee time to relate what both the interviewer seeks and the interviewee wants to tell (Ritchie, 2003). In addition, Yow (2006) defines a life history as an account of one's life told to another in which a narrator selectively engages his/her lived experiences through personal storytelling.

It should be kept in mind that regardless of a research project's objectives, a good oral history is characterised by leaving space for interviewees to speak their own minds, therefore enhancing the participant's input in the oral history (Ritchie, 2003 & Cresswell, 2007). This is in agreement with collaborative research, in which the researcher makes an effort to create a space for more involvement from the participants as the participant is an integral part of the research approach (Hay & Henning, 2005; Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). I therefore collaborated with the mother on the findings of the data-analysis, as to ensure the mother's acceptance of the findings of the data. In the next section the data analysis and interpretation process I followed, will be discussed.

As an oral history is completed in the spoken language, it needs to be audio-recorded and transcribed in order to make the data accessible. The two conversations were therefore audio-recorded, as suggested by Ritchie (2003). As transcripts are not able to communicate non verbal language such as *tone of voice, winks, smiles etcetera* (Meyers & Sharpless, 2006: 237), it is important that the researcher will make note of these details via footnotes or written explanations as an additional source of information and then add it to the transcript (Meyers & Sharpless, 2006:237; Ritchie, 2003).

3.8 ENGAGING WITH THE DATA

In this section, I will discuss the methods I used in order to gain deeper insight into this mother's experiences and how I made sense of the narratives I explored. This involved an intense engagement with the data based on the process of inductive analysis as described by (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

According to McMillan & Schumacher (2001), the first step of the inductive analysis process involved the organisation and management of the data into categories, patterns and themes. The act of organisation and management will be presented in the subsequent section. Following this step, I will discuss the second part of the process namely the analysis of the data which involved identification of the themes and categories that emerged from the data. As an important characteristic of inductive analysis is the dependence on the researcher's cognitive activities, synthesis and interpretation of the data will be based on the construction of knowledge as proposed by social constructivism. A brief discussion on the interpretation of the data will therefore form the latter part of this section.

In addition to the processes involved in the inductive analysis approach followed, I remained aware of the complexity of the data as shared by Sarah:

Speech is somatic, a bodily function, and it is accompanied by physical inflections – tone of voice, winks, smiles, raised eyebrows, hand gestures – that are not reproducible in writing. Spoken language is repetitive, fragmentary, contradictory, limited in vocabulary, laded down with space holders...and yet people can generally make themselves understood right away. As a medium, writing is a million times weaker than speech. It is a hieroglyph competing with a symphony (L. Menand in Charlton, Myers, and Sharpless, 2006:237)

The preceding excerpt clearly illustrates the complicated nature of analysing spoken language in the form of an oral history, or a life story. Furthermore, the narration of a lived experience takes place within the complication of different contexts and systems (Shacklock & Thorp, 2005). It is therefore of the utmost importance to analyse the data in the context of these systems and the role each system plays. This allowed me to look at the narratives in context. An awareness of the complicated nature of the different factors, contexts, and systems furthermore allowed me to situate the life story of the mother in a rich, multi-dimensional, and dynamic setting.

3.8.1 Data management

The two transcribed conversations and the written story was numbered 1, 2 and 3 respectively. For the conversations, each speaking turn was numbered, and each line of each speaking turn was numbered individually. After careful consideration of the content

and classifying the data according to themes, specific themes emerged from each speaking turn. Each theme was then numbered by referring to the number of the conversation (either 1 or 2), the conversation point, and the line. For example, the reference **1:36 [1-7]** can be read accordingly:

- **1: 36 [1-7] = 1** represents the first conversation,
- **1: 36 [1-7] = 36** represents the **36th speaking turn** of the first conversation, and
- **1: 36 [1-7] = [1-7]** represents **lines 1-7** of the 36th speaking turn.

Regarding the written narrative, the reference **3 [11-21]** can be read:

- **3 [11-21] = 3** represents the written narrative
- **3 [11-21] = [11-13]** represents **lines 11-13** in the written narrative.

All the themes that emerged from these three documents (the two transcribed oral memoirs and the written life story narrative), were then placed on two mind maps (one represented her childhood bullying experiences and the other one her parenting experiences) with its corresponding numbering. These themes were then organised into separate clusters, which will be presented in the next section.

3.8.2 Data analysis

During the process of data analysis, I firstly identified the themes that emerged from the data. A **theme** can be defined as a subject or topic on which a person speaks, writes, or thinks (The Dictionary Unit for South African English [DUSAE], 2008). For the purpose of this study, a theme will represent the subject of experiencing bullying.

Secondly, I identified the groups/concepts the themes could be clustered as. A **concept** can be defined as an idea or mental picture of a group or class of object, formed by combining all their aspects (DUSAE, 2008). For the purposes of this study, a concept will thus represent an idea of a group of themes, which will form the combining aspect as a unit of analysis (experiences, feelings, and reactions).

Thirdly, I identified the factors by which the concepts are influenced. A **factor** can be defined as a circumstance, fact, or condition (connected with or relevant to an event) that contributes to a result (DUSAE, 2008). For the purposes of this study, a factor will thus represent a circumstance/fact/condition (e.g. self-esteem and identity; emotional impact, personal characteristics and parenting style) that shapes to Sarah's experiences as a parent.

Finally, I identified the spheres from which these factors, concepts, and themes emerged. A **sphere** can be defined as an area of activity, interest, or expertise; a group or section distinguished and unified by a particular characteristic (DUSAE, 2008). For the purposes of this study, a sphere will represent a section in Sarah's life (e.g. family; social; and parenting) that is unified by her experiences as a person being bullied.

In order to enhance the data analysis, I revisited the multifactor model of bullying. This proved to be a tremendous supportive structure in the presentation of the data analysis in Chapter Four. An interpretation of the data analysis was based on a social constructionist approach, and will therefore be discussed next.

3.8.3 Data interpretation

The interpretation strategy explored and implemented is in line with the social constructionist perspective. According to this perspective, the emphasis is on an ongoing conversation that allows for the creation of different realities (Strauss & Corbin, 1996).

According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2004), the narrative perspective, with social construction theory as its operational guide, theorises that a person's narratives can guide the interpreter/therapist to look for "*enriched, intentioned, multistories shaped in part by personal, historical, political, and cultural forces*" (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 2004: 344). This means ultimately that Sarah is embedded in her context, which provides a background for the highly personalised themes that emerged to the foreground of her narratives.

Following these perspectives, I viewed the mother as a narrator whose sense of reality is organised and maintained through the life story she relates to herself and those around her. In her relating her life story to me, she conveyed knowledge concerning the experiences of her life and the world in which she lives. These narratives resulted in a rich description of her life. According to Goldenberg and Goldenberg (2004), this enabled me to understand why she behaves in a certain way (for example accepting a victim role as profiled by the multifactor model of bullying), why she experiences life in a certain way (as a person experiencing bullying in the main spheres of her life), or even to understand how her experiences influenced her parenting style.

The narrative perspective further assisted me in the description of the emerging themes against the backdrop of the multifactor model of bullying. Firstly, this was done to establish whether a typical bully profile can be applied to this mother. Several themes, concepts, factors, and spheres as described by Sarah coincided with factors as presented in the multifactor model of bullying and served as guidance for the interpretation of the mother's narratives. Secondly, the narrative perspective allowed for the discovery of how the themes of the childhood bullying experiences relate to the themes of her parenting experiences. Thirdly, it allowed for an exploration of the way in which the themes of her bullying experiences culminated into a specific parenting style.

In order to allow Sarah partisanship in the interpretation process, I collaborated with her by discussing the results of the data analysis with her. In keeping with qualitative inquiry, I ensured the trustworthiness of the research process. This leads me to a discussion of my role as a researcher, as it determines the trustworthiness of the data. Hence, the role of the researcher will be subsequently discussed, after which a discussion on trustworthiness will follow.

3.9 ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

According to Hoepfl (1997) the role of the researcher in qualitative inquiry is to act as a human instrument through which data collection, analysis and interpretation takes place. This places the researcher in a considerably difficult position pertaining to the researcher's ability to conduct a qualitative inquiry successfully. According to Hoepfl

(1997:4) it is imperative that a researcher acquires a personal quality that enables him/her to indicate an awareness of the subtleties of the meaning of the data. This *theoretical sensitivity* is grounded in the researcher's competency to deal with the data in such a way, that it enhances the readers' confidence *in the researcher's ability to be sensitive to the data and to make appropriate decisions in the field* (Hoepfl, 1997:4). This competency is especially marked by the researcher's ability in showing insight in the meaning making process and to separate the relevant from the irrelevant.

Due to the nature of qualitative inquiry, my role is therefore not to judge or use the findings but to present the data and the findings thereof in such a way that it leaves space for the reader to share a joint responsibility for establishing the value of this research project (Hoepfl, 1997). This leads me to address the issue of trustworthiness that will be discussed next.

3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS

In order to address the overall trustworthiness of this project, a complete adherence to the principles pertaining to transferability, credibility, dependability, authenticity, and confirmability is necessary. As it was my intention to allow the reader to share the responsibility of establishing the value of this project, transferability as a way of achieving trustworthiness is imperative.

Transferability pertains to trustworthiness, as trustworthiness depends on the degree of similarities between Sarah's case and other cases. Hence, I would like to stress that I cannot specify the transferability of Sarah's case to others, as my role as researcher was limited to that of being a human instrument through which the research process took place. This means that my role was only to provide sufficient information that facilitates the reader to determine whether the findings of Sarah's case can be applied to a new situation, therefore accepting joint responsibility for validation (Hoepfl, 1997).

According to Eisner (1991:205), transferability presents itself in the form of *retrospective generalisation* that allows me (the researcher), Sarah (the participant) and you (the reader) to reconstruct our understanding of our past and future experiences. This is in

correspondence with the theoretical stance (interpretivist and social constructivist) I assumed as a researcher. To me this ultimately means that I should present the data and findings thereof in such a way that it is consistent with how Sarah constructed her reality by means of her narrations.

As qualitative inquiry relies heavily on the interpretation of the researcher, participant, and the reader, one should be aware of the subjectivity of all role players in the construction and meaning making process of Sarah's case. Once again, joint responsibility in creating knowledge is stressed (Hoepfl, 1997). The subjectivity of all the role players (the researcher, the participant and the reader) pertains to the issue of **confirmability**.

To address my own subjectivity, I employed numerous strategies as suggested by Cresswell (2007), Hoepfl (1997), Denzin & Lincoln (2005), and Henning et al (2004), to demonstrate my efforts to keep this research project trustworthy. In addition to conformability, Hoepfl (1997) is of the opinion that proving credibility is sufficient to establish **dependability** in a qualitative enquiry. Therefore, the following section will address the strategies that were employed to improve credibility and dependability.

3.10.1. Crystallisation

According to Patton (2002), credibility in qualitative inquiry depends more on the richness of the information gathered and the analytical abilities of the researcher, than on the sample size. Therefore, crystallisation as a process of validation and trustworthiness (Cresswell, 2007) was employed in order to emphasise the complexity and richness of the information.

Crystallisation make use of the crystal as a central image, which combines

...symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, and angles of approach. Crystals are prisms that reflect and refract, creating ever-changing images and pictures of reality

(Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

This indicates that the research participant cannot be viewed as a rigid, fixed, and two-dimensional object, but rather as a crystal – crystals change as they grow, *they reflect externalities and refract within themselves* (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005:6). What we see does not depend on a fixed position or objectification, but rather from our vantage point (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Henning et al, 2004). By implementing crystallisation, one can understand and experience how there is no single truth, as it provides us with a deepened understanding of how Sarah constructs and interprets herself within her context. This specifically pertains to the way Sarah constructed her disruptive and unstable family context (See Chapter Four).

In addition to crystallisation, Cresswell (2007) and Hoepfl (1997) agree that the notion of trustworthiness in qualitative research cannot depend on crystallisation only, but should also be addressed by the researcher from an interpretive perspective: *validation is a judgment of the trustworthiness or goodness of a piece of research* (Agen in Cresswell, 2007:205). Hence, several strategies as suggested by Cresswell (2007), Hoepfl (1997) and Ritchie (2003), should be applied within the research design, generation of data, data analysis and in the presentation of the data. These strategies involve prolonged engagement, triangulation, peer review, negative case analysis, clarifying research bias, member checking, transferability, and external audits. Hoepfl (1997) also suggests that the use of an inquiry audit be implemented, as this will contribute in the enhancement of dependability. Cresswell further recommends that qualitative researchers should engage in at least two of these strategies in order to ensure trustworthiness.

In this research study, the following validation strategies were implemented in addition to crystallisation: corroboration, peer review, inquiry audits, and member checking. The next section will therefore focus on explaining the meaning of these strategies concerning Sarah's case.

3.10.2 Corroboration

Corroboration involves a process of testing the data against different sources in order to illuminate a theme. The richness of data supports the credibility of the identified themes (Cresswell, 2007; Hoepfl, 1997). Reflecting on the issue of trustworthiness, Ritchie

(2003) states that oral history is just as reliable or unreliable as other research sources and that it is thus important that the information attained by the oral history should be tested against other evidence. Reflecting on the question of dependability, Ritchie (2003) further stated that oral history is just as dependable or undependable as other research sources. It is thus important that the information obtained by the oral history should be tested against other evidence. (Ritchie, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This is said with the awareness that the mother's life experiences are unique, and cannot be tested against other evidence, as experiences are subjective by nature.

Therefore, in this research study two unstructured, in-depth interviews (oral history narrated by Sarah) as well as a written narrative was implemented to ensure richness of data. These narratives therefore should enrich the oral narration as data, by adding the written narratives as proof of subjectivity.

3.10.3 Peer review and Inquiry audit

Peer review and inquiry audits present the researcher with an *external check* of the research process (Cresswell, 2007:208; Hoepfl, 1997). A peer should act as devil's advocate in order to ensure that the researcher remains honest and impartial. By asking difficult questions regarding the data management, analysis, and interpretation, the researcher is presented the opportunity to hone the findings of the research process. An M.Ed (Educational Psychology) student from the University of Pretoria and a junior lecturer at UNISA acted as peer reviewers.

An inquiry audit (as a method of obtaining dependability) involves a process *in which reviewers examine both the process and the product of the research for consistency* (Hoepfl, 1997:13). I deemed my supervisors as valuable reviewers of this process. The peer review and inquiry audit proved to play an integral part in my reflection phase of the data interpretation as I became aware of a fundamental difference between my interpretation of Sarah's narrated experiences with her father. I had to remind myself that my theoretical perspective and role as a researcher do not allow me to impose my personal views. Hence, I decided to only reflect Sarah's subjective experiences according to her narratives in my research results and findings (see Chapter Four). This

in accord with **authenticity**, which means that I had to ensure that a balanced view of Sarah's perspectives, view, beliefs and values will be presented in the data analysis and interpretation (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). As member checking forms part of ensuring authenticity, I will discuss member checking next.

3.10.4 Member checking

According to Ritchie (2003), some skeptics consider an oral history to be too subjective. This suggests a partial view, as the information given is subject to alteration over time. Besides the interviewee's subjectivity, the subjectivity of the interviewer also plays a cardinal role in the validation of the data gathered, as:

...more active interviewers risk distortion of their interviews by intruding their own cultural assumptions and political perspectives. Accepting subjectivity as inherent in the process and impossible to avoid, the advocates of a more active, scholarly interviewer believed that the interviewer believed that the interviewer's questioning actually involved a "first interpretation" of the interviewee's narrative. (Ritchie, 2003:28).

Member checking is therefore a process of validation involving partisanship with the participant (Cresswell, 2007; Hoepfl, 1997) in order to avoid research bias and ensure authenticity, as described in the former excerpt. According to Cresswell (2007), this strategy of member checking is generally viewed as the most critical strategy in ensuring trustworthiness. In this research project, the mother as partisan checked the credibility of the findings and interpretation of the data analysis. By collaborating with the mother on the research findings during a follow-up session, the themes that emerged from her narrations were discussed with Sarah. This allowed me to test the validation of my interpretation of her narratives against her construction of reality. It also allowed the mother to add, remove, or change the findings according to her **own truth**, rather than the truth of the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Finally, this strategy ensured that I kept to the ethical guidelines as described in Chapter One. Hence, a brief discussion on the ethics involved in this research study will follow.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Due to the sensitive nature of Sarah's narratives, a discussion on the findings with Sarah supported me in following the ethical considerations as set out in Chapter One. The discussions provided Sarah with the opportunity to protect her identity (by omitting identifying information), as well as to safe guard her privacy (safety in participation) and emotional well-being (by omitting data viewed as too sensitive for publication). Furthermore, by collaborating with Sarah on the validity of the findings, the research process was kept transparent. It should also be kept in mind that Sarah may present with difficulty in trusting people due to the nature of her childhood experiences, and that the issue of trust was considered throughout the research process. Collaborating with Sarah on the findings ensured that Sarah's trust in my ability to operate ethically was honoured.

3.12 SYNOPSIS

In this chapter, I explained the choice of paradigm (the Interpretivistic and Social Constructionist paradigm perspective) and the research approach (qualitative). In accordance with this approach, I explained the methods of data gathering, analysis, and interpretation appropriate to answer to the research questions. This was done while staying aware of the fact that I am dealing with a person who suffered a trauma during childhood, a mother of a daughter, somebody who experiences life in her own way. I also explained how, after the data was gathered, the processes I followed supported me to gain deeper insight into this mother's life.

It is for this reason that the next chapter will focus on the exploration of Sarah's experiences as a mother. Her experiences will be presented as the themes that emerged in the process of engaging with the data.

Chapter Five will deal with the conclusions of this research project in the form of a reflection on the research process and a letter to Sarah. The limitations and benefits of the project as well as the contributions and recommendations pertaining to research, practice and training will form the latter part of Chapter Five.

Chapter Four

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this chapter is to answer the research questions as framed in Chapter One:

- In which way is the mother's personal profile similar to that of the bully victim profile?
- How do the mother's narrated childhood bullying experiences link thematically with her narrated parenting experiences?
- How do the themes of the narrated experiences culminate into a specific parenting style?

Secondary to the purpose of answering the questions is to reflect on my experience of the research process and to share Sarah's life story to the point of the research.

4.1.1 Reflection on the research process

When I started this project, I knew that Sarah would share with me extremely personal and painful memories of a highly sensitive nature. After my first conversation with Sarah, however, I realised that nothing could have prepared me for the intensity thereof. Sarah's willingness to share her traumatic past with me touched me deeply, especially because it is of such an intensely personal nature. It was only when I started analysing the data that I knew I was going to experience difficulty in writing my research report.

While writing my report to illustrate my findings, I realised that I could not disclose certain information that is vital to the full understanding of Sarah as a person due to the high level of sensitivity of the content. On a personal level, I found it difficult to decide whether to share certain aspects of Sarah's narratives. By omitting certain aspects, it may lead to the reader not fully understanding Sarah. It may also prevent the richness of

the findings to emerge in this report. It is therefore of the utmost importance that Sarah's story should be read with the awareness that highly sensitive information has been omitted in order to avoid causing any more difficulty for Sarah. This, in addition to protecting her identity, will allow my reporting to be ethically sound, as well as honouring Sarah's trust in the research process we undertook together.

4.1.2 A mother's story

Sarah is a fifty two year old person married to George. They have a daughter (Sally), continuing to live with them while completing her university studies. During the referral procedure, Sarah confessed to being bullied by her father¹⁰ when she was a child. She also related her bullying experiences as child and reflected that her parenting experiences with Sally feels like bullying to her as well. That led us to undertake this research project together.

Sarah grew up in a home with father who bullied her until she was fourteen, when her mother divorced her father. Before the divorce, Sarah's childhood was marred by a bullying relationship with her father, and traveling from the one place to the next without her parents ever warning her and siblings of the change to come:

Nothing was ever discussed with us. When we, we grew up in Pietermaritzburg, and we left and lived in the Free State. We were just told at the end of the school term we're leaving, so bang, we left. There was no, how do you feel about it, we just left school and we moved. And it was the same when we left the Free State. We got home from boarding school, and it was, you're not going back on Monday because we are leaving this weekend.

1:36[1-7]

During her primary school years, she experienced being bullied by her peers. While narrating these experiences, Sarah expressed feeling unloved, unsupported, and lonely as a child, as she did not have any close relationships with her parents, teachers, or friends. This was partly due to the abuse she experienced at home, the fact that she

¹⁰ It should be noted, that although Sarah's primary home context can be seen as extremely disruptive and unstable, Sarah constructed it as bullying, and therefore all references to a disruptive and unstable home context will be referred to as bullying. The section **Family Sphere** will provide the reader with a brief discussion on what is meant with a disruptive and unstable primary home context.

was not long enough in one school at a time to form and maintain close relationships, and also because she was not able to trust anybody to share with these traumatic experiences:

Stephanie: Were your teachers and classmates aware of what was happening at home?

Sarah: No.

Stephanie: So you had to go through that alone...

Sarah: Ja. I think they probably thought, she is very shy.

But they didn't understand why.

1: 104 -107

At the age of seventeen, Sarah left home and started building a life of her own. She married George when she was in her early twenties, and when she was 28, Sally was born. Almost a year after Sally's birth, Sarah was involved in a devastating and traumatic car accident in which she almost died, leaving her bedridden for months. During this time, George took care of the parenting activities concerning Sally, as Sarah was not able to participate in parenting while in her recovery process. Of this, Sarah expressed her feelings:

And then I had the car accident. And Sally and I was bonded, okay, George did never change her nappy and I mean, our roles were as it should have been, mother and daughter, or child, and I was feeding her, and enjoying her, and then I came back...and George was the mother.

2:55[17-20]

And even when I came back, I mean, I was bedridden. And I couldn't get up out of bed so he became the mother and the father. And I mean, he, he had to change her nappies and cook food, and bath her and do everything I was supposed to do and he's just never relinquished that role in my opinion, you know.

2:57[1-5]

Over all, Sarah's experience of her parenting Sally in primary school was positive, and Sarah related it was hardly ever necessary to discipline Sally until she started going to high school:

*You know I never had to discipline Sally as a child in primary school, She was the perfect baby, perfect toddler, perfect in primary – I promise you people laugh, and I always used to say to George, when is the * going to hit the fan, when is she*

going to start giving us problems? And so, when she started, when the hormones started, surfacing, and when I started to need to discipline, I... I think that because of my personality I find it difficult to discipline.

2: 15[1-7]

As Sarah further narrated her experiences of parenting with Sally, it became evident that she would do almost anything to protect Sally from experiencing a traumatic childhood like her own:

I mean, I wanted to protect her, I wanted her to leave home without any kind of drama, I just wanted her to get through her childhood without any major trauma.

2:83[1-3]

Unfortunately, when Sally was in Grade 12, she experienced a traumatic incident¹¹ due to choices she made regarding her life. This did not affect only her, but also the entire family. It left the family facing a difficult time dealing with the incident and the consequences thereof, and Sarah with a sense of failure as parent. The trauma also exacerbated the already existing rift between Sarah and Sally, which Sarah finds excruciatingly difficult to overcome:

Stephanie: Did you and Sally ever discuss this?

Sarah: No. No. No.

Stephanie: Do you have the need to?

Sarah: I just know that a year after it happened, I know she kept a diary. And she, she did what she need to do. I didn't forget the day, but I didn't say anything to her. And she was livid, livid. And she wrote me a letter saying that I didn't care. But I just didn't feel up to...but you know, it's coming up again, the tenth of June. So, ja.

Stephanie: Do you want to mention it?

Sarah: I don't know how to. I mean, how do I say to her, how do you say it to her? Because, I'm, to drag it up every year, I don't think it is good for you. I can't do it. I actually can't do it. I can't imagine. How do you discuss it? How do you even, what do you say? I don't know!

2: 114 – 119

Since this traumatic experience transpired in their lives, Sarah and Sally's relationship deteriorated even more, and Sarah found parenting to become more and more difficult.

¹¹ Narratives too sensitive – Sarah asked for the specific circumstances to be excluded from the research.

This, according to Sarah, is particularly painful as she finds it difficult to communicate with Sally, especially when Sally bullies her:

...It's that power thing again, you know, and I know she's bullying me, but I, now it's this power game she plays. You need me, and...(long silence), oh, I just...kind of you know, I just withdraw again...
2:4[1-2]

On her life and childhood, Sarah reflections suffice:

But I think because I've confronted everything, and I've, you know, done the course¹², and forgiven everybody in my life that needs to be forgiven. I don't feel, even though there were a couple of tears, you know, I don't feel ... that emotion anymore. I'm more, ja, it happened, and, so what, you know, get on with it.
1:2[3-7]

I am who I am today because of my childhood. I know that. It has affected me in countless ways which I acknowledge. I have tried though through attending various courses and workshops to work through the resentment and anger issues. There are times I become very frustrated when what I view as deficiencies affect my life. But I think that generally I have come to terms with who I am and moved on. I have contact with my father who I see from time to time (even though I don't feel very much for him which I think is sad for him not me). I have forgiven the miserable old man. He is who he is and I have to accept him as he is or forget about him. I have chosen to accept him. I expect nothing from him...I do not bear grudges, I do not resent anyone. I get on with life and made the best of what I have and what I am.
3[90-102]

I think when you become aware of who you are and why you act in a certain way, you can change. You can change your interactions. I've done it. Hopefully. There's sometimes when I forget, but I'm certain that you can change. It's an everyday thing, you know.
1:197[1-3]

Such is the story of Sarah. Despite the traumatic past she experienced, she relates her future hopes and desires for her life as such:

I've got to an age where I don't want confrontation, I don't want fighting, I don't want to be unhappy. I just want my life to be full of love, you know, ja.
1:131[2-4]

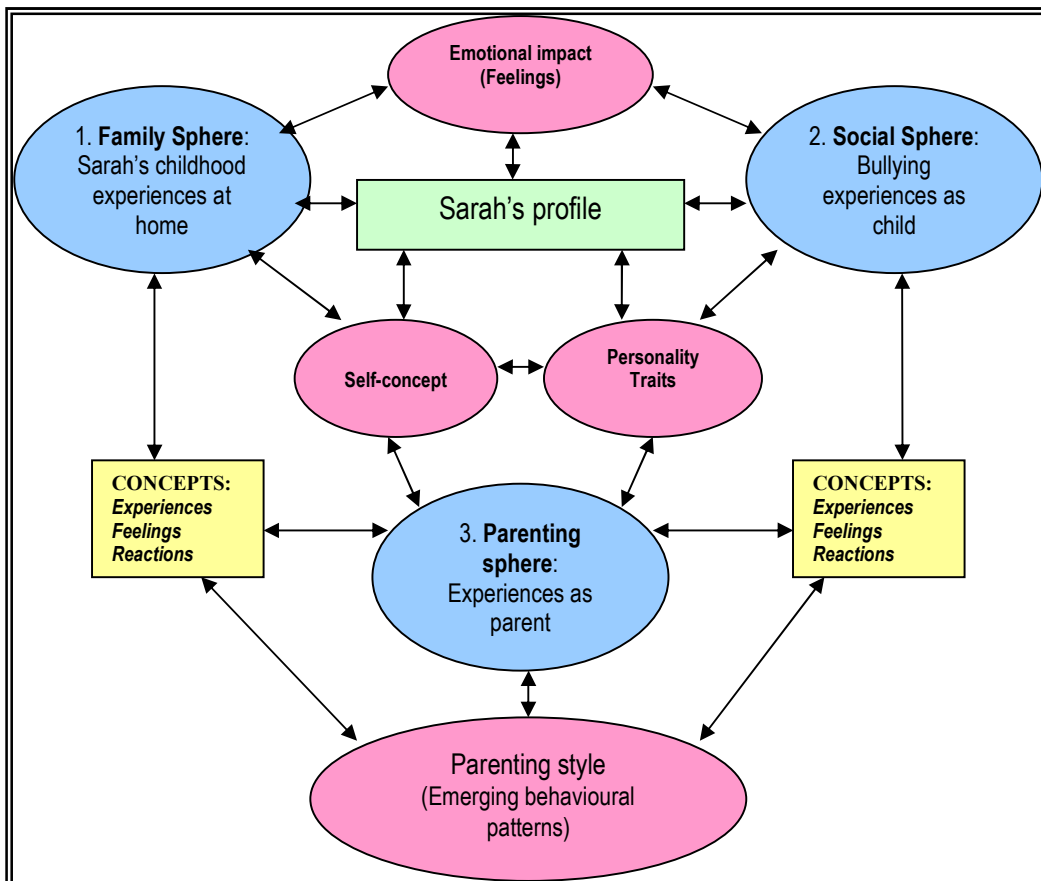
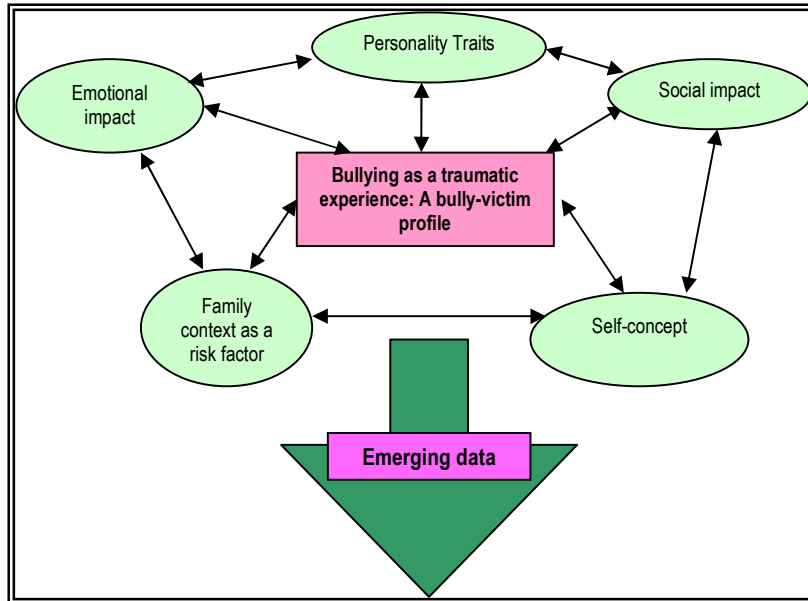
¹² The course Sarah attended was based a personal/self-development course which allowed her the space/opportunity to deal with aspects of her traumatic childhood.

It is in the following section that Sarah's story will be told more fully, by answering the research questions as set out by this project.

4.2 THE MULTIFACTOR MODEL OF BULLYING: AN APPLICATION OF SARAH'S CASE

In order to address the research questions, the emerging themes of the mother's narrated bullying experiences were organised into spheres, factors, concepts, and themes (see Chapter Three) as suggested by the Multifactor Model of Bullying (Personality, Emotional Impact, Social Impact, Family Context as a Risk Factor, and Self-concept). These categories were renamed in order to give the reader a personalised and holistic picture of Sarah's themes as it emerged from the narrative data (See Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: The multifactor model of bullying: an adaptation of Sarah's case



Firstly, three main spheres and four factors were identified in Sarah's narratives as opposed to the five factors (Personality, Emotional Impact, Social Impact, Family Context as a Risk Factor, and Self-esteem and Identity) as identified by the Multifactor Model of Bullying. The three main spheres can be defined as her childhood experiences at home (**Family Sphere** instead of Family Context as Risk Factor); at school (**Social Sphere** instead of Social Impact), and her relationship with her daughter Sally (**Parenting Sphere**). Secondary to these three main spheres of experiences, are the four factors **Emotional Impact (feelings)**, **Personality Traits**, **Self-concept**, and **Parenting Style** which are important to look at when addressing the first research question. The **Parenting Sphere** and the factor **Parenting Style** can be seen as additional to the Multifactor Model of Bullying as this allows the second and third questions to be answered.

Secondly, from Sarah's narratives about her bullying experiences as a child (family and social spheres) and as a parent (parenting sphere), arise corresponding and related experiences that can be grouped into three main **concepts** namely **Experiences**, **Feelings**, and **Reactions**. These related and corresponding concepts and their **themes** will be discussed in detail when addressing the second research question.

Thirdly, this adapted model attempts to show how Sarah's parenting style emerges based on the themes of her childhood (family sphere and social sphere) and parenting experiences (parenting sphere). By addressing the third research question, a more detailed description of Sarah's emerging parenting style will be given.

4.2.1 Sarah as a person who was bullied: an emerging profile

This section will focus on answering the first research question: In which way is the mother's personal profile similar to that of the bully victim profile?

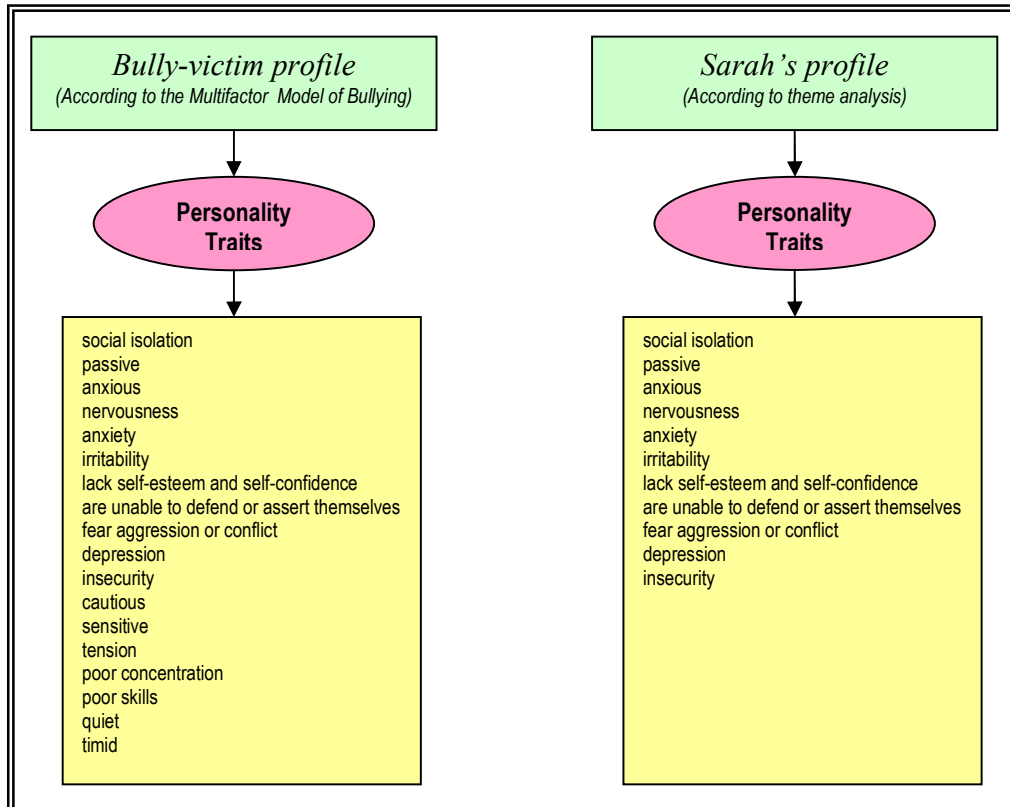
4.2.1.1 Personality traits

According to the Multifactor Model of Bullying, as discussed in Chapter Two, two types of bully victims can emerge, namely the passive and proactive victim (Lawson, 1994).

Sarah seems to have adopted the role of the passive victim. The following personality traits of a passive victim were described in Chapter Two: poor interpersonal skills, social isolation, passive, quiet, timid, anxious, cautious, sensitive, tension, nervousness and irritability. These persons also lack self-esteem and self-confidence, and are unable to defend or assert themselves. They fear incidences of aggression or conflict, and suffer with poor concentration. In addition to these characteristics, passive victims also suffer from anxiety and depression, and insecurity (Sgarzi & McDevitt, 2003; Lawson, 1993; Tattum, 1993; Olweus, 1978; Allen & Lauterbach 2007). It should be noted however that these symptoms also pertain to unstable home circumstances. This will be fully discussed later in the chapter, in **Family sphere**.

The next figure (Figure 4.1.) will demonstrate a comparison between the personality traits of a bully-victim as set out by the Multifactor Model of Bullying, and the personality traits that emerged from Sarah’s narratives:

Figure 4.2 : Sarah’s profile: Personality traits



One can sense a picture of Sarah's emerging personality traits by quoting her voice as confirmation of the existence of some, but not all the characteristics as described above. This may be ascribed to Sarah's parental home instability.

Table 4.1: Emerging personality traits as confirmed by Sarah's narratives

Personality Traits	Quote	Code
Social isolation (feeling isolated or left out)	<i>And I ended up spending many, many breaks alone. And being ostracised by my class because of her. She threatened; don't have anything to do with her, or else</i>	1:42 [4-8]
	<i>I can remember many, many lonely breaks spent on the swing and at the side of the hall.</i>	1:62[1-2]
	<i>...and the first person they (the staff at hospital during Sally's birth) gave her to was George!</i>	2: 55[6]
Passivity (Manifested as escape and withdrawal)	<i>And even then, nine times out of ten, I will withdraw...</i>	1:111 [3]
	<i>...I just withdraw again and just accept...I know I should have just said to her, look, stick your help.</i>	2:4 [5-7]
	<i>All you do is dream your life away, bury your head in books and fantasise about what another life would be like...to get away from your life.</i>	3[26-28]
	<i>And I haven't spoken to her since.</i>	2:2[10]
	<i>...until I get to a point where I sort of, I tend to, I just become passive and...</i>	2:6[1-2]
Nervousness / Anxiety	<i>I'll never forget those two teachers because grade one, first day, I vomited everywhere, I couldn't cope.</i>	1:93[1-2]
	<i>And eventually the diagnosis was irritable bladder syndrome. And they've put it down to the stress of what was going on at school (the bullying).</i>	1:42[13-14]
Irritability	<i>...but I get extremely aggressive and irritable, and totally unpleasant. So I don't know if it's because I'm not taking the drug (anti-depressant), or if it's part of the depression that I have when I'm not taking the drug.</i>	2:63[4-6]
	<i>I was more irritated, more...</i>	2:2[10]
Lacking in self-esteem	<i>... had I my parents' support and love and all of those safe emotions, it would have given me the confidence...</i>	1:99[2]
	<i>I don't have the confidence...if I compare myself to when I was eighteen, or younger, I have a lot more.</i>	1:85[1-3]
Not being able to stand up for oneself	<i>I have just never been able to stand up to Sally the way I was never able to stand up for myself against my father.</i>	3: [68-70]
Fear of aggression (manifested as fear/dislike of conflict/confrontation)	<i>I'm too scared to confront her (Sally).</i>	2:25[12]
	<i>I don't like confrontation.</i>	1:67[4]

Depression	<i>I've been diagnosed. Ja. I was never depressed before...they put me unto anti-depressants...</i>	2:63 [1-2]
Insecurity	<i>...but because I didn't know, and I was unsure of myself...</i>	2:4 [4-5]
	<i>I think that because of my personality, I find it difficult to discipline.</i>	2:15[7]

These personality traits set the scene in which Sarah is vulnerable for bullying, as will be seen in the development of this report. It also provides us with a filter through which we can make sense of the emotional impact Sarah's bullying experiences had on her.

4.2.1.2 Emotional impact of Sarah's bullying experiences

As seen in the previous section, Sarah was diagnosed with depression, and suffered the physical manifestation of anxiety as child (i.e. irritable bladder syndrome, vomiting in new and unfamiliar circumstances). This is in expectation of Rivers et al (2007) who supported the belief that there are long term negative implications for the emotional well-being of victims of bullying such as depression, anxiety, low self-esteem and post-traumatic stress in adulthood. Rivers et al (2007) also linked early onset of depression in these persons with eating disorders and the onset of bipolar disorder in later years. According to Sarah's narratives, eating disorders and bipolar disorder was not discussed, and no evidence in the data supports this notion.

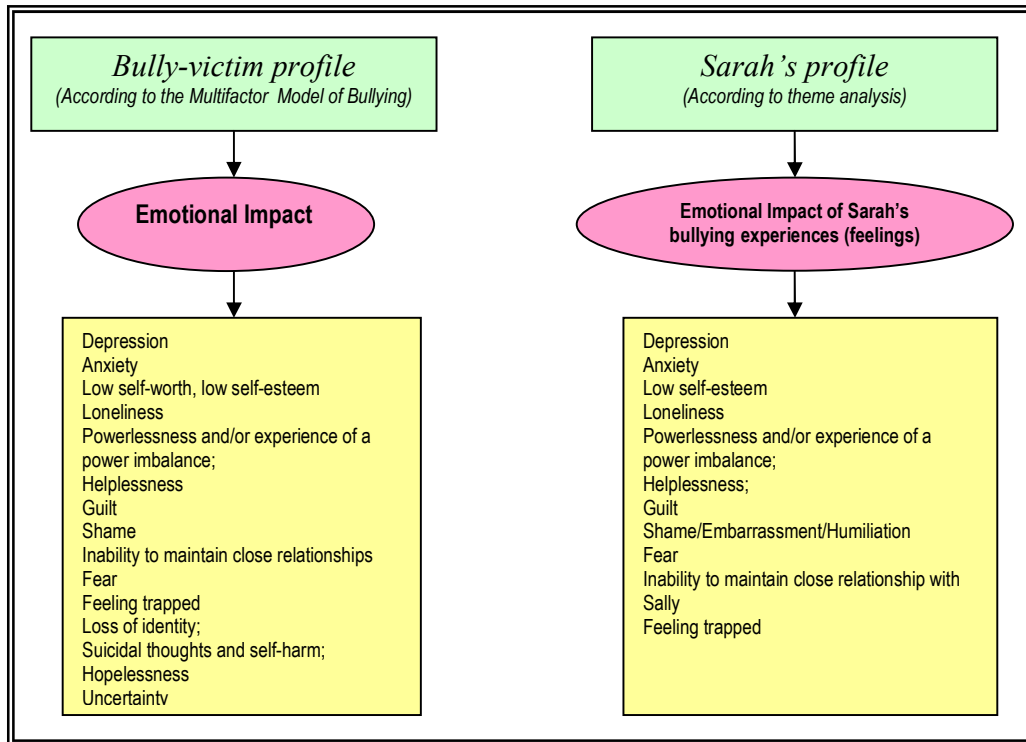
To Sarah, extreme emotional distress caused by **active rejection** (*..but we used to, at break, you'd play with skipping ropes and, and they wouldn't allow me to join in – 1:50 [2-3]*), **being passively neglected** (*...and I, and this included my brother and sister, were never hugged, kissed, cuddled or played with by my father – 3[12-13]*), **being ignored by others** (*...where he never greeted you, he never acknowledged you, he never spoke to you – 1:10[5]*). This may have given rise to her feelings of isolation.

The emotional impact that can be related to the bully-victim profile as suggested by the Multifactor Model of Bullying, was identified in Chapter Two as the following: depression; anxiety; low self-worth, low self-esteem and loss of identity; loneliness; and suicidal thoughts and self-harm. Feelings of powerlessness and/or experience of a power imbalance; hopelessness and helplessness; and uncertainty were also identified. Bully-

victims reported feeling trapped, guilty and experienced shame, fear, and an inability to maintain close relationships (Aluede et al, 2008; Dyart & Teggart, 2007; Hunter et al, 2007; Johnson et al, 2007; Kelloway et al, 2006; Lawson, 1994; Rivers, 2007; Schafer et al, 2004).

The following figure (Figure 4.3.), draws a comparison between the emotional reactions as set out by the Multifactor Model of Bullying and Sarah’s emotional reactions as identified through her narratives.

Figure 4.3: Sarah’s profile: Emotional impact of her bullying experiences



From the figure above, one can compare the similarities between the emotional impact as predicted by the Multifactor Model of Bullying, and the emotional impact Sarah’s bullying experiences had on her. In the next table, the emerging feelings and emotional impact was felt by Sarah, are described by her own words¹³:

¹³ The emotional impact of depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem was already covered in the section describing Sarah’s personality traits, and will therefore not form part of Table 2.



Table 4.2: Emerging feelings and emotional impact as confirmed by Sarah's narratives

Emotional Impact (Feelings)	Quote	Code
Loneliness (Feelings of not being loved or supported or accepted)	<i>I get absolutely no support from George, at all, nothing.</i>	2:61[15]
	<i>If you don't think that you are going to get help from your own parents, if you don't feel loved or acknowledged by your own parents...</i>	1:99[3-5]
	<i>You know, these girls, everybody is standing around, and you are being shunned, and you know you are not wanted...</i>	1:107[1-2]
Powerlessness/Power imbalance	<i>She (Sally) is stronger than me. She is younger than me. And I get to the point where I run out of words with her.</i>	1:71[2-3]
	<i>I'm giving away my power all the time! And yet, I've prevented a fight, and, but in the end, I kind of think she (Sally) sees it as winning the fight. And so she wins it, and she wins it, and she becomes stronger and stronger, and in her eyes I become weaker and weaker. And I physically, and I'm talking about physically and emotionally, begin to feel weaker and weaker because I keep on giving in.</i>	1:75[1-6]
	<i>...but I kind of always felt that I was his (her father) scapegoat and sometimes he, I think that he did what he did because he could. You know, I'm the adult.</i>	1: 10[8-10]
	<i>You know that feeling of being absolutely powerless as a child, you can't do anything. I mean, he's a big man (her father), you know, and when I look at him now I realise he isn't that big, but as a child, you are absolutely powerless. You cannot stand up against him.</i>	1:77[1-5]
	<i>And she was their ringleader.</i>	1: 56[1]
Hopelessness/Helplessness	<i>...my inability to stand up to her</i>	3: [65]
	<i>...you can try and change it, but you can only change so much.</i>	1:79[1-2]
	<i>I was bedridden. And I couldn't get up out of bed so he (George) became the mother, and the father...</i>	2: 58 [1-3]
	<i>....giving in so that the fight ends, I start feeling very helpless.</i>	1: 73 [16-17]
Guilt	<i>"...and I live with the guilt"</i>	2:99[9]
	<i>...all these threats to make us feel guilty...</i>	2:99[6]
Shame/Embarrassment/Humiliation	<i>...you know that you actually have to find a place where you must go and sit alone. Ja, so I felt it was pretty humiliating.</i>	1:109[5-7]
	<i>...when he (her father) threw another one of his temper tantrums and embarrassed me and my guests and stormed out of here and he didn't thank me for the evening..</i>	1:145[4-5]
	<i>...once, she (Sally), humiliated me in front of her friends, and the other occasion was at school as well.</i>	1:195[6-7]
Fear	<i>Except I lived in constant fear and anxiety for the first fourteen years of my life until he left.</i>	3[31-32]
	<i>I don't know if I'm just so scared that she's (Sally) going to...I think I'm just terrified that I'm going to have to confront the fact that she's a thief.</i>	2:29[1-3]

	<i>We walked around on eggshells, absolutely terrified, never knowing...what I was doing was right or if it was going to result in a hiding.</i>	1: 12[10-12]
Inability to maintain close relationship with Sally	<i>She will never come to me to talk to concerning a problem; she will go to everybody else but me.</i>	See footnote ¹⁴
Feeling trapped	<i>History repeating itself. I have just never been able to stand up to Sally the way I was never able to stand up for myself against my father.</i>	3:[66-68]
	<i>I can't I seem to revert this, who is the adult and who is the child, that relationship, and I don't know why I can't keep out of it.</i>	1: 77 [6-9]

Schafer et al (2004) found adults who have been bullied as children reported emotional loneliness influencing their ability to maintain and form close relationships with others. This leads me to the next factor to be explored, namely the social impact of Sarah's bullying experiences.

4.2.1.3 Social Sphere (Social impact)

Bullying can have a devastating effect on the way victims approach their relationships. The multifactor model of bullying, as described by Frisen et al (2007), Aluede et al (2008), Andreou (2000), and Rigby (2003), have identified the following social consequences: being perceived as "different" from one's peers, socially isolated and low in social acceptance. As the theme social isolation and loneliness have already been discussed in the previous sections, it will not be addressed in this section. It shows nonetheless the interrelation between different spheres, factors and themes, and how closely they are linked. However, these are not the only social consequences of being bullied.

According to Dyer and Teggart (2007), one of the most common impacts of being bullied tends to be withdrawal. This is in accordance to Lawson's findings (1994), that withdrawal is one of the behavioural consequences of being bullied (see "Withdrawal" in the section "Personality Traits"). Escape into a fantasy world and a refusal to attend

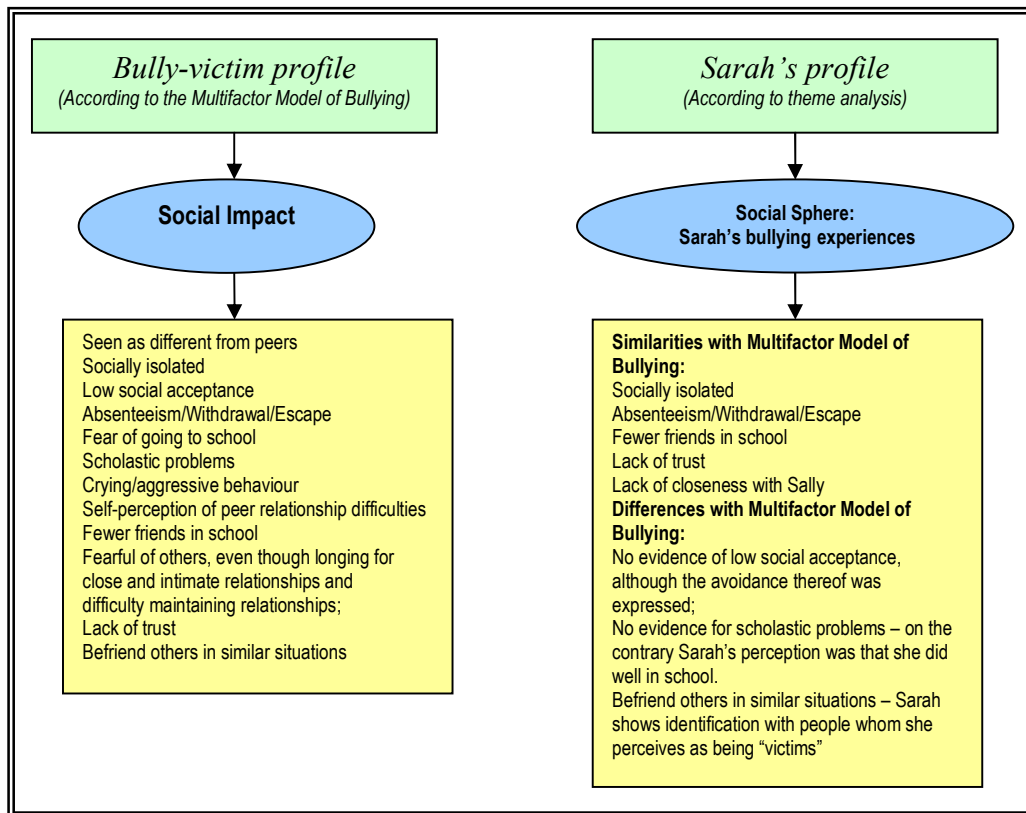
¹⁴ In the member-checking process with Sarah, some of the narratives were seen as too private to share with the reader. In order to still give the reader a sense of the lack of closeness Sarah experiences with Sally, she offered this explanation as an additional narrative to work with.

social activities (at school or later in life), are also some of the consequences of bullying experiences (Lawson, 1994). Lawson also reported scholastic difficulties as a consequence of bullying.

Sgarzi and McDevitt (2003), Genzale (2008), Hunter et al (2007) and Smith et al (2004), report that victims of bullying might be fearful of others even though they long to have intimate and close relationships with others. They also tend to befriend others in similar situations, and may have difficulty maintaining relationships due to a lack of trust.

Figure 4.4 will show the similarities and differences that exist between the Multifactor Model of Bullying, and Sarah’s experiences:

Figure 4.4: Sarah’s profile: Sarah’s bullying experiences in her social sphere



When comparing the predicted social impact on a bully-victim’s experiences to Sarah’s social experiences, certain similarities and differences surfaced from the narratives.

First, though no evidence was found in Sarah's narratives on low social acceptance, she did express avoidance of not appearing social acceptable:

We were in that situation [brief experience at one of her primary schools] for a couple of months and then our parents, you know, now we have to go to Jo'burg, so that was two schools in standard five and then I went to Fernhoff Primary¹⁵, and from there I went to Fernhoff High, and then we moved again. And it was the most awful experience...after a week in that school I remember I ...my mother as well, and of course I was in my old school uniform because my parents didn't have money, and I hated it and I said I'm not going back there...

1:121[1-9]

Secondly, Sarah performed well in school and according to her she experienced no scholastic problems:

...I was always trying to please, you know. Always, I know my school work was perfect, I wasn't the brightest, I wasn't the most stupid in class, you know (laughs.

1:101 [1-3].

But they will always tell you I had the most beautiful handwriting, and I had the most vivid imagination, and they would all tell you I could write beautiful stories, you know. But I always wanted to be noticed so I used to spend hours on my projects, and hours, you know when we had to do work, my books were works of art, you know, because I wanted that attention from my teachers. It was devastating if I didn't get the gold star or the comment on how perfect my work was and you know. And I think it was because I didn't get that at home, you know.

1:103[1-8].

Thirdly, although there is no evidence that Sarah befriended others in similar situations, she did narrate two incidences where Sarah stood up in order to protect who she perceived were the victims:

(We were going on holiday) with the Venter bakkie, you know, and we were all going to the beach one day and there were about four cars full of "snotkops"¹⁶, and there was these two black girls being attacked by a pack of dogs. And you know we drove pass and not one of these men got out and stopped or, and, I screamed at the guy who was driving my car and he stopped. And I got out, and I tell you it must have been ten dogs attacking these two girls, and I chased

¹⁵ Fictitious name

¹⁶ "Snotkops" is an Afrikaans, derogative term used to describe young and immature men.

them off, I got the girls out of the ditch, I found out who the dogs belonged to, let her know in no uncertain terms what I thought about her, and her father and her mother and her granny and her, you know. That kind of thing I can tackle without...and it doesn't bug me. And a guy rode into a flock of birds at the Durban front, Sally was still tiny, it was just after my car accident, and he rode through these birds, these pigeons, and they were left with broken wings and then he did a u-turn and he started coming back, and I put my crutch out and I stopped him on his bike and I let him have it. And everybody started applauding, you know, so those kind of situations don't bother me.
1:69[1-15].

There were however, some of the social consequences that were similar to those predicted by the Multifactor Model of Bullying. The following table (Table 3) shows the impact her bullying experiences had on her social sphere:

Table 4.3: Social sphere: Sarah's bullying experiences

Social Impact	Quote	Code
Socially isolated	<i>I ended up spending my breaks alone because no one would talk to me.</i>	3[38]
	<i>George has put her (Sally) ahead of me, since the day she was born.</i>	2:53[1-2]
Absenteeism/Withdrawal/Escape	<i>I used to read a lot...I lived in a fantasy world half of the time.</i>	1:18[1-6])
	<i>And she looked at me and said: "don't pressure me." So I ignored her.</i>	2:2[3-5]
	<i>(At school) I've developed an irritable bladder, where I was continually having to go to the loo.</i>	1:42 [8-9]
Fewer friends	<i>And you just become friends with somebody and you have to leave again...so I never had the chance to make friends.</i>	1:129[1-4]
	<i>I woke up in hospital and there was only my mother and direct family members. I didn't have any friends...so it had a big negative effect on my life.</i>	1:137[4-6]
Lack of trust	<i>I don't have any faith in Sally anymore.</i>	2:61[11]
	<i>I actually found all the receipts, I went through her waste paper basket, and I found them. It was my credit card she used.</i>	2:25 [1-5]

Another impact that emerged from Sarah's narratives that corresponds to the literature, is her longing to have close relationships with especially her daughter, despite the fears she has concerning her relationship with Sally, or the lack of trust in Sally out of fear and worry to get hurt (Schafer et al, 2004). It also emerged from the narratives that Sarah does not know how to approach Sally in order to establish and maintain a close relationship with her. This can be seen in the following quotes:

I don't have any faith in Sally anymore.
2:61[11]

...I actually found all the receipts. I went through her (Sally) wastepaper basket and I found them. And it was my credit card that she used. She's literally, I promise you, thousands, thousands and thousands of Rand that she's pinched from us.
2:25 [1-4]

... I was sixteen, I was seventeen, I mean, you know, and I've tried to be there for her (Sally)
2:77[24-25]

...I think even if we had a good relationship, how do you, how do you even go there, you know... - 2:123[1-2]

As Schafer et al (2004) reported, having difficulty in forming and maintaining relationships have a negative impact on a person's self-esteem. The impact of these failing relationships on Sarah's sense of self will be discussed next.

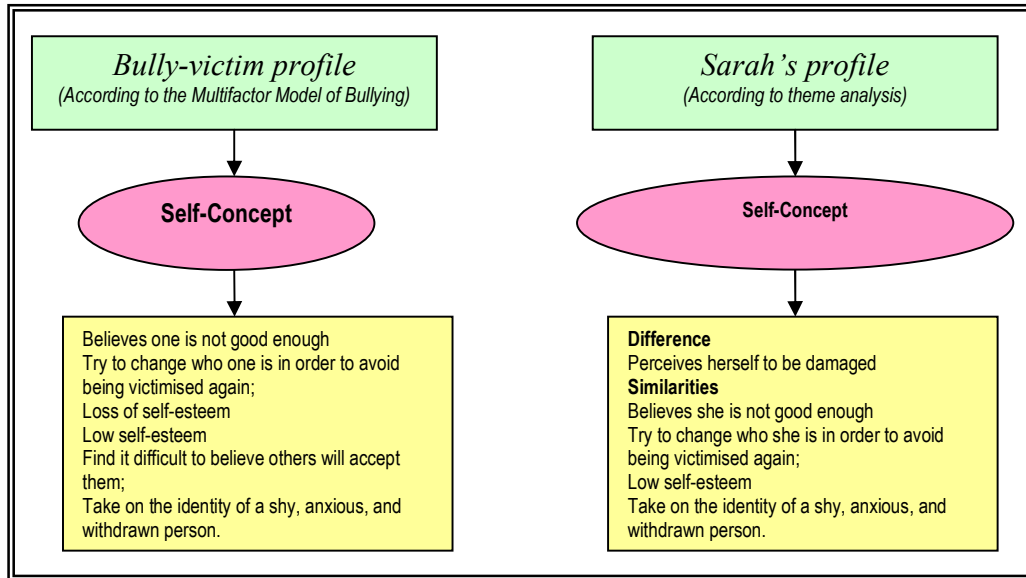
4.2.1.4 Self-concept: Self-esteem and identity

As discussed in Chapter Two, the devastating effect of bullying can affect the self-concept¹⁷ negatively. A person who experienced bullying may be left with a lifelong low self-esteem and even loss of identity. Victims may also find it difficult to believe that others will accept them (Lawson, 1994), and have a sense of being not good enough. These persons might try to change who they are in order to avoid being victimised again. Loss of self-esteem may continue until adulthood (Lawson, 1994; Aluede et al, 2008). According to Lawson (1994), a person who was bullied may also take on the identity of a shy, anxious and withdrawn person.

¹⁷ Self-concept can be defined as an object of perception – it is how a person perceives him or herself. The self as perceived, or as object, includes a person's values that are adopted from other people rather than the actual experience. Some experiences will even be introjected or taken over from important others (Engler, 1999).

Figure 4.5 will demonstrate how Sarah’s self-concept compares with the proposed bully-victim profile:

Figure 4.5: Sarah’s profile: Self-concept (Self-esteem and identity)



As one can see in the above figure, one important difference emerged from Sarah’s narratives about her self-concept. This difference demonstrates how Sarah perceives herself as being damaged, or scarred through her experiences as a bully victim:

...I lived in constant fear and anxiety for the first fourteen years of my life until he left and then I had to try and undo the damage he had left behind. Although I didn't realise at the time that I was damaged
 3[31-34]

I have a, I can't, I cannot handle Sally. And I know that that is, it's a...a...scar. It is something that I've been left with from my father's relationship, and I can't. I cannot deal with her.
 1:69[15-17]

I'll never be the person I want to be, you know, I would love to be confident like George and get up, and...you know. But I know I can never be like that.
 1:83[10-12]

From these quotes, one can imagine the impact felt by Sarah on her sense of self as she describes the consequences of her abusive relationship with her father. It is clear that Sarah feels that her bullying experiences at home left her sense of self as scarred.

This is in agreement with the findings of Aluede et al (2008), namely that the psychological scars left by bullying might often endure for years. This may cause negative self-esteem that continues into adulthood.

The following table will show the way Sarah perceives herself that is similar to those of a bully-victim, and how her bullying experiences affected her self-concept:

Table 4.4: Emerging self-concept as confirmed by Sarah's narratives

Self-concept: Self-esteem and Identity	Quote	Code
Believes she is not good enough	<i>I never knew that what I was doing was right.</i>	1:12[11]
	<i>I just felt that no matter what I did, it would just never be good enough (in her father's eyes).</i>	1:24[1-2]
	<i>You know, he (her father) didn't come to my wedding. He didn't come to Sally's christening.</i>	1: 89[4-5]
Try to change who she is in order to avoid being victimised again	<i>I will not give anyone the satisfaction of ever destroying my life again.</i>	1:189[3-4]
	<i>I think when you become aware of who you are and why you act in a certain way, you can change. You can change your interactions. I have done it.</i>	1: 197:[1-3]
	<i>I've changed to the degree where I am able to do that now.</i>	1: 83[7-8]
Low self-esteem	<i>I don't know how she can get up the stage and do what she does, and have the confidence, you know. But I never had that, and I thought that I've improved, and I don't know if age does that. I could never stand on a stage, or even a meeting, I could never get up and....</i>	1:83[3-7]
	<i>I think I've just learned to accept who I am. I'll never be the person I want to be, I would love to be confident like George and get up. But I know I can never be like that.</i>	1:83[10-12]
Adopt the identity of a shy, anxious, and withdrawn person.	<i>I'm pretty shy person, I don't like confrontation.</i>	1:673-4]
	<i>I don't think, I don't get angry a lot. And even then, nine times out of ten, I will withdraw.</i>	1:111[1-3]

From this evidence emerges the understanding of how Sarah's bullying experiences shaped her self-concept to adopt a perception of herself as a victim of a father who she perceived as the bully perpetrator. This leads me to our next discussion, which is about Sarah's narratives on her childhood experiences at home.

4.2.1.5 *Family Sphere: Sarah's childhood experiences at home*

Lawson (1994) made a profound statement that a person's self-concept is firstly shaped within the family, and that all children need a balance between positive and negative feedback from their parents:

– praise for what they do right as well as criticism for what they do wrong. Some parents find this hard to give, especially if they were made to feel worthless by their own parents (Lawson, 1994:24).

As discussed in Chapter Two, the family circumstances play an important role in shaping a child to adopt either bullying behaviour, or bully-victim behaviour. Several family situations may lead to a child having trouble in avoiding acting like either a bully, or a bully victim. Three types of family situations¹⁸ were identified according to the principles of the Multifactor Model of Bullying, namely **power imbalances between parents and child** (Genzale, 2008 & Nation et al, 2008), **overprotective parents** (Sgarzi & McDevitt, 2003), and **sibling bullying** (Lawson, 1994).

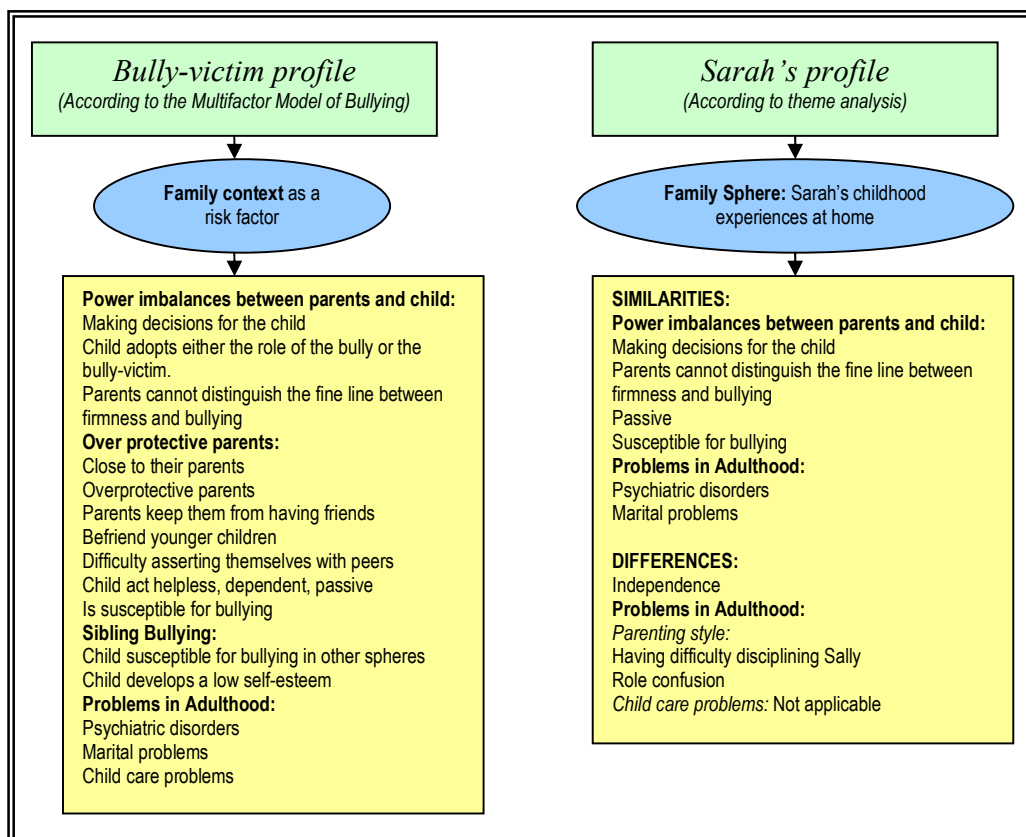
Sarah's family situation, in addition to being disruptive and unstable, was similar to the family situation as described by the Multifactor model of bullying as **Power Imbalances between Parents and Child**. It is however important to note that even though Sarah's family situation rendered her vulnerable to bullying, it does not necessarily imply that bullying is always preceded by disruptive and unstable primary home contexts. In Sarah's case, however, it is important to understand that her family situation, namely power imbalances between parents and child, existed within a disruptive and unstable home context. As proposed by Maslow (in Engler, 1999), a disruptive and unstable home context affects an individual on all levels of the hierarchy of needs. Sarah's basic safety needs (requirements for an orderly, stable, and predictable world) were not met, making her anxious and insecure. Her unfulfilled belonging and love needs were also not met, leading her experiencing feelings of loneliness and not being loved. Self-esteem and self-actualising needs could therefore not be attend to during her childhood due to the unfulfilled needs on the lower levels of Maslow's hierarchy (Engler, 1999).

¹⁸See discussion in Chapter Two.

Other general consequences of parental bullying, are described by Lawson (1994). Traumatic family circumstances are related to problems in adulthood, such as childcare problems¹⁹, psychiatric disorders, and marriage.

In the next figure (Figure 4.6), a comparison will be shown between the family context as a risk factor, and Sarah’s childhood experiences at home.

Figure 4.6: Sarah’s profile: Family sphere: Sarah’s childhood experiences at home



The following table (Table 4.5) will present Sarah’s voice on her childhood experiences at home. This will clarify her relationship with her parents, as well as help the reader to understand why it still influences her as an adult today.

¹⁹According to Pretorius (1998), **childcare problems** can be defined as geographical insufficiencies (physical environment, neighbourhood, housing, material goods, and cultural goods).



Table 4.5: Sarah's profile – Sarah's bullying experiences in her family sphere

Experiences at home	Quote	Code
Making decisions for the child	<i>Nothing was ever discussed with us...we were just told, at the end of the school term we're leaving, you know, so bang, we left...and it was the same when we left the Free State. We got home from boarding school, and it was, you know, you're not going back on Monday because we are leaving this weekend.</i>	1:36:[1-7]
Power imbalances: Overstepping the line between firmness and bullying	<i>And the other thing, the hidings were, looking back it wasn't the pain that bothered me as much as the hate that it was given in and the ...(silence)</i>	1:12[13-14]
	<i>...but I kind of always felt that I was his (her father) scapegoat and sometimes he, I think that he did what he did because he could. You know, I'm the adult.</i>	1: 10[8-10]
	<i>I don't think I deserved the hidings, that, the degree of which she (her mother) gave them to me. I mean, probably just a whack on the backside would've sufficed, but she left me with marks and bumps and so...</i>	1:28[5-8]
	<i>The ferocity of the hidings I received growing up were more the hate and anger with which they were given than the actual pain that affected me.</i>	3[16-18]
Passive	<i>See discussion on characteristics</i>	
Susceptibility for bullying	<i>One major incident in my childhood happened when I was ten, in standard 3. I had a friend Liza. I don't remember what set it off but she had the class gang up on me and making my life absolutely miserable.</i>	3: [35-37]
Problems in Adulthood	Quote	Code
Psychiatric disorders	<i>Sarah has been diagnosed with Depression</i>	1:63[1]
Marital problems	<i>I think generally when George and I have an argument, I feel bullied into decisions that are taken. I just feel that I have to go along or else the repercussions will be catastrophic: George in a mood, George divorcing me, George disliking me.</i>	3[87-89]
	<i>George will tell you, in fact he said to me last night if I hadn't changed, he would have divorced me.</i>	1: 184[1-2]
Having difficulty disciplining Sally	<i>I think because of my personality, I find it difficult to discipline.</i>	2: 15[7]
	<i>Even though she was giving me problems, her problems were like, back chatting, and being obnoxious, or being really, really ugly. How do you punish for that?</i>	2: 77[1-3]
Role confusion	<i>I just feel at the moment that the roles are reversed. I am no longer the parent. And I don't want to be Sally's friend. I'm not her friend. I'm her mother. And I don't, but I just feel at the moment that I'm the child and she's the mother, and that she's running this house, and that she's running my life. And she kind of dictates what's' going on in this house.</i>	2: 47[1-5]
	<i>...I don't want to treat her like a child, but I can't be adult to adult with her. I can't I seem to revert this, who is the adult and who is the child, that relationship, and I don't know why I can't keep out of it.</i>	1: 77 [6-9]
	<i>Even George and I have that kind of relationship. The moment that he becomes angry with me, I lose my ability to remain an adult. I do. I do. And the roles just go from adult to adult, to adult to child.</i>	1:77[9-12]

The problems Sarah experiences as an adult, namely depression and marital difficulties, also coincides with the problems a bully-victim might experience in adulthood. In addition to these experiences, which are not discussed by the Multifactor Model of Bullying, emerge themes relating to Sarah's experiences as a parent. Another difference that surfaced between Sarah and the proposed bully-victim is that there are no child-care problems reported by Sarah. In fact, Sarah wanted to make sure Sally grew up in a happy and healthy family environment, without the trauma Sarah experienced:

I wanted to protect her, I wanted her to leave home without any kind of drama, I just wanted her to get through her childhood without any major trauma.

2: 83[1-3]

I grew up with a father who hit first, and I was terrified that I would do that with Sally.

1: 193[7-8]

There is also evidence of Sarah making sure that Sally never had to do without any physical and emotional support when she was still at school:

We've never withheld money from her, if she wanted something we've tried to give it to her.

2: 29[8-9]

And she's never had to do without.

2:33[10-11]

All the grounding that we were supposed to do, we did. George spent hours with that girl (Sally) in primary school with her athletics, with her netball I was there with her, with everything we were always with her, patting her on the back telling her how marvelous she is.

2:35[3-7]

Another difference that emerges from Sarah's narratives is her strong sense of independence, which is in contrast with the expectance of her being dependent as a child who grew up in a power-imbalance with her parents:

...I got where I got, I supported myself...you got on and you did it...I never asked my mother or my father for a cent.

1: 173[1-7]

My father complained about the R30 maintenance²⁰ that he paid, and he couldn't wait for me to drop out of varsity, so he that he could stop the payment. And I didn't want to. I think I was too proud. And that, I never, never ever borrowed money, not even from George. But I think it made me more self sufficient, more independent, I did what I wanted to do.

1: 175 [1-5]

It is important to note that the differences between Sarah's profile and the bully victim profile may be ascribed to the disruptive and unstable primary home context Sarah had.

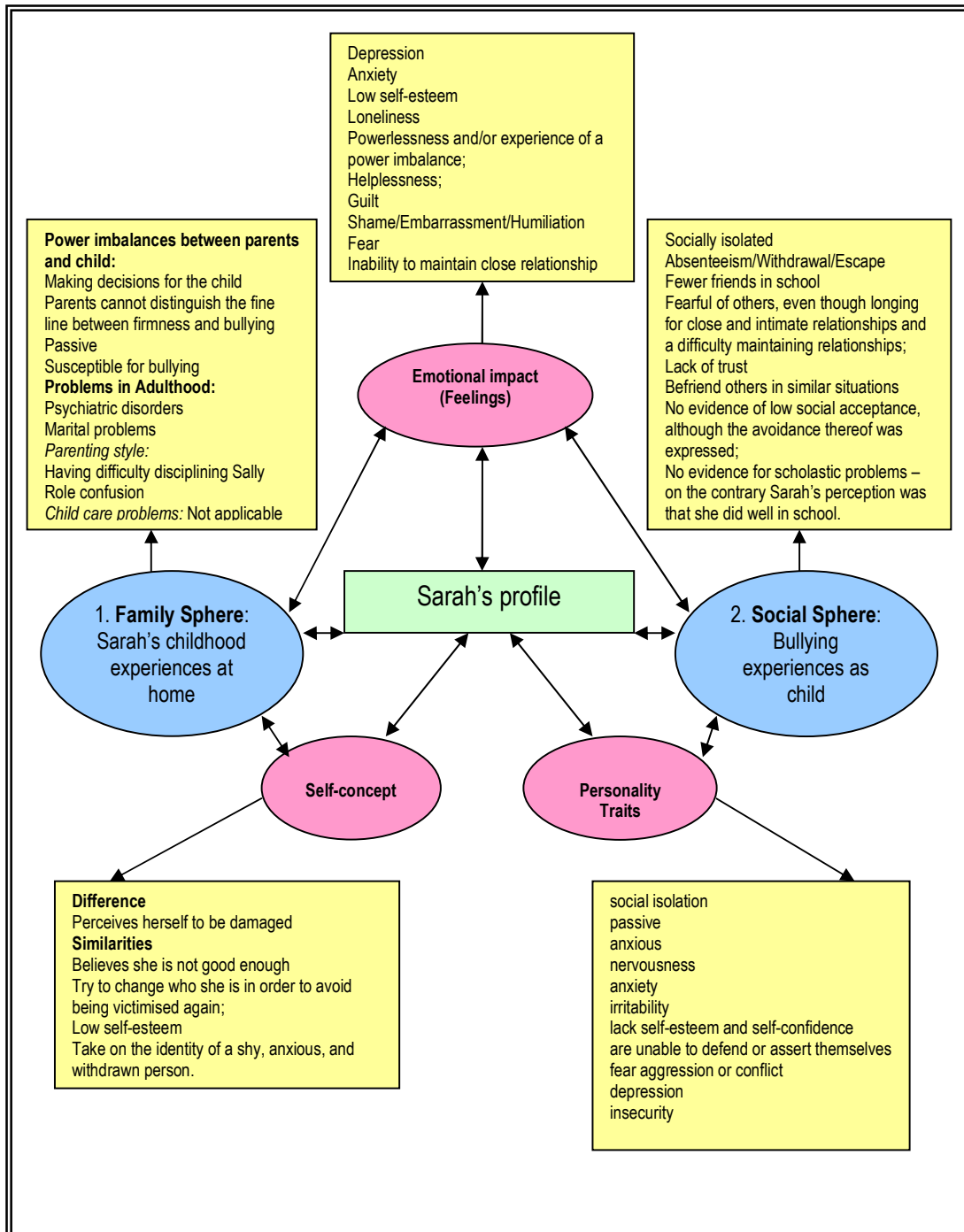
From Sarah's narratives, it therefore becomes clear that Sarah's family context played a defining role in the shaping of Sarah's adult experiences as a parent (which will be discussed later in this chapter).

4.2.2 Making sense of Sarah's experiences

By looking at Sarah's narratives, it became clear that Sarah, as a person who was/is bullied, presents with a tendency to show some of the characteristics of a bully-victim profile as described by the Multifactor Model of Bullying. However, some important differences make Sarah's case unique. As a summary, the following figure (Figure 4.7) will present Sarah's profile holistically according to her narrated experiences.

²⁰ When Sarah left home to start her new life, she had to work and study at the same time. The R30 maintenance refers to the maintenance her father had to pay as determined by the divorce settlement. According to Sarah, he had to pay maintenance until she finished with her studies.

Figure 4.7: Making sense of Sarah's experiences



Despite the similarities between the bully-victim profile as suggested by the Multifactor Model of Bullying, and Sarah's profile, it is of the utmost importance to stay aware of Sarah's capacity to be a bully-victim survivor. This can be seen in the following

characteristics and important differences between Sarah and the suggested bully-victim profile:

- Strong sense of independence;
- Awareness of the impact her childhood experiences have on her life;
- Positive outlook on the future;
- Expressing the desire to rise above her circumstances.

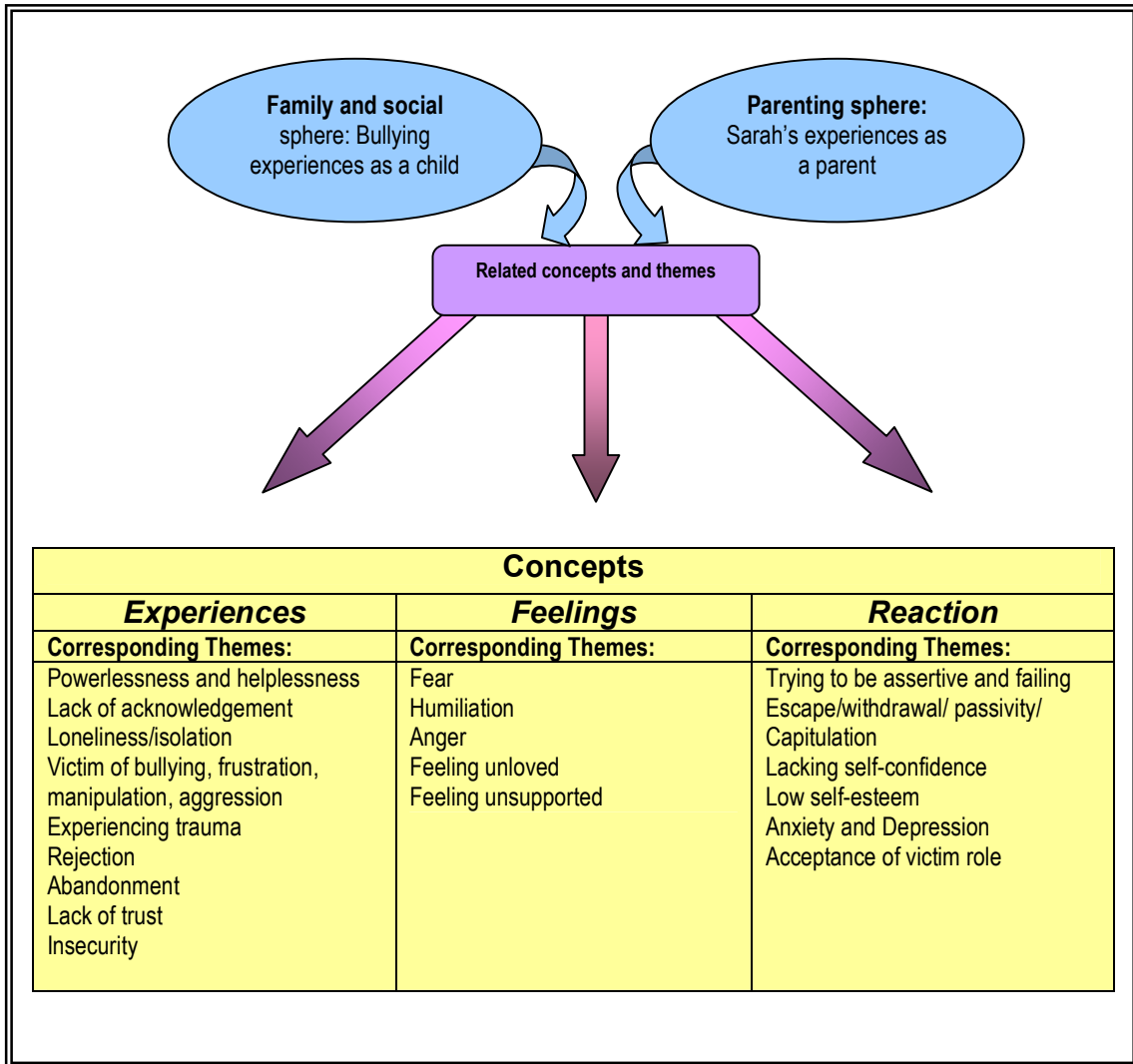
Without being aware of these characteristics and important differences in mind, one cannot get a full picture of Sarah as a person. A full description of Sarah's strengths will be presented in Chapter Five.

4.3 CORRESPONDING AND RELATED THEMES OF SARAH'S NARRATED EXPERIENCES

In this section, the second research question will be addressed: *How do the the mother's narrated childhood bullying experiences link thematically with her narrated parenting experiences.*

Firstly, it is important to look at the general and related themes that emerged from the narratives regarding Sarah's bullying experiences at home and school as a child, and her parenting experiences. These themes can be regrouped under three cluster concepts, namely the experiences, feelings and reaction surrounding her bullying experiences. The concepts and themes that emerged from Sarah's narratives can be summarised as follows (see Figure 4.8):

Figure 4.8: Related concepts and themes from Sarah’s bullying and parenting experiences:



In the following table (Table 4.6), Sarah’s experiences are voiced in order to show the reader how her bullying experiences (family, social and parenting spheres) and the themes that emerged from her narratives, relate to each other. A brief discussion on these related themes will follow thereafter.



Table 4.6: General and related themes of Sarah's experiences as a child and parent

	Bullying experiences during childhood	Parenting experiences
Corresponding Themes	Concept 1: Experiences	
Lack of acknowledgement	<i>If you don't feel loved and acknowledged by your parents...1:99[4-5]</i>	<i>It was not only that experience, but everything she keeps away from me. She, even though I was open with her about everything, encouraged her to come to me with problems; never, ever came to me for help. She'd rather discuss it with someone else than with me. She'd rather cook for her boyfriend's family than be with us. ²¹</i>
Loneliness/isolation	<i>He (her father) was just vacant in my childhood in most ways, emotionally, physically. 3[14-15]</i>	<i>On the birth of Sally, where she felt left out: And it seems to have been symbolic, or a prediction, almost, of the way things have gone since then. 2:55[15-17]</i>
Victim of bullying, frustration, manipulation, aggression	<i>He took all his frustrations out on me. 1:10 [6]</i>	<i>But even though she was able to manipulate, and get whatever she wanted, she'd be nice to me...and then I realised what she was doing. 2:77[6-11]</i>
Experiencing trauma	<i>Narratives too sensitive</i>	<i>Narratives too sensitive</i>
Rejection	<i>My mother threw me out when I was 17. 1:165[2]</i>	<i>...then she will say to me, why don't you just go to your mother. She's heard George say that to me a couple of times. Why don't you just go to your mother and stay there? 1:53[7-9]</i>
Abandonment	<i>If you don't think that you are going to get help from you own parents...1:99[3-4]</i>	<i>George has never confronted Sally about (information too sensitive). He won't do it. He's told me to do it...why must I confront her and have our relationship damaged further while his remains intact?</i>
Lack of trust	<i>But I never felt they (her parents) would help me with any situation.1:99[3]</i>	<i>I went through her wastepaper bin...2:25[1-2]</i>
Insecurity	<i>...grade 1, first day, I vomited everywhere, I couldn't cope...and they didn't want us (her friend and her) to sit together, that is how highly strung I was. 1:93-95</i>	<i>...but because I didn't know and I was unsure of myself...2:4[5]</i>
Powerlessness and helplessness	<i>You know that feeling of being absolutely powerless as a child, you can't do anything. 1:77[1-2]</i>	<i>But I get this, where I just feel so helpless. 1:71[9]</i>
Corresponding Themes	Concept 2: Feelings	
Fear	<i>...but for the rest of the time we walked around on eggshells, absolutely terrified, never knowing...if it was going to result in a hiding. 1:12[10-12]</i>	<i>I actually become scared of her. Believe it or not. 1:71[1]</i>
Humiliation/embarrassment	<i>When he had one of his temper tantrums and embarrassed me. 1:145[4]</i>	<i>Once she (Sally) humiliated me in front of her friends, and the other occasion was at school as well. 1:195[6-7]</i>
Anger	<i>I was so angry with my mother... 1:159[3]</i>	<i>I become so angry with myself that I can't handle the situation. 3[71-72]</i> <i>...because I get so angry with her. And I actually want to resort to violence. 1:71[4]</i>
Feeling unloved	<i>I think if my parents have been normal parents, if we haven't been such a dysfunctional family, if there have been a lot of love, and there have been a lot of kissing and cuddling... 1:111[6-7]</i>	<i>And when I confront her, there's nothing there. It actually, it worries me, there is nothing there, there's no, there's no emotion. 2:25[10]</i>
Feeling unsupported	<i>He never held my hand while walking in town; in fact, I can never remember walking alongside my father. He was just vacant in my childhood in most ways, emotionally, physically. 3[13-15]</i>	<i>And George won't stand up for me, even if he knows I am right, he will stand up for her. And he does that in front of her. 1:53[4-6]</i> <i>I get absolutely no support from George, at all, nothing. 2:[15-16]</i>
Corresponding Themes	Concept 3: Reaction	
Trying to be assertive and failing	<i>...and that incident had happened to me at school, I do believe that it wouldn't have affected me (the bullying incident). I think I would've handled it. 1:111[7-9]</i>	<i>I'm giving away my power all the time!...but in the end, I kind of think she sees it as winning the fight. And so she wins it, and she wins it, and she becomes stronger and stronger, and in her eyes I become weaker and weaker. 1:75[1-4]</i>

²¹ In the collaboration process with Sarah, some of the narratives were perceived as too private to share with the reader. In order to give the reader a sense of the lack of acknowledgement Sarah experiences with Sally, she offered this explanation as an additional narrative to work with.



Escape/withdrawal/ passivity/ Capitulation	<i>...and then the Hardy Boys, you know, I lived those adventures and the mysteries and, and that is how I coped, it was just, and I, I used to draw...I used to get lost in a world of fantasy and painting and I used to love the radio. 1:20[1-5]</i>	<i>...I just switch the phone off and I haven't spoken to her since. 2:2[9-10]</i>
Lacking self-confidence and Low self-esteem	<i>...I don't have the confidence...if I compare myself to when I was 18, or younger, I have a lot more. 1:85[1-2]</i>	<i>I know that while this is going on I don't have the skills to handle it. I just wither up and die inside. 3[70-71]</i>
Anxiety and Depression	<i>So you lived in this continual state of unease, an anxiety where you never knew what type of mood he was in. 1:12[5-6]</i>	<i>On anti-depressants: ...so I just take it. And I kind of stay in this zone of nothingness, and there's no ups or downs, which is great. 2:63[7-8]</i>
Acceptance of victim role	<i>She (her mother) left me with marks and bumps and so. I don't know, sometimes I think, maybe I deserved them. 1:28[7-8]</i>	<i>I keep on giving in. Just because I know if I don't give in and walk away...1:75[6-7]</i>

Before one can fully gain insight into why these themes emerged in both Sarah's childhood and parenting experiences; it is important to remember that Sarah's profile predisposes her to repeat the same patterns in her relationships with others. In order to give a richer analysis of Sarah's narratives, a brief reference to **Script Analysis**²² is necessary to direct the interpretation.

According to Thompson, Rudolph and Henderson (2004) script analysis is a method of explaining the nature of people according to Transactional Analysis, founded by Eric Berne. A script can be defined as a person's ongoing programme for a life drama, in which the person compulsively acts according to that programme. This can happen either on a conscious or unconscious level. It also proposes that a person's difficulties derives from *bad scripts* (Thompson et al, 2004:270) they learn during their childhood. According to script analysis, the basic unit of analysis is themes, as is the case of this research project. Scripts have five components:

- (1) Directions from parents (as it relates to Sarah's **family sphere**),
- (2) A corresponding personality development (as it relates to her **personality traits**),
- (3) A confirming childhood decisions about oneself and life (as it relates to her **self-concept and social sphere**),
- (4) A inclination for either success or failure (as it relates to her **parenting sphere**), and
- (5) A pattern for behaviour (as it relates to her **themes and parenting style**).

²² In addition to this, I would like to reflect on my finding it difficult to interpret this section without any formal frame of reference, besides my training as a psychologist. I therefore decided to use Script Analysis in order to direct the interpretation. This way I intend to ensure that my role as methodologist is delineated more clearly.

It is thus with these principals of script analysis in mind, that Sarah's relating themes will be discussed. I will start this discussion with Sarah's reflection on her experiences with her father, and how she relates this to her experiences with Sally:

As a mother...looking back I realise my inability to stand up to her (Sally) was just the way I had to handle the episodes with my father. History repeating itself.
3[64-67].

Reflecting on Sarah's statement, it appears as if she might be aware of the fact that she is repeating the same themes, or life script, from her childhood into parenthood. In conjunction with Sarah's profile as already discussed, this awareness shows us how deeply complex the relation is between Sarah's childhood and parenting experiences (**Experiences, Feelings and Reactions**). When we look at her life script in terms of the sub-themes that emerged from her experiences, feelings and reactions, we can almost sense the way in which the *bad script* (Thompson et al, 2004:270) she learned during childhood, is causing her difficulties in her adult life as a parent. By exploring her life script in terms of the five components of Script Analysis, we might gain a deeper understanding of the way in which her childhood experiences relate to her parenting experiences.

Firstly, Sarah's direction from her parents, as discussed in the previous section **Family Sphere**, led her to experience an extremely disruptive and unstable home context (which she describes and constructs as bullying), coupled with experiences of power imbalances between her and her parents, which may have set the scene for similar experiences later in her life – also as a parent. Secondly, corresponding to the tendency Sarah shows in her profile to identify with the bully-victim role, and the emergence of her character, comes from the childhood decisions she made about herself (see discussion on **Self-concept** and **Social Sphere**). This is evident in how she tried to change to become more confident, deciding not to raise Sally the way she had been raised, and by her perception of herself as being 'damaged'.

Also, Sarah's inclination to a sense of failure and disappointment when she narrates her experiences with Sally, might stem from her wanting to spare Sally a childhood like hers,

as well as having a close relationship with her. Unfortunately Sally's traumatic experience in Grade 12, and their deteriorating relationship (almost since Sally's birth and Sarah's car accident), proves to be evident to Sarah perceiving herself not being able to provide these experiences for Sally.

Finally, a pattern of behaviour emerges from her themes, which relates to her **experiences, feelings and reactions** to both her childhood and parenting experiences. These experiences are related to each other in the following way: the moment Sarah is confronted with a situation that contains elements of a bullying experience (e.g. powerlessness, as lack of acknowledgement, loneliness/isolation, being a victim of bullying, frustration, manipulation, aggression, trauma, rejection, abandonment, lack of trust and insecurity); she reacts in a specific way. She will either try being assertive and failing²³, or capitulating, or she will withdraw from the situation. These experiences might also cause Sally to experience anxiety and depression, which has a negative influence on her self-concept (Aluede et al, 2008). This may lead Sarah to experience one or more of the following feelings in these situations: fear, powerlessness, helplessness, humiliation, anger, feeling unloved, and feeling unsupported.

Finally, the final component (a pattern of behaviour), allows us to look at Sarah's parental style as an expression of behaviour, as Reder and Lucey (1995) conceptualised parenting styles. This will be fully explained in the next section, when answering the third research question, namely, how do Sarah's themes (Experiences, Feelings and Reactions) of her narrated experiences culminate into a specific set of behavioural patterns linked to parenting – what parenting style emerges from her narratives?

²³ With the exception of one incident, where Sarah stood up for herself against a teacher and her classmates: *The only good thing about this whole episode was that for the first time in my life I had the guts to stand up for myself. I packed my case while my teacher sat totally dumbfounded and walked out and never looked back. I still feel good about that.* 3[58-61].

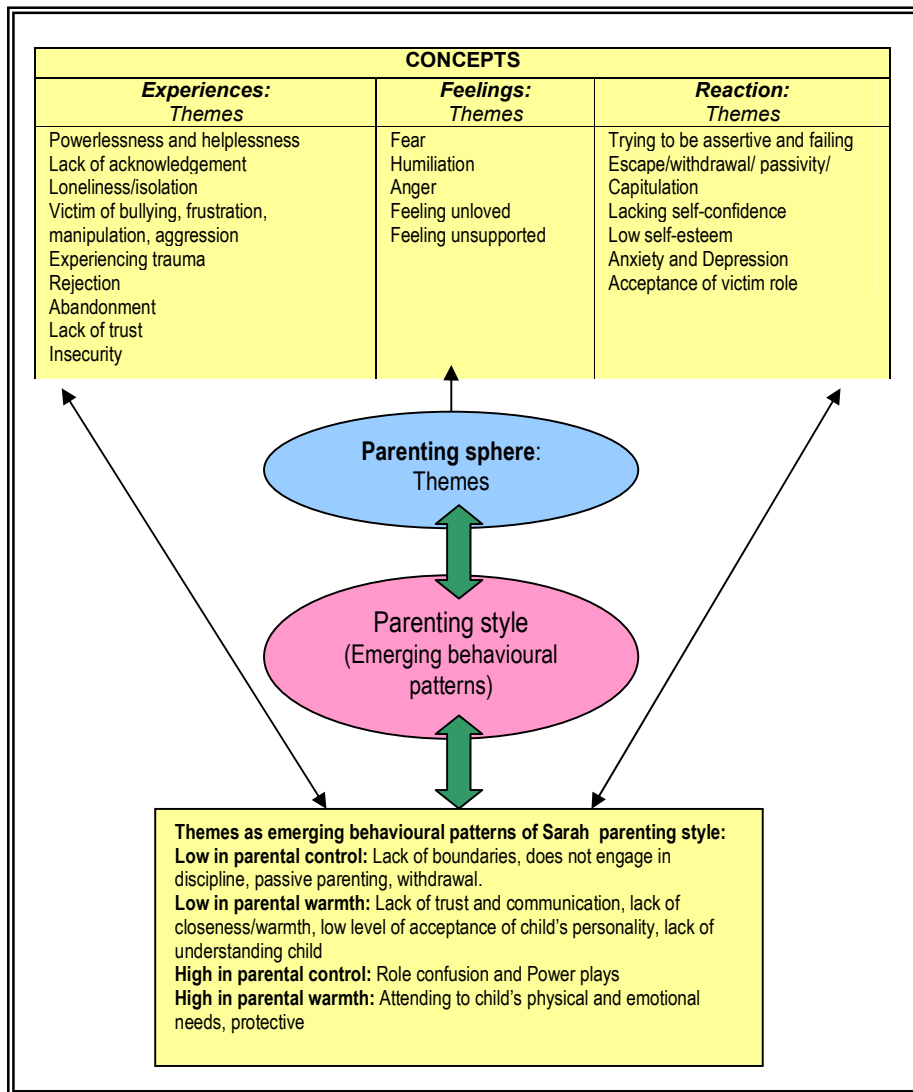
4.4 SARAH'S EMERGING PARENTING STYLE

Reder and Lucey (1995) define a parenting style²⁴ as a two-way process wherein reciprocal interaction between child and parent is seen as being central. Different relevant skills and important functions of parenting is classified around the **existence of two types of behaviour** (with other words, two types of behavioural patterns) that parents exhibit towards the child, for example *parent-child centered behaviour/warm parenting* (smiles, imitations, ignoring of negative behaviour, positive touch and attention and encouragement). In contrast with this behaviour, is *parent-child directive behaviour/cold parenting* (demands, using the “no” word, teaching, questioning, critique and negative touch).

In addition to the above behaviours, how parents behave regarding authority, another two types of behavioural pattern can be distinguished: *High level of control* and *low level of control*. The next figure (Figure 4.9) demonstrate how the themes as explored by her parenting sphere (experiences, feelings and reactions), relates to the themes (behavioural patterns) explored indicative of her parenting style:

²⁴ See Chapter Two for a full description of the nine parenting styles as identified by Martin and Colbert (1997), McGillicudd-de Lisi & De Lisi (2007) and Pretorius (1998).

Figure 4.9: Sarah’s parenting style as explored through her narratives



When comparing Sarah’s parenting style with the ten parenting styles that were discussed in Chapter Two, one can see Sarah’s own parenting style emerging away from any of the proposed and existing parenting styles. However, some similarities were found to exist. Before discussing the following figure (Figure 4.9), a brief guideline to the interpretation of this figure will be set out.

Firstly, this figure aims to plot Sarah’s parenting themes according to the adapted dimensions of parenting as described by Martin and Colbert. According to Martin and Colbert (1997), four main types of parenting styles can be described in terms of two

dimensions, namely Parental Warmth and Parental control. These dimensions exist on two continuums plotted on two axes²⁵.

A slight revision of the continuums resulted in an adaptation of these dimensions as proposed by Martin and Colbert. According to them, the first continuum (as presented by the **X-axis - Parental Control**), describes a continuous sequence of related parenting behaviour of which the extremes can be described as parents being *controlling/demanding* on the one side, and parents being *uncontrolling/undemanding* on the other side. The **Y-axis (Parental warmth)** represents the two extremes of which the one is parents being *warm/responsive*, and parents being *cold/alooof*. In this adaptation, however, in order to accommodate the other parenting styles as described by McGillicudd-de Lisi and De Lisi (2007), and Pretorius (1998), the two continuums will be represented as follows: **The X-axis (Parental Control)** describes the continuum in the following three sub-dimensions namely *Controlling/Demanding*, *Uncontrolling/Undemanding* and *Complete Withdrawal*. The **Y-axis (Parental warmth)** represents *Over parenting*, *Warmth/Responsiveness* and *Aloofness/Coldness*.

The four main parenting styles (Authoritative, Permissive, Authoritarian and Uninvolved) as identified by Martin and Colbert, the Non-conforming parenting style (McGillicudd-de Lisi & De Lisi, 2007), and the five parenting styles (warm, dominant, involved, neglectful and harmonious parenting styles) as defined by Pretorius (1998), are plotted according to these two continuums and their sub-dimensions. This model serves as reference to which a comparison with Sarah's parenting style can be made.

²⁵ An **axis** can be defined as an imaginary line that divides something in half, especially in the direction of its greatest strength (DUSAE, 2008). For the purposes of this study, the two axes will be represented by the X-axis (Parental Control), and the Y-axis (Parental Warmth).

Figure 4.10: Application of the parenting dimensions to Sarah’s case

		X-axis		
		Parental Control		
Y-axis		<i>Controlling/Demanding</i>	<i>Uncontrolling/Undemanding</i>	<i>Complete Withdrawal</i>
Parental warmth	<i>Aloof/cold</i>	Demanding and/or Authoritarian Role confusion Power plays	Uninvolved Passive parenting Lack of closeness/warmth Lacks understanding of Sally	Neglectful Lack of trust and communication Withdrawal Low level of acceptance of Sally’s personality
	<i>Warm/Responsive</i>	Authoritative and/or Warm Nurturing (attending to Sally’s physical and emotional needs)	Permissive Does not engage in discipline Lack of boundaries	Non-conforming
	<i>Over parenting “Smothering”</i>	Involved Protective		

Based on the above figure, it seems that Sarah’s parenting style as plotted in Figure 4.9, consists of elements of all but one parenting style, i.e the non-conforming parenting style. It seems that Sarah adopted parental behaviour based upon the **Uninvolved** and **Neglectful parenting styles**. There is also evidence that Sarah adopted parental behaviour based upon the **Authoritative and/or Warm, Authoritarian and/or Demanding**, and the **Permissive parenting styles**.

From this, one can rather conceptualise Sarah’s parenting style on the continuums as follows: **High on parental withdrawal** and **low on parental control**, characterised with tendencies to be controlling/demanding in situations of role confusion and power plays, **and low on parental warmth**, characterised with tendencies to be nurturing and protective in the absence of conflict/trauma/bullying experiences.

Before discussing Sarah’s narrated experiences and the way in which it culminates into Sarah’s parenting style as conceptualised above, it is necessary to revisit Sarah’s profile and experiences. In order to gain a deeper insight into how it contributed to a set of parental behavioural patterns (parenting style) that emerge from Sarah’s narratives (themes), a full picture of Sarah will be presented in Figure 4.11.

The following themes emerged from Sarah’s narratives regarding her parenting style and parenting experiences and are presented in Table 4.7 with addition of Sarah’s voice:

Table 4.7: Themes as an emerging pattern of behaviour: Sarah’s parenting style

Themes emerging as behavioural patterns: Parenting Style	Quotes	Code
Low in parental control		
Lack of boundaries	<i>She has ...(narratives too sensitive) so many times and I have threatened to get her (narratives too sensitive), and you know, and then she does it again, and again, and again, and she knows that George and I will not do it.</i>	2:17[11-14]
Does not engage in discipline	<i>Her problems were like, back chatting, being obnoxious, or being really, really ugly. How do you punish for that?</i>	2:77[2-3]
	<i>...then I started to need discipline, I, I think that because of my personality, I find it difficult to discipline.</i>	2:15[6-7]
Passive parenting	<i>But he won’t confront her. And I, I, it’s another reason why I don’t want to confront her. Why must I confront her and have our relationship damaged further while his remains intact?</i>	2:53[14-16]
Withdrawal	<i>I keep on giving in. just because I know if I don’t give in and walk away, I am going to...</i>	1:75[5-7]
	<i>I just switched the phone off. And I haven’t spoken to her since.</i>	2:2[9-10]
Low in parental warmth		
Lack of trust and communication and Lack of closeness	<i>I just know that a year after it happened, I know she kept a diary. And she, she did what she needed to do. I didn’t forget the day, but I didn’t say anything to her. And she was livid, livid. And she wrote me a letter saying I didn’t care. But I just didn’t feel up to (sighs deeply) – but you know it’s coming up again, the tenth of June. So, ja.</i>	2:117[1-4]
	<i>And I get to the point where I run out of words with her. I run out of...because I get so angry with her.</i>	2:71[3-5]

	<i>How do I say to her, how do you say it to her? Because, I'm, to drag it up every year, you know, I don't think it's good for you. I can't do it. I actually can't do it. I can't imagine. How do you discuss it. How do you even, what do you say. I don't know.</i>	2:119[1-4]
Low level of acceptance of the child's personality	<i>I don't like her personality.</i>	2:45[15]
	<i>...I don't know where that comes from (a trait of Sally's).</i>	2:35[3]
	<i>So I tried to understand her...</i>	2: 77[5]
High in parental control		
Role confusion and Power play	<i>I'm giving away my power all the time! ...I keep on giving in...</i>	1:75[1,5-6]
	<i>...and I can't keep the adult role. I don't want to treat her like a child, but I can't be adult to adult with her. I can't I seem to revert this, who is the adult and who is the child, that relationship, and I don't know why, why I can't get out of it.</i>	1:77[6-9]
High on parental warmth		
Attentive to child's physical and emotional needs	<i>We've never withheld money from her, if she wanted something we've tried to give it to her.</i>	2:29[8-9]
	<i>...and she never had to do without...</i>	2:33[10-11]
	<i>All the grounding that we were supposed to do, George spend hours with that girl in primary school with her athletics, with her netball I was there with her, with everything we were always with her.</i>	2:35[3-7]
Protective	<i>I wanted to protect her, I wanted her to leave home without any kind of drama, I just wanted her to get through her childhood without any major trauma.</i>	2:83[1-3]

4.5 SYNOPSIS

In this section, Figure 4.11 will serve as a visual summary of the findings of this research project.

Figure 4.11: Summary of findings

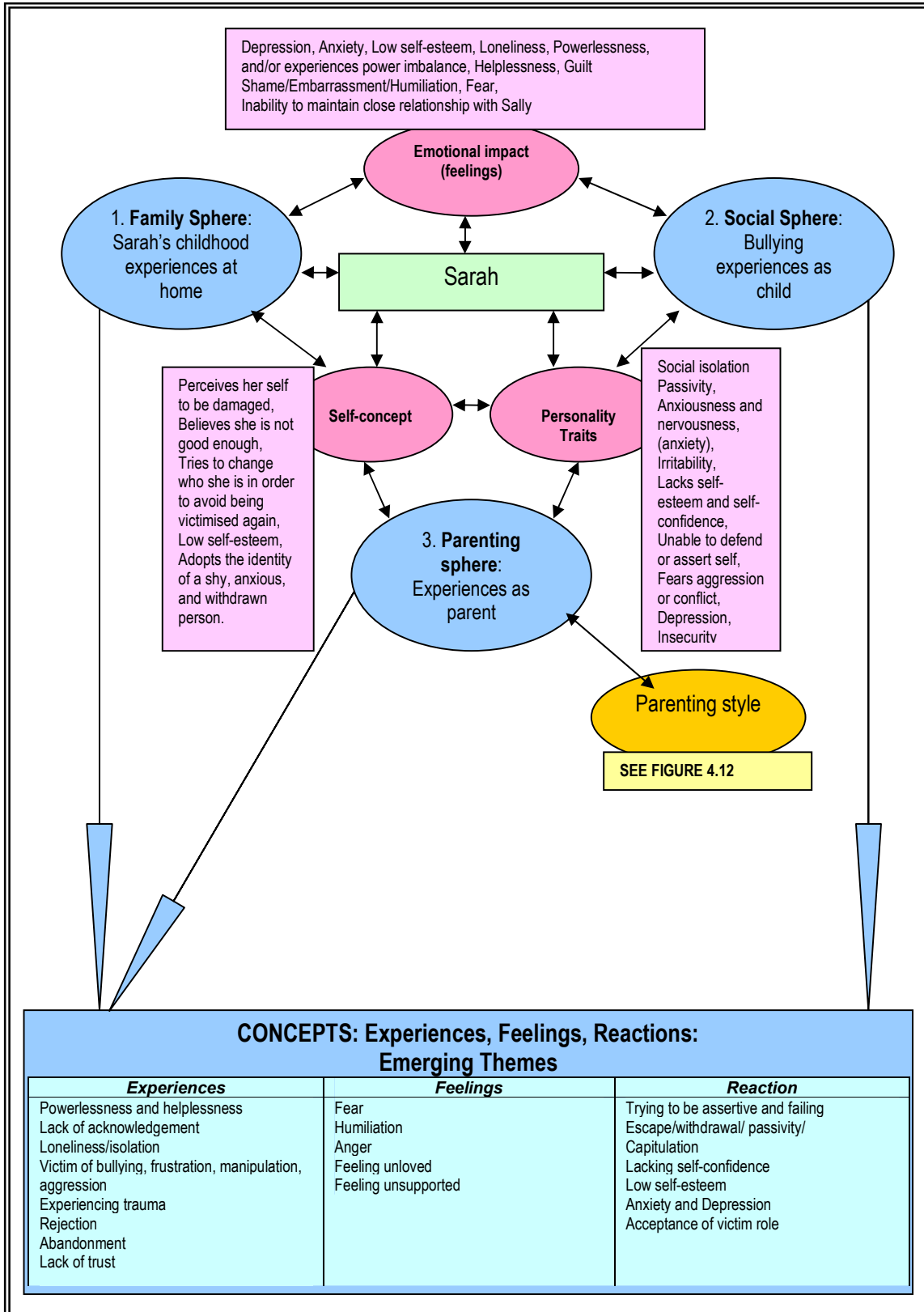


Figure 4.12: Parenting style

Parenting Style	↔	Experiences	Feelings	Reactions
Parental Control Lack of boundaries, Does not engage in discipline, Passive parenting, Withdrawal	↔	Powerlessness and helplessness, Victim of bullying / frustration / manipulation / aggression, Experiencing trauma	Fear, Humiliation, Anger	Trying to be assertive and failing, Escape/withdrawal/passivity/capitulation, Lacking self-confidence/low self-esteem, Acceptance of victim role
Parental Warmth Lack of trust and communication, Lack of closeness/warmth, Low level of acceptance of child's personality, Lack of understanding the child, Attending to child's physical and emotional needs, Protective	↔	Lack of acknowledgement, Loneliness and isolation, Rejection, Abandonment	Feeling unloved, Feeling unsupported	Lack of trust, Escape/withdrawal/passivity

For a discussion of the third research question (In which way do the themes of Sarah's narrated experiences culminate into a specific parenting style?) to take place, one should answer all three research questions as a whole, as the third research question can only be answered in accordance with the findings of the first two questions. In order to gain depth in our understanding of Sarah, the three questions will be answered as a whole in a letter to Sarah in Chapter Five. For the purposes of discussing Sarah's narratives in Chapter Five, it is important that the reader stays aware of the following:

His-story and her-story is the reality of each client – unique, personal, subjective, and fortunately, open to change (Prochaska and Norcross, 1999:445).

--ooOoo--

Chapter Five

CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to reflect on the findings by presenting the reader with a letter to Sarah regarding the findings and to provide a brief reflection on this part of the research process.

To me, this was the most challenging part of the research process. Never would I have thought that by looking at themes in Sarah's narratives, I would become so personally involved with the narratives – and with Sarah.

So many themes emerged in such a rich way, that I could not have asked for better data with which to work. Initially I found the organisation, analysis and interpretation of the data quite difficult, but reporting on data with such sensitive content and raw emotions without causing more pain to Sarah, was what proved to be the most challenging experience.

At first, I felt the inclination to take a clinical stance in my reporting the case, but since it was not the purpose of the research to look at the data from a clinical stance, I decided to stay within what narrative research offers and report back in the form of a letter to Sarah. The latter part of this chapter will be devoted to the limitations and benefits of this study as well as the contributions and recommendations for research, practice and training.

5.2 A LETTER TO SARAH

Dear Sarah,

One of the wonders of narratives is that they are open, ongoing, never ending. Historical narratives and scientific narratives are open, ongoing, and changing. As our stories change, so too do we change...If you want to know your identity, the reality of who you are, don't turn to someone else's theory. Turn to the next chapter in your own story (Prochaska & Norcross, 1999: 446).

Firstly, I would like to thank you for trusting me with your life story. You shared very personal information with me and I hope that with my research findings about your life story, you will not regret trusting me with your innermost experiences.

I would like you to revisit our preliminary meeting, when we discussed the possibility of this research project. The aim of our meetings was to provide us with narratives enabling us to explore: (1) the meaning of a bully-victim as you see it, (2) your experiences of being bullied by your significant others, (3) how the themes emerging from your experiences may lead to the discovery of your parenting style, and (4) how it was influenced by your childhood experiences.

Secondly, after analyzing each theme and sub-theme that emerged from the narratives you shared, it was then compared to a bully-victim profile, as proposed by a theoretical framework (multifactor model of bullying) several authors contributed to. You can read more about this in Chapter Two and

Chapter Four. This comparison allowed me to answer the first research question as proposed by this project: In which way is your personal profile similar to that of the bully victim profile?

Thirdly, after delineating your childhood experiences from your parenting experiences, an exploration of the emerging themes led to the discovery of specific themes present in both your childhood and parenting experiences. These themes could be seen in terms of your experiences as a person who was bullied, the emotional impact it had (feelings), and your reactions to situations similar to your bullying experiences. The discovery of these themes assisted me in answering the second research question: How do the themes of the bullying experiences during childhood as narrated by yourself, relate to your parenting experiences?

Finally, I analysed by using script analysis how your parenting experiences were influenced by your childhood bullying experiences. This led me to discover a very complex pattern of parenting experiences, feelings and reactions that ultimately allowed me to describe your parenting style with Sally. Therefore, the final question was addressed: In which way do the themes of your narrated experiences culminate into a specific parenting style?

In keeping with your life script and the Multi-factor Model of Bullying, several other themes also emerged indicating your personal resources and resilience. I would therefore like to emphasise the inner resources that came about while analysing the data. Hence, the next part of this letter is going to address the

matter of inner resources, which may assist you to deal with your life situation on a personal, as well as on a parental level.

According to Satir (1967) each person has within the self all the resources that are needed for growth and healthy functioning. This ultimately means that we as a persons have the capacity to move beyond the boundaries of the debilitating life scripts we sometimes follow. According to Satir (1967), the resources you possess are presented in the following figure (Table 5.1.). Satir is also of the opinion that a person's self can get so bombarded with trying experiences that one can get lost in the process of identifying with these trying experiences and thereby limiting our development as a whole person.

I would therefore like to make you aware of those resources Satir mentioned each naturally possesses to develop the self's full potential. These resources exist despite the limitations a traumatic life script might impose on the self. These resources were also identified through the inductive analysis and will be subsequently presented in Table 5.1:

Table 5.1: Sarah's capacity to rewrite her story

Resources: Sarah's capacity for...	Quotations
Being spiritual	<i>I've done the course, and forgiven everybody in my life that needs to be forgiven. 1: 2[3-4]</i>
Inspiration and imagination	<i>...and I had the most vivid imagination, and they would all tell you I could write beautiful stories. 1:103[1-3]</i>
Sensing and feeling	<i>...but I have a sixth sense about a lot of things. 2:21[8-9]</i>
Awareness	<i>It has affected me in countless ways which I acknowledge. 3[90-91]</i> <i>And you know it becomes easier when you get older. I think you become more aware...2:147[4-5]</i>
Learning and changing	<i>And especially because of the way I have evolved as a person. 2:45[6-7]</i>
Feeling love	<i>...I love her (Sally). 2:137[8]</i>



	<i>I think when you're laying on your death bed...all come down to love, and what is right in your life. 1: 143 [2-3, 6]</i>
Expressing creativity	<i>...I used to draw, I used to paint a lot. 1:20[3-4]</i>
	<i>so I used to spend hours on my projects...my books were works of art... 1: 103[4-5]</i>
Compassion	<i>It wasn't easy for Sally to go through what she went through. 2: 101[1-2]</i>
Wholeness	<i>...and make the best of what I have and what I am. 3 [101-102]</i>
Intuition	<i>I've got a sense, and I know a lot more about Sally than she knows I know. 2:123[4-5]</i>
Wisdom	<i>I'm not looking forward to get old, but I am beginning to look forward to the wisdom and maturity that comes with that. 2:147[6-7]</i>
Self-acceptance and the acceptance of others	<i>...but I think generally I have come to terms with who I am and moved on. 3 [94-95]</i>
	<i>He (her father) is who he is and I have to accept him as he is or forget about him. I have chosen to accept him. 3 [97-98]</i>
	<i>...I think you become more accepting, you know you become more accepting of people, it's like with my father now. 1:87[1-2]</i>
Hope	<i>But you know, that will come. It will come. (on her hopes for Sally). 2: 139[1-2]</i>
	<i>Your biggest accomplishment in your life is your child. Really. 1:139[2-3]</i>
Making choices	<i>I have chosen to accept him. 3 [97-98]</i>
Connecting	<i>...I was the one who approached her (Sally). 2:81[1-2]</i>
Responsibility: Taking charge of one's impulses, feelings, parts, and behaviours	<i>I will not, I will not give anyone the satisfaction of destroying my life. 1:189[3-4]</i>
	<i>I think when you become aware of who you are and shy you act in a certain way, you can change. You can change your interactions. I've done it. Hopefully. There's sometimes when I forget, but I'm certain that you can change. 1: 197[1-3]</i>
	<i>...because if you count to ten...and give yourself time to actually think about it, you would react in completely a different way than if you just react to it. 1: 191[2-4]</i>
Being cooperative	<i>George told me last night if I hadn't changed, he would have divorced me. And that's why I just turned over a new leaf. 1: 187[2-3]</i>
Trusting	<i>For Sarah to have been able to relate her story, she displayed her trusting the research process and the researcher.</i>
Understanding	<i>I was sixteen, I was seventeen, and I've tried to be there for her. 2: 77[23-24]</i>
Making and carrying out decisions	<i>I just took the decision, and I thought, you're not going to do this to me anymore. 1: 145[11-12]</i>

It is my wish that you as Sarah - a person, a woman, a mother, a wife, a daughter - will use these resources to rewrite a new and fulfilling story regarding yourself and your life, especially regarding your relationship with Sally.

I would like to end this letter with a quote from Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*:

*You shall be free indeed when your days are not without a care nor your nights without a want and a grief, but rather when these things girdle your life and yet you rise above them naked and unbound.
(Gibran, 2004:63-64)*

kindest regards

Stephanie

5.3 LIMITATIONS AND BENEFITS

5.3.1 Limitations

The project's limitations center around the research bias, a lack of reproducibility, and a lack of generalisation as the extrapolarisation of the results may not always be valid as it is not open for cross controlling. It should be kept in mind though that the process of collaborating with Sarah validated the findings as truthful to the experiences as described by Sarah in her narratives. Furthermore, it was not the purpose of this study to provide reproducibility, generalisability, or extrapolarisation, but rather to understand Sarah's case on a deeper level.

A further limitation of this study was identified during and after the research process: The narratives focused on only negative childhood and parenting experiences and thus made the research findings one-sided. One may have gained more insight into Sarah's life story by including narratives on her positive childhood and parenting experiences, and comparing these with each other as well. That way a richer understanding of Sarah and her parenting style might have emerged. The information on Sarah's positive experiences may have assisted future therapeutic interventions. It should be kept in mind that although this may seem to be a limitation, the purpose of this research project was to work from Sarah's perspective.

A major limitation was imposed on the project by the manner in which Sarah constructed her understanding of bullying. This caused a discrepancy between the literature review and the findings of the data analysis, which complicated analysis and interpretation.

5.3.2 Benefits

One of the major benefits of this research project is that the focus on Sarah's subjective experiences allowed me to direct my understanding of Sarah (Terre Blance et al, 2006). In addition, this research project attempted to elucidate Sarah's environments and her experiences within a variety of conceptual frameworks (Hay, 2005) such as for example the Multifactor Model of Bullying, the Rational-Emotive-Behavioural Therapy approach, Script Analysis and Satir's construction of the self. The conclusions were part of an interactive process, which focused on the meaning, and understanding of Sarah's parenting situation that was explored (Grosson, 2003). One of the greatest strengths of Sarah's case is that it gives a rich description of her experiences in order to reflect her perspective (Stark & Torrance, 2005). In addition, Sarah's case presents with certain scientific benefits, such as its openness for new discoveries, especially in this rich description of a specific case. It can be used as source of insight and hypotheses for subsequential research (Berg, 2003 and De Vos et al, 2002).

Further benefits Sarah's case brings forth are (Cohen et al, 2000):

- Results were reported in simple language – Sarah as a non-expert in the psychology field, as well as other parents/students/trainers/researchers will easily understand the results.
- The results are self-explanatory.
- It focuses on the unique characteristics of Sarah's case.
- It gives a deeper meaning that may have been missed in larger groups of participants.
- It is held in high regard concerning Sarah's reality, as she approved and agreed with the findings.
- It increases insight into cases similar to Sarah's.
- No research team was needed to conduct the research on Sarah's case.

5.4 CONTRIBUTIONS TO RESEARCH, PRACTICE, AND TRAINING

As discussed in Chapter One and Two, although research exists on the impact bullying has on an adult, little or no research was done on the parenting experiences of a person who experienced bullying as a child. This research project may therefore shed more light on the tremendous impact bullying as a traumatic experience has on the parenting experiences of persons who were bullied. It may also assist therapists in the understanding and approaching of persons who experienced bullying when attending to especially their parenting styles and experiences. Professionals, training student psychologists, may use the information in this project to make students aware of the impact bullying experiences might have on their someone's parenting experiences.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH, PRACTICE AND TRAINING

As can be seen in Chapter Two, more studies need to be undertaken regarding the parenting experiences and styles of parents who were bullied as children. As no two cases are the same, a narrative approach is recommended as this will support researchers to stay aware of the uniqueness of each client's experiences and thoughts about his/her reality. It is also recommended that researchers should:

- Take into account the experiences of the whole family involved with the person who was affected by childhood bullying, who may include the person's own parents and siblings, as well as the person's spouse and children;
- Consider the mixed method approach as to provide generalisation, reproducibility as well as to avoid researcher bias;
- Consider research questions that focus on
 - the experiences of the person's positive childhood experiences,
 - the experiences of the persons who have close relationships with a bully victim,
 - the parenting style of the spouse of the bully victim and the consequent impact on the spouses' relationship with each other, and
 - the experiences of the children regarding the parent-child relationship.

- Consider research on the implementation of narrative therapy with a bully victim and the consequent effects on his/her parenting styles.
- Consider why some bully victims present a bully victim profile, and others not, as well as explore the strength and resilience of these bully victims who do not adopt a bully victim role.

For practitioners assisting parents with their parenting style, it is recommended that the impact of childhood experiences be acknowledged. This is especially the case when a practitioner is working with a parent whose childhood experiences need to be acknowledged in order to move towards a more functional parenting style. Knowledge on the parenting styles of parents who were bullied may prevent a parent from either taking on the role of the bully or the role of a person who is bullied in a parenting context.

Psychologists in training need to be made aware of the important contribution a person's childhood experiences may have on him/her as a parent. Training should include techniques these future practitioners can use in order to assist a parent in retelling and reshaping his/her experiences – as a child as well as an adult/parent.

5.6 SYNOPSIS

This research project undertook a narrative exploration of a mother's life story. It was found that she presented a profile similar to that of a bully victim. Important differences between these two profiles emerged, showing that although her childhood bullying experiences had a traumatic effect on her; Sarah still possesses strengths that may assist her in dealing with the traumatic effects of her experiences. It was also found that there exists a thematic link between Sarah's childhood bullying experiences and her parenting experiences. This research project furthermore discovered the way in which her childhood bullying experiences culminated into Sarah's own and unique parenting style.

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Appendix A

LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANT



Januarie 2009

Geagte deelnemer

U word uitgenooi om deel te neem aan 'n beperkte navorsingsprojek wat deel vorm van my Magister studies. Hierdie navorsing het ten doel het om 'n ondersoek te loots na die oorskapsstyl en ervarings van die gewese boelieslagoffer as ouer en as kind.

U deelname is vrywillig en u kan enige tyd van die navorsing onttrek. Hierdie navorsing is 'n ondersoek na u ervarings, soos u vertel in die vorm van 'n Lewenstorie. Enige insette wat u sou wou byvoeg tot hierdie ondersoek word verwelkom. Een of meer onderhoude word beplan waar die lewenstorie as ouer in diepte verken gaan word. 'n Opvolgsessie word beplan waarin ons saam temas sal verken. Daar word deurentyd gepoog om die proses so deursigtig as moontlik te hou.

U identiteit sal beskerm word as 'n anonieme deelnemer, en die inligting wat u gee gedurende die navorsingsproses sal behandel word met sensitiwiteit en vertroulikheid. 'n Skuilnaam sal tydens die opskryf van die bevindings gebruik word om u identiteit te beskerm. Indien die navorsing as stresvol of ontstellend ervaar sou word, kan u ten enige tyd onttrek en psigososiale ondersteuning aan u beskikbaar gestel word.

Indien u bereidwillig is om aan hierdie studie deel te neem, sal u meegaande vorm onderteken, met dien verstande dat u steeds enige tyd van die navorsing kan onttrek.

Met dank

Stephanie Rieker
Navorser
082 600 2141

Dr C Lubbe-De Beer
Supervisor
012 420 2765



Appendix B

EXAMPLE OF A PAGE FROM THE TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEWS

		INTERVIEW (1):	THEMES:
		1: 73 (1-17) 1: 75 (1-7) 1: 77 (1-12)	
SPEAKING TURN			
73	T:	I don't know. And the incident I talk about is, I mean I've only had one, and I call it bullying because my boss did bully me into doing uhm something. Uhm, handing over a computer programme to a manager. I had the only programme in the company, and I said, no, I won't do it, it's copy right infringement. If I get caught doing that, company policy and procedures say I can be fired. And you are telling me to hand it over. I said I can't do it. And he started screaming, pointing his finger in my face, you know, he gave me an ultimatum, you do it, or else, you know. So I handed it over to the manager. And later that day he called me in and said, I apologise profusely, because I, he says I actually didn't know, he said, you were actually terrified when I was shouting at you. He said he could see it on my face. And uhm. That's the way I get with... although I did stand up to him to a point, uhm, I capitulated, and I do that with • as well. Because, because I don't want to hit her uhm, the only other thing I can do is to capitulate and walk away. And you know, dr Phil says, on his shows, with all his wisdom, you know. Do you want to, you know, do you want to win or do you just want to in the end, after giving in and giving in and giving in so that the fight ends, I start feeling very very helpless. You know what I mean? You start becoming...	capitulation? power doing things not want to do "doing the right thing" powerless aggression fear of aggression standing up capitulation also daughter ↳ social pattern? helplessness powerlessness
74	S:	yes, you are giving away your power	
75	T:	Yes, I'm giving away my power all the time! And yet, I've prevented a fight, and uhm. But in the end, I kind of think she sees it as winning the fight. And so she wins it, and she wins it, and she becomes stronger and stronger, and in her eyes I become weaker and weaker. And I physically, and I mean I'm talking about physically and emotionally, begin to feel weaker and weaker because I keep on giving in. just because I know if I don't give in and walk away, I am going to... whack her. And I don't want to do that.	powerlessness losing + frustration powerlessness helplessness powerlessness aggression frustration
76	S:	It seems to me it is this very complicated situation of not wanting confrontation, and then being forced into a confrontation and then not being able to, or you end up giving away your power (dogs barking), it is one of the reasons why you give in. why do you think it is that you keep on giving in besides the fact that you fear that you are going to give her a whack or...do you think there's anything else that you think is causing that?	
77	T:	I think it's the relationship I had with my father. You know that feeling of being absolutely powerless as a child, I mean, you know, you can't do nothing. I mean, he's a big man, you know, and when I look at him now I don't I realize he isn't that big, but as a child, you are absolutely powerless. You cannot stand up against him. And even though I on a, even though I know that I should be able to with • I seem to revert to that...and I can't keep the adult role. I don't want to treat her like a child, but I can't be adult to adult with her. I can't. I seem to revert to this, who is the adult and who is the child, that relationship, and I don't know, why I can't get out of it. You know. Even • and I have that kind of relationship. The moment that he becomes angry with me, I lose my ability to remain an adult. I do, I do. And the roles just go from adult to adult, to adult to child. And I...	powerless helpless (father) powerless helpless (daughter) role reversal aggression: (falls back to childhood patterns when confronted?)



Appendix C

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

DEGREE AND PROJECT

INVESTIGATOR(S)

DEPARTMENT

DATE CONSIDERED

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE NUMBER :

EP09/01/01

MEd Educational Psychology

An exploration of the parenting experiences of a mother bullied as a child.

Stephanie Riekert

Educational Psychology

31 August 2009

APPROVED

Please note:

For Masters applications, ethical clearance is valid for 2 years

For PhD applications, ethical clearance is valid for 3 years.

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE

Dr S Bester



DATE

31 August 2009

CC

Dr C Lubbe-De Beer
Ms Jeannie Beukes

This ethical clearance certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application for ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the students' responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries.

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries.