

**THE CONSTRUCTION, IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION
OF A TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS STRESS MANAGEMENT COURSE
FOR ADOLESCENTS**

THESIS

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of the requirements for the Degree of
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ABSTRACT

Stress is a problem in today's world and adolescents are not exempt from suffering its ill effects. Currently no stress management courses are offered as part of the formal guidance programme in high schools or in the community.

This pilot study is an attempt to construct a stress management course based on the concepts of Transactional Analysis. The course was implemented with a multi-racial, standard eight group of nine boys and girls. The course was evaluated qualitatively and quantitatively. The quantitative measures proved to be inappropriate to this study and did not render any useful information.

The study found that the scholars expressed that they had changed in their handling of their daily stressors as a result of the course. Personal growth had also taken place.

The findings of this research are discussed in terms of the important implications they have for school guidance programmes.

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CHAPTER ONE**INTRODUCTION**

1.1 INTRODUCTION

"At every phase of the life-span, human beings are exposed to a variety of stressful events" (Kessler, Price and Wortman, cited in Lempers and Clark-Lempers, 1990: 217). Concern over the effects that stress appears to have on the well-being and functioning capacities of adults is prevalent in the research. However "the literature on life stress in adolescents and children is surprisingly sparse, despite the obvious vulnerability of these populations to disruptive and developmental changes" (Cohen, Burt and Bjorck, 1987: 583).

Most of the research appears to be concerned with the stress-illness relationship (Tolor and Murphy, 1985) and not with the mechanisms that adolescents use to deal with their stressors (Fanshawe and Burnett, 1991).

1.2 ADOLESCENCE AND STRESS

Adolescence is a period of human development characterized by a complex set of development tasks or demands which move the young person from childhood to young adulthood. Adolescents are confronted with managing the physiological changes of puberty, integrating increased cognitive capacity with life experience.

(Garmezy, cited in Patterson and McCubbin, 1981: 164)

This study is concerned with adolescents' handling of everyday stressors, rather than with assessing the impact of major events on adolescents. Daily stressors are cumulative in effect as well as sometimes occurring simultaneously.

Stressors are stress provoking stimuli and may be people, events or objects. DeLongis *et al.*, (cited in Wagner, Compas and Howell, 1988: 190), found that "'hassles' accounted for greater portions of the variance in overall health status, somatic symptoms and energy levels than did major life events".

Two further studies support this view by suggesting that for adolescents, day-to-day minor 'hassles', such as domestic arguments over hairstyles and the use of the family car, may be more related to psychological difficulties than other types of stressors (Newcomb *et al.*, cited in Tolan, Millar and Thomas, 1987: 149).

Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaham and Mullan (cited in Wagner et al, 1988: 191) noted that "major events may change the meaning of pre-existing daily events or strains, so that previously minor annoyances may suddenly become overwhelmingly frustrating and painful".

Wagner and Compas (1990: 383), described what these daily stressors are when they found that, "certain stresses were most strongly related to psychological symptoms: family stresses in the junior high [Standards 5-7], peer stresses in the senior high [Standards 8-10], and academic stresses in the college [University and Technikon] sample" (South African equivalents given in brackets).

These researchers drew a further distinction between adolescent boys and girls in the events they perceive as highly stressful in stating that

Adolescent girls may have more of a personal investment in interpersonal events than boys, and so may be more at risk...for perceiving interpersonal events as highly stressful, and for experiencing symptoms in relation to this stress. Similarly, adolescent boys may be more at risk for experiencing stress and symptoms than girls in relation to achievement-related life events.

(Wagner and Compas, 1990: 384)

Stark, Spirito, Williams and Guevremont (1989: 210) elaborated further on the differences between boys and girls in their research on the stress response by suggesting that

...sex is an important variable mediating the types of events reported by adolescents and how such events are perceived. The order of the most commonly reported problems among boys was school, parents, friends and girlfriends. Girls, on the other hand, more frequently cited problems with parents, followed by boyfriend, friends and school.

Hurrelman (1984: 190), explained that "school produces 'stress' in so far as it seems to students to be a learning factory which is alien to them", while Adcock, Nagy and Simpson, (1991: 856), found in their study that "females expressed significantly more difficulty dealing with stress than did males".

1.3 THE PROBLEM

There is very little documented research on how adolescents cope with the stressors in their daily lives or on attempts to aid them in coping. One relevant research study by Patterson and McCubbin, (1987: 163) suggests that "the developmental tasks associated with adolescence pose a unique set of stressors and strains...(to which) the adolescent's adaptation ...is through the process of coping which involves cognitive and behavioural strategies". They found that females had significantly higher mean scores for coping patterns that

focused on involvement in relationships as a way to cope with life problems while males had significantly higher mean scores on one coping pattern, that of being humorous and making 'light' of the situation. Stark *et al.*, (1989: 208), confirmed this in their research, when they stated that "males were found to more frequently use wishful thinking than females, while females more frequently use social support than males".

Ham and Larson (1990: 583), found from their study that "children and early adolescents' perceptions of whether or not they expect daily stressors is related to their effective response to those stressors," because the person's decision-making process mobilizes his/her perceived resources to decrease the negative qualities of the expected situation.

The problem can be summarized thus: adolescents do experience stressors in their daily lives and probably need help in developing strategies in order to cope healthily with these.

1.4 GUIDANCE AND STRESS

Van Hoose and Pietrofesa (cited in Pietrofesa, Bernstein, Minor and Stanford 1980: 10) posited one of the goals of school guidance as

...to aid in the growth of children and youth by helping them confront their life dilemmas and by assisting them in moving toward achieving their highest potential.

School guidance services seem excellently placed to play an important role in meeting the adolescents' needs with regard to stress management. However, Euvrard in his study on "What pupils say they would like to study in Guidance lessons", highlighted the fact that guidance lessons in South African schools "are not always designed to address the needs of the pupils concerned" (Euvrard, 1987: 9). It is relevant to this study that he stated that a number of the pupils expressed a need to learn about stress management as they "are already concerned about stress and how to handle it" (Euvrard, 1987: 68). At the present time stress management is not part of the school guidance curriculum.

1.5 AIMS OF THIS STUDY

This research study presents a new approach to help adolescents develop a strategy to cope more effectively with the stressors that are part of daily living. This strategy consists of a course designed by the researcher, using the concepts of Transactional Analysis, to teach the participants skills that can help them to cope better with the stressors of their daily lives, as well as equipping them with life-skills for the future. In the search of the literature no evidence was found that Transactional Analysis had been used as a means of helping adolescents understand and cope with their daily stressors.

This research is based on the assumption that people are not

...viewed as passive victims who have minimal ability to cope...but have an inherent motive to be competent in their interactions with the world around them...as well as that they have the potential to develop as hardy personalities who can interact with their environment with a sense of commitment, a belief in personal control and an expectation of challenge.

(Strümpfer, 1985: 61)

The researcher assumes that adolescents do have the ability to take responsibility for their personal experience of stress and that they can learn a stress management strategy to become more competent in coping with the stressors in their daily lives. This, in turn, can help them to reduce their stress levels in order to prevent the negative effects of stress, or distress.

Therefore this study aims to make a contribution towards developing a strategy that will teach adolescents a way of coping with the normal stressors of life. However such a Transactional Analysis Stress Management Course could be incorporated into the high school guidance and counselling programme because it is developed as an educational course designed to teach adolescents life-skills which they can take with them into their adult lives.

Strümpfer's approach supports this view as he stated that

...distress management programmes may be directed at remediation, prevention or enhancement, or at all three, and on another continuum, they may range from a broad approach of teaching information and skills that would be useful in life situations...

(Strümpfer, 1985: 65)

This research serves as a pilot study because it introduces a new strategy in the field of adolescent stress management.

The findings are limited by the exploratory nature of this study and by the methodology used.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

The twentieth century has been called the Age of Anxiety. The history books will speak of the alarming increases in health problems related to tension and anxiety in what may be called the Century of Stress.

(Charlesworth and Nathan, 1984: 3)

2.1 ADOLESCENCE

Adolescents are not exempt from suffering the adverse effects of too much stress because adolescence is a complex time of human development. This is a transition phase from childhood to adulthood. It is during this stage of physical change, with its concomitant emotional swings, that the major life-tasks are to create one's self identity and to learn to cope with oneself, one's interactions with other people and to find one's place in a world where there are many stress provoking stimuli or stressors. Erikson highlighted the importance of "identity versus role confusion" for the adolescent, in his theory of psychosocial stages of development (Biehler, 1981: 123).

In order to cope successfully with this stage of life in which they find themselves and to prepare for adulthood, adolescents need to develop self-understanding and learn life-skills to cope with their personal experiences of stress.

2.2 SCHOOL GUIDANCE

School guidance was officially introduced into some South African high schools by The National Education Policy Act 1967 (Act 39 of 1967). Guidance is now offered in most high schools in South Africa and has been defined in many ways. An operational definition adopted by the Report of the Work Committee: Guidance, of the HSRC Investigation into Education (1981) is pertinent to this research,

'Guidance' is a practice, a process of bringing the pupil into contact with the world of reality in such a way that he acquires life-skills and techniques which allow him to direct himself competently (i.e. to become self-actualising) within the educational, personal and social spheres and the world of work, in order to progress and survive effectively.

(HSRC Report, 1981: 5)

2.3 STRESS

It is not easy to find a generally acceptable definition of stress. Earlier definitions emphasized the physiological effects of stress. Selye, a medical doctor, who is regarded as the father of stress, concentrated on the body's response to "all the wear and tear caused by life" (Selye, 1976: xvi).

However he did introduce the idea which is still held today that

...although we cannot avoid stress as long as we live, we can learn a great deal about how to keep its damaging side-effects, 'distress,' to a minimum...We are just beginning to see that many common diseases are largely due to errors in our adaptive response to stress.

(Selye, 1976: xvi)

Selye also saw disease as an attempt "to maintain the homoeostatic balance of our tissues " (1976: 13), and he introduced the stress syndrome, calling it the General Adaptation Syndrome. (Figure 1: 13)

The General Adaptation Syndrome develops in three stages:

- * the **alarm** stage - in which the body's defence mechanisms become active after the initial shock phase of lowered resistance to the stressor.
- * the **resistance** stage - in which there is maximum adaptation which rises above the person's normal resistance to stressors and then returns to a state of equilibrium. If the stressful situation continues the third stage emerges.
- * the **exhaustion** stage - in which the person's resources are overtaxed and distress decreases the person's physical functioning, which is then impaired and the person suffers ill health.

Selye's detailed description of the stress response could be described as a stimulus - response model of stress.

Later definitions were not confined to a medical model but incorporated the person's individual response to the stressors in the environment. Stress is viewed as an imbalance in the context of a person - environment transaction. Such a model is relevant to the present study (Figure 2: 14). Here the stress "reaction depends on how the person interprets or appraises (consciously or unconsciously) the significance of a harmful, threatening or challenging event" (van Dijk, 1983: 9). This view is a phenomenological one and is more appropriate to this research because it is the person's reaction that is important as he/she interprets and appraises stimuli as being positive or negative. This phenomenological viewpoint has led to investigations into the nature and levels of stress in the individual rather than in the environment (Appley and Trumbell, cited in van Dijk, 1983).

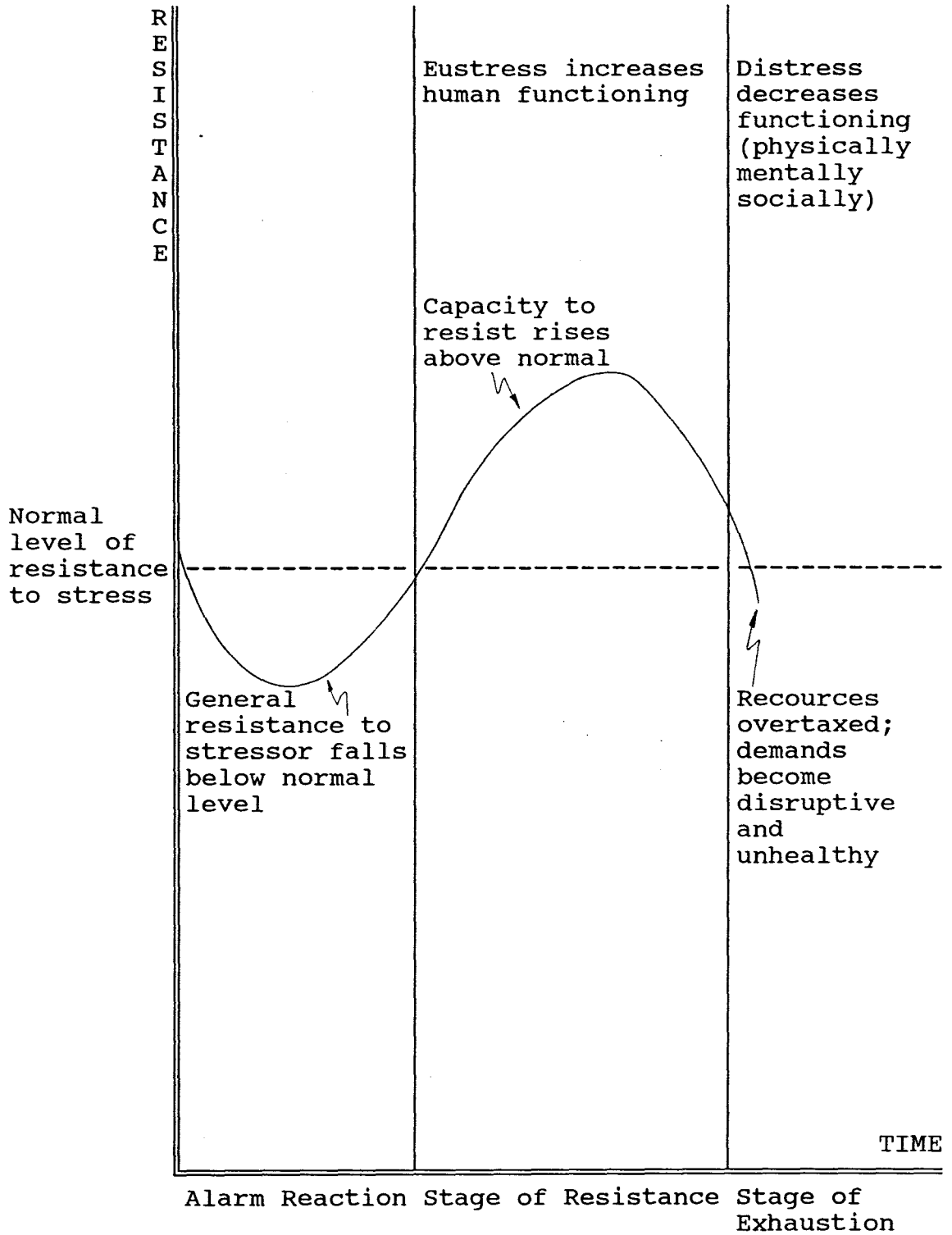


Figure 1

THE GENERAL ADAPTATION SYNDROME

(Adapted from Zimbler, 1985:9)

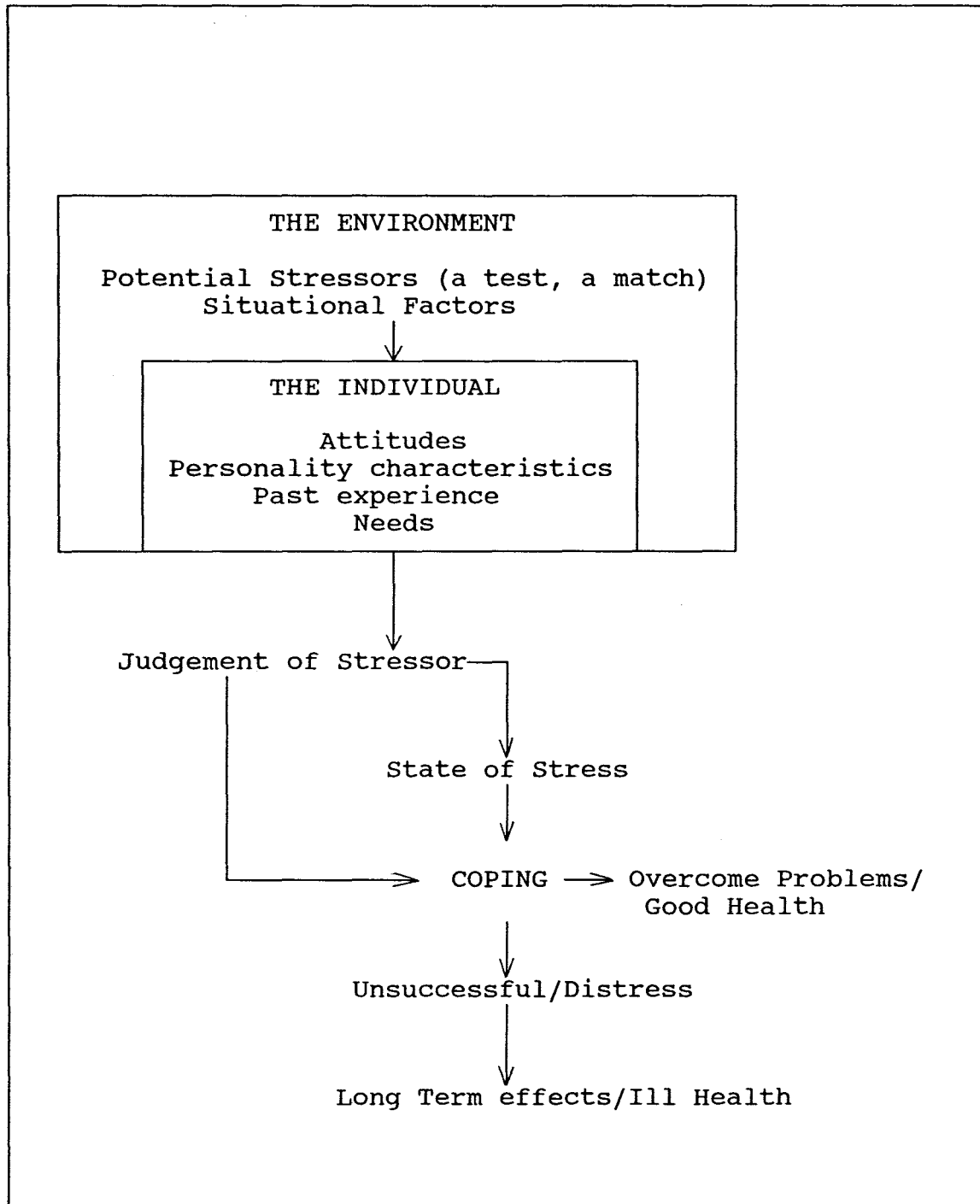


Figure 2

THE PERSON-ENVIRONMENT MODEL OF STRESS

(Adapted from van Dijk, 1983: 10)

Singer (cited in Norton 1990: 1) defined stress as, "The physiological and psychological reactions people exhibit in response to environmental events called stressors". This definition highlights the importance of the mind as well as the body in analysing the stress reaction.

2.4 STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress management techniques are the strategies that people can learn to use in order to deal with their stress reactions so that they do not become distressed. As stress is regarded as an inevitable part of being alive, researchers in stress research support the idea that "stress is not even necessarily bad for you; it is the spice of life, for any emotion, any activity causes stress" (Selye, 1976: xv). However in order to keep stress levels "beneficial to performance and the actualisation of potential"...stress needs to be effectively managed either "through stress reduction or modification techniques, as well as lifestyle changes and altering our environment" (Norton, 1992: 8).

Effective stress management techniques include managing oneself by meditation, relaxation, letting go of emotions, physical exercise and balanced nutrition (Norton, 1992). Knight (1990, 68) in a study on "The Contribution of Meditative Experiences to Personal Growth", found that "meditation was shown to promote relaxation...and that it would be valuable to discover

whether meditation could be used specifically as a means of examination stress reduction."

2.5 TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS (TA)

Transactional Analysis was used in this research as the stress management technique to help the pupils reduce their distress as they gained knowledge about themselves and their interactions with other people. Transactional Analysis can be seen as a means of changing one's lifestyle so that one's perception of oneself and other people is enhanced, thereby decreasing the impact of personal and inter-personal stress. "Transactional Analysis is both a psychological theory and a psychological method. It is also educational" (James, 1977: 3).

Transactional Analysis theory is based on a decisional model. Each of us learns specific behaviours and decides upon a life plan as we are growing up. Although our childhood decisions are strongly influenced by parents and others, we ourselves make these decisions in our own unique style. Since we decided our life plan, we also have the power to change it by making new decisions at any time. Thus each of us is responsible for our own growth, as we alone exercise the choice to retain our old decisions or make new ones. No one can make us change. Each of us is ultimately responsible only for himself.

(Woollams and Brown, 1979: 4)

Eric Berne (1961: 33), the originator of Transactional Analysis, defined it as "a theory of personality and social

action and a clinical method of psychology therapy, based on the analysis of all possible transactions between two or more people, on the basis of specifically defined ego states." Transactional Analysis uses four different types of analysis to understand and predict human behaviour:

- * **Structural analysis:** helps to explain what is happening within the individual.
- * **Analysis of transactions:** describes what happens between people.
- * **Game analysis:** provides an understanding of transactions that lead to games and how these can be broken up to result in good feeling payoffs.
- * **Script analysis:** assists in understanding the life plan or script which is acted out by an individual.

Structural Analysis describes the person as having three ego states: Parent, Adult and Child.

The Parent ego state (exteropsyche) incorporates the specific parent figures that people have when they are young. "This ego state is outwardly expressed toward others in prejudicial, critical and nurturing behaviour - behaviour which is identical or very similar to that of the original parent figures" (James, 1977 : 11). An inner dialogue continually takes place with the Adult ego state telling the Child ego state what to do and what not to do.

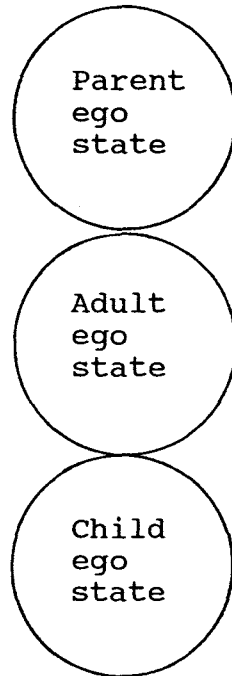
The Adult ego state (neopsyche) is not related to the age of a person and objectively tests reality. It is concerned with collecting and collating information so that logical decisions can be made. The Adult ego state is often thought of as the 'computer' of the personality because it computes logically without feelings.

The Child ego state (archaeopsyche) contains all the natural feelings, needs, impulses and potentialities of an infant. "It also contains creative, manipulative, intuitive capacities as well as the adapted feelings and behaviour learned during childhood, such as compliance, rebellion and procrastination" (James, 1977: 11). In summary,

When people act, think or feel as their parent figures once did, they are in the Parent ego state. When they are living in the here and now, gathering facts, computing them and acting on the basis of facts rather than on the basis of parental tradition or childhood feelings, they are in the Adult ego state. When people feel, act and respond to others as they learned to do when they were little, they are in their Child ego state - using, however the increased facilities they have gained while growing up.

(James, 1977: 11)

The three ego states are usually represented in circular form:



Berne claims these three ego states exist in all people and are phenomenological realities because they are observable states of being. "Broadly speaking, the Parent believes, the Adult thinks and the Child feels" (James, S. 1990: 9).

The analysis of transactions involves determining which ego state in one person is transacting with which ego state in another person. There are three types of transactions: complementary, crossed and ulterior.

Complementary transactions involve direct and open transactions from any ego state in one person which receives an open response from an appropriate ego state in another person. For example an Adult-Adult parallel communication where the stimulus and response complement each other.

Crossed transactions can also occur between any ego states but the stimulus or message from one person gets an unexpected response which results in communication being broken off or feelings of hurt, anger and misunderstanding being experienced. Tone of voice, body language, facial expressions and gestures all contribute to the meaning of a transaction.

Ulterior transactions have a hidden agenda with the covert non-verbal cues conveying a different message from the overt verbal stimulus and response. Ulterior transactions may be angular transactions, which involve one ego state in one person and two ego states in the other, or duplex transactions which involve two ego states in each person.

Game Analysis involves the analysis of a series of overt ongoing social transactions, seemingly complementary but which are accompanied by covert ulterior transactions which lead to a well-defined, predictable outcome with payoffs. Payoffs include negative feelings such as anger, fear, sadness, inadequacy and feelings of low self esteem. It takes two or more people to play a game which is usually played from the Parent or Child ego states and is outside conscious awareness until analysis takes place.

Games are played repeatedly and therefore analysis includes an awareness of the psychological games which are being played; how they are being initiated and how people get hooked into playing these games which become learned patterns of behaviour.

People play games in order to acquire strokes, which are units of recognition and include the old familiar feelings from childhood, as well as maintaining a life position of being not-OK.

Games also confirm Parental injunctions and further the life scripts of the players. Most people play a number of games with various people and in varying degrees. Games provide many strokes and lifelong patterns of stroking for some people and therefore are not easily given up. In fact, for most people much of their social life is taken up with playing games.

"Schlemiel" (making messes and then saying sorry); "Why does this always happen to me?"; "See what you made me do;" and "Kick me" are all examples of Transactional Analysis games.

Script Analysis involves the analysis of the life dramas that people, normally without awareness, act out during their lives. This personal life plan is based on early childhood decisions made at a time when the person is "extremely vulnerable to parental influence" (Barnes, 1977: 513).

Although people are not usually aware of it, their psychological scripts, like those of stage plays, contain not only the themes, but also the roles they expect to play, the dramatic action, climax and denouement.

(James, 1977: 16)

Therefore a person's script is like a blueprint for life. It makes sense of the way life has been in the past and projects a meaningful way of living in the future.

Life scripts may be:

Constructive and winning scripts in terms of the person's potential.

Non-winning scripts that have banal, empty messages that instruct a person to go nowhere.

Destructive or losing scripts that have hurtful, distorted messages that in extreme cases may be death messages.

Life scripts are written on the basis of the four possible existential positions a person can assume:

I'M OK, YOU'RE OK

I'M OK, YOU'RE NOT-OK

I'M NOT-OK, YOU'RE OK

I'M NOT-OK, YOU'RE NOT-OK

The **I'M OK, YOU'RE OK** life position will lead to the person living from a constructive script. "Persons in this position reflect an optimistic and healthy outlook on life, freely relate with others, and assume a 'get-on-with-it' stance in their dealings with other persons and the environment" (Barnes, 1977: 498).

The **I'M OK, YOU'RE NOT-OK** life position is often adopted "if the young person is severely neglected, abused or oppressed, he may decide that it is others, not himself, who are not-OK" (Barnes, 1977: 499).

The **I'M NOT-OK, YOU'RE OK** life position is "referred to as the depressive position...if his needs are not met, the young person may decide that 'I'm not-OK'. Persons in this position often feel stupid, inferior, ugly or inadequate" (Barnes, 1977: 499).

The **I'M NOT-OK, YOU'RE NOT-OK** life position is "assumed by persons who are miserable enough in their youth to have decided that neither they nor anyone else is worthwhile or valuable. This is the 'give-up' position..." (Barnes, 1977:499).

Although called 'life' scripts "adolescents modify script decisions which they made at younger ages; they break out of injunctions they had obeyed earlier" (Babcock and Keepers, 1977:176). Thus script analysis enables a person to understand his/her script so that there is the possibility of changing the decision that was made when the person was very young and didn't have sufficient Adult information. "Helping people to assume the healthy life position [I'm OK, You're OK] is one of the major goals of Transactional Analysis" (Barnes, 1977: 499).

2.6 ASSERTIVENESS

Assertiveness can be used as a qualitative measure of stress and a means of coping with it. "Assertion involves standing up for personal rights and expressing thoughts, feelings and beliefs in direct, honest and appropriate ways which do not violate another person's rights" (Lange and Jakubowski, 1976: 7). This results in a person having more control over him/herself in stating what he/she wants and feels. Taking cognisance of personal needs "is a much better way of coping with stress and substantially reduces the likelihood of negative stress" (Burns, 1988: 176). The person who is non-assertive and denies personal needs is usually more anxious, self-effacing and susceptible to distress.

In terms of Transactional Analysis, assertiveness can be seen as an expression of the Adult. Parents, Teachers and Other People in Charge, by wanting children to be unquestioningly obedient and not encouraging them to express their opinions, can prevent them from developing self-assertion.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 CHOICE OF METHODOLOGY

The problem of methodology cannot be considered in isolation but only within the context of the phenomenon to be investigated and the problem aspect of the phenomenon. These three things, the method, the phenomenon and the problem aspect of the phenomenon must be dialogued continuously and no one of them can be considered to the total exclusion of the others.

(Giorgi, 1971: 11)

This research aimed at focusing on the experiences of a group of standard eight scholars who participated in a Transactional Analysis Stress Management Course, constructed by the researcher. In particular, the researcher was attempting to determine whether a course, constructed on the principle tenets of Transactional Analysis, would be effective in reducing the stress levels of this group of adolescents.

The methodological tool to be used...must be in harmony with the nature of such a phenomenon, and must be able to capture and describe the subtle nuances and meanings experienced by the subjects.

(Knight, 1990: 36)

Although the researcher considered a number of methodological approaches it was felt that the methodological perspective of Humanistic Existential Phenomenology would allow the findings to emerge from the data itself.

Phenomenology is a method; more properly it is an attitude but not that of a technician with his bag of tools and methods...rather it is one of wonder and of respect as one attempts a dialogue with the world...The phenomenological psychologist is identified not by the subject-matter with which he deals, but by the way in which he attempts to understand and describe his environment.

(Kruger, 1979: 113)

This research "is primarily concerned with an attempt to conduct research within a humanistic paradigm, where human experience is not reduced to statistics and where the richness and complexity of such experience is retained and respected" (Blom, 1989: 52).

The researcher did not want to pre-select rigidly structured categories in which to evaluate the course although this would have produced data which would have been easier to analyse. However, because of the complexity of human experience, it was felt that it would be more appropriate to allow the experience of the course to disclose itself to the participants. "The focus of this study was on human experience, and what it aimed to determine are the existential dimensions of such experience" (Stones, 1982: 51).

Therefore it was decided to concentrate on a qualitative methodology. Laughton (1984: 110) stated that

...the researcher desirous of retaining the originating ethos of the source of knowledge must select a research paradigm which enables him/her to organise the researched knowledge in a manner which retains its realm of relevance and related originating province of meaning.

Euvrard (1987; 13) supported this by stating that

In practice qualitative phenomenology research does indeed prescribe the category of experience under investigation, but having done so, leaves it to the subject to decide on his/her exposition of the phenomenon, unfettered by any superimposed directions.

This was necessitated in order to have some sort of structure in which to evaluate the participants' experience. Categories of experience were prescribed to a certain extent, in this study, by the questions formulated in the Evaluation Questionnaire.

In this research the participants' experience, during the course, was under consideration as they were exposed to a new way of looking at their personal experiences of stress. The researcher also attempted to obtain quantitative data to see if this in any way aided her understanding of what took place during the course.

To this end she administered assertiveness and stress questionnaires to the participant group before the course and again at the completion of the course to see whether any changes occurred. The questionnaires were administered to a non-participant control group at the same times.

3.2 THE SAMPLE

3.2.1 Selection

As the aim of this research is to construct, implement and evaluate a Transactional Analysis Stress Management Course which could be used as part of the school guidance programme, scholars will form the sample. Initially the researcher felt that standard ten pupils should form the sample as the expectation is that stress is experienced by many matriculation scholars. However, as the researcher was not teaching in a school at the time, scholars were not readily available to her during school hours. A reliance, therefore, had to be made on others in finding a suitable group with whom to work.

Professor Dovey, of Rhodes University: East London, gave the researcher access to his standard ten LEAD group which forms part of an ISIDA programme. (An explanation of this programme is given in Appendix A). Permission was granted for the research to be conducted with these scholars, if they voluntarily agreed to be part of this study. After explaining the research project to the standard ten LEAD group, the

majority felt that they could not commit themselves to eight one-hour sessions which would take place at weekly intervals in the afternoons.

In consultation with Professor Dovey it was decided to approach the standard eight LEAD group, and it was emphasised again that there could be no compulsion in trying to get the scholars to form part of the research group and that the scholars would have to volunteer for the course. For this reason a convenience sample rather than a random sample was obtained. The researcher intended to implement the course with whomever volunteered. The group was briefly told what the course would be about, how long it would take and what the time commitment would be.

3.2.2 Nature

The standard eight LEAD group consisted of eighteen scholars who attended high schools in East London and Mdantsane. The group consisted of boys and girls who did not belong to the same racial group. These scholars had all been identified as having the potential for leadership, education, advancement and development (LEAD), and were part of a programme that was held out of school hours and meetings took place regularly at Rhodes University, East London. Therefore an expectation could be made that these scholars would cope successfully with the stressors in their daily lives.

However a study by Hurrelman, (1984: 181) showed that, "mental and social symptoms of stress...are also increasingly appearing in students who seem to excel at the demands of the organised school activity and who are acknowledged by their teachers as having good intellectual and social competence".

Eleven scholars volunteered to be part of the course. These volunteers were then named as the participants. This group initially consisted of four black, four white, and three "coloured" scholars. No Indian scholars volunteered and thus were not represented in this research group. The volunteers were asked to sign contracts committing them to attend all the eight sessions of the course. Racial classifications are mentioned because they are a factor in this study in that differing school systems led to different responses in the scholars who were part of the researcher's experiential course.

Before the first session one scholar withdrew because of sports commitments. At the first meeting of the research group two of the black scholars who had volunteered did not come but two other black scholars who had not originally volunteered came and said they wished to be part of the research group. The research project was explained again and the two new participants signed contracts. The group then consisted of four black, three white and three "coloured" scholars. All the scholars were given false names so that they cannot be identified. Mulu attended the first session and then missed sessions two and three but was present for the remainder of the

course. Mdena attended the first five sessions and then never returned to the course. All the other participants except Cara and Ewan missed one session each. The final group consisted of four girls and five boys and it was hoped that it would be possible to ascertain whether any gender differences emerged in the handling of daily stressors. Also each racial group present, had the same number of representatives. These participants completed the course. In summary: This study was done on a very specific population. All the scholars were in standard eight and were part of an elite group who had been chosen because of their intellectual, leadership and motivational potentials. The non-participant group also came from this specific population but consisted of those not attending the course.

The tabulation indicating the gender and race of each participant is presented. (Table 1)

Table 1

| Participant | Gender | Race |
|-------------|--------|------------|
| 1. Cara | Female | White |
| 2. Xata | Female | Black |
| 3. Gill | Female | "Coloured" |
| 4. Sheila | Female | "Coloured" |
| 5. Syba | Male | Black |
| 6. Steve | Male | White |
| 7. Ewan | Male | "Coloured" |
| 8. Brad | Male | White |
| 9. Mulu | Male | Black |

3.3 CONSTRUCTION OF COURSE

With the aid of a clinical psychologist, who is a specialist in Transactional Analysis, the researcher constructed a course consisting of eight one-hour sessions. Each session formed an individual unit, but each unit built on the knowledge and experience of the previous units. (If a participant missed a

session the understanding of the subsequent unit would be adversely affected).

The first unit introduced the participant group to the concept of stress. Each subsequent unit linked a concept in Transactional Analysis with the participants' experience of stress.

The units were titled as follows:

1. **INTRODUCTION:** to the concept of stress.
2. **THE EGO STATES:** Parent, Adult and Child.
3. **TRANSACTIONS:** Interactions with other people.
4. **I'M OK, YOU'RE OK:** Acceptance of personal worth and that of others.
5. **STROKES:** Transactions that make a person feel worthwhile.
6. **GAMES:** Transactions which are crooked lead to negative feelings.
7. **SCRIPTS:** Blueprints for living.
8. **AUTONOMY:** Being assertive and taking personal responsibility for the choices that are made.

An example of each unit is presented in Appendix B.

3.4 IMPLEMENTATION

At the first meeting, the nature of the course was explained to the group and a contract of commitment was agreed upon and signed by the scholars who volunteered to participate. Each participant was asked to keep a 'stress diary' and note what or who stressed them and when this took place. Bodily and emotional responses to these stressors were also to be noted. Each participant was given an exercise book for his/her notations and a file in which to keep the worksheets and exercise forms that would be filled in throughout the course. This information would need to be available for analysis at the end of the course. Furthermore, at the beginning of the course and at its completion both the participants and the non-participants filled in assertiveness and stress questionnaires. (An example of each questionnaire is presented in Appendix C). These questionnaires were administered in order to provide quantitative data for comparison with the qualitative analysis.

Each participant filled in an evaluation form at the completion of the course which contained both closed and open ended questions which gave the participants the opportunity to express their own thoughts and feelings about the course. (An example of the evaluation form is presented in Appendix D).

Each unit consisted of an introduction in the form of visual aids, audio recordings, video recordings, role-plays, practical demonstrations and readings. The concept for that unit was

explained by the researcher and then discussed either in small groups consisting of two or three scholars or in a large group consisting of all the participants and the researcher. The unit was re-enforced with written exercises and worksheets (Joneward and James, 1973).

A factor that the researcher had not taken into account was that the representatives of the racial groups would respond differently during the course because they had come from different school systems. It appeared that black scholars are expected to be more passive at school and accept that the teacher, who is 'in authority' and 'an authority', must be listened to without question or comment. The black scholars in the participant group conformed to this stereotype and appeared to be more passive than the other scholars, always waiting for a direct question before saying anything. The researcher had expected a lot more discussion and comment which did not spontaneously occur.

The fact that only two participants attended every session of the course was a problem because each unit built on the information and experience gained during the previous session. At the beginning of each session the researcher was thus obliged to give the group a resumé of the previous unit. Obviously this was not the same as having experienced the presentation of the unit in the prepared session. The precise content could not be the same and therefore the participant who had missed the previous unit had difficulty in understanding

the content of the current unit.

Two 'crises' arose during the programme. The first occurred during the fourth session. Mulu arrived after missing the two previous sessions. The researcher felt that he should no longer be a participant in the course, because he had missed too much vital material. This proposition was put to the group who felt that he should be allowed to continue. If the researcher had insisted on him leaving the group, the rapport with the group could have been adversely affected. (However the fact that he had missed so much information and course experience emerged in later sessions and in the evaluations when he indicated in his responses that he didn't understand all of the basic concepts and terminology of the Transactional Analysis Stress Management Course).

The second 'crisis' arose at the sixth session when only five out of the ten participants arrived. The previous week's meeting had not taken place because the day had been a public holiday. The planned continuity of the course was in jeopardy. The unit could not be presented because half of the group was not present and the role-play that the researcher had planned to introduce 'games' involved one of the participants who was not present.

Mdena did not come to this session and never returned to the group. The director of the LEAD group felt that the participants had let the researcher down while the research was in progress and he confronted the recalcitrant members of the

group. Unfortunately, this intervention appeared to affect the rapport the researcher had established with the participants.

Another problem that arose on that particular day was that the venue that the group usually used had been allocated to another group and the researcher had to use the staffroom. This was also disruptive as people were coming in and going out of the room during the session.

3.5 THE RESEARCH METHOD

Although the natural scientific method has a positivistic emphasis on quantification and therefore is more amenable to statistical analysis, it is not always appropriate when conducting research with people. The researcher did not think it would be appropriate for this research study because it would have reduced the dimensions of the participants' experiences during the course into rigid, prespecified categories. However, it must be borne in mind that in all research it is virtually impossible to pose a completely neutral question and the formulation of any question does imply a certain frame of reference. The aim of this study was to focus on the subjective experiences of this group of adolescent scholars as they participated in the Transactional Analysis Stress Management Course. Personal experiences of stress are essentially described in qualitative terms. The methodological tool needed to be in harmony with the nature of the phenomenon,

as the researcher was investigating whether the course was effective in reducing the participants' experiences of stress, and of increasing their personal understanding of stress, as a result of participating in the Transactional Analysis Stress Management Course.

The researcher aimed to teach the life-skills of Transactional Analysis to the participant group of adolescents as a means of helping them manage their personal experiences of stress as they became more aware of their own responses in their interactions with other people. Therefore the qualitative methodological approach which was thought to be the most appropriate to this study, was that of Existential Phenomenology. The course was based on phenomenological principles emphasizing the importance of "understanding and explicating the experience of being human" (Euvrard, 1987: 13).

As stated previously, although this research was of a qualitative nature, the researcher also attempted as a secondary measure to try and obtain a certain amount of quantitative data to see if this would confirm the qualitative findings and to determine whether any changes in the participants' stress levels and assertiveness scores could be attributed to the Transactional Analysis Stress Management Course. The assertiveness questionnaire was taken from 'Coping with Stress' (Burns, 1988: 172-173) in which the author stated that "passive acceptance of negative conditions is not a solution of large environmental stressors over which we seem

to have no control" (Burns, 1988: xi). Therefore the more assertive a person is the less stress he/she is expected to experience.

The stress questionnaire was administered to both participants and non-participants at the same time as the assertiveness scale to determine each scholar's stress levels and to monitor any changes which might have occurred by the end of the course. To this end the researcher constructed a stress scale.

The detailed evaluation questionnaire, filled in by the participants, at the completion of the course formed the basis for the researcher's qualitative analysis. The participants were able to express their personal thoughts, feelings and opinions about their stress and the effectiveness of the course. However, it must be re-iterated that in all research it is virtually impossible to pose a completely neutral question and therefore the form of the question does imply a certain frame of reference which may influence the answers given.

3.6 ANALYSIS OF DATA.

The data obtained was to be so collated and analysed as to contribute to the aim of this study.

The analysis of the course was to be made by the researcher

...essentially involving intuition, reflection and description. This means that one first concentrates on what is given or being experienced and secondly asks more specific questions about the phenomenon. In this way the researcher can deal with a more complete phenomenon, selecting those aspects of it that he wishes to see or manipulate, by defining the phenomenon in terms of his manipulation.

(Giorgi, 1971: 10)

This study aims to explicate the Transactional Analysis Stress Management Course, constructed by the researcher, as it is experienced by the group of nine standard eight participants. The researcher will use observation on her part, and subjective evaluations by the participants as qualitative data. The explication "of qualitative data presents a problem, because it cannot make readily accessible the kind of 'proof' that can be summarized by natural scientific researchers in neat statistical tables" (Stones, 1982: 66).

Each question, in the evaluation questionnaires, was looked at in terms of all the scholars' answers to it. The results are given, in a clear tabular form, followed by a discussion of each question. These were also to be considered in the light of the participants' diaries and the researcher's observations.

The assertiveness and stress questionnaires were used to explicate the quantitative data to try and ascertain whether this would yield results that could confirm the qualitative data.

CHAPTER 4**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION****4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The qualitative results are discussed first followed by the quantitative results. There is clear evidence that better stress management and personal growth did occur in the participants as a result of being part of the Transactional Analysis Stress Management Course.

4.2 QUALITATIVE RESULTS

The qualitative results are discussed under the questions which the participants were asked in the evaluation questionnaires and which they filled in at the completion of the course. The stress diaries are not used directly in the results because none of the participants maintained their notations throughout the course. Also any relevant information from them emerges in the evaluation questionnaires.

4.2.1 Did you get what you expected? (Table 2)

Table 2

| Participant | Response | Explanation/Description |
|-------------|----------|---|
| 1. Cara | No | When I arrived I thought it would be a waste of time. |
| 2. Xata | No | I thought we are going to do some school work. |
| 3. Gill | No | I was surprised because it was something new I learned. |
| 4. Sheila | No | I thought it was going to be very difficult and I thought it was going to be boring. |
| 5. Syba | No | I could not guess what the course would be about. I had taken this course as just an opportunity of gaining some facts about life. |
| 6. Steve | No | I thought it was going to be a course about how to handle stress, meditation etc. |
| 7. Brad | Yes | I found that the course did tackle all aspects of stress. However I found some of the sessions not as as beneficial as others. |
| 8. Ewan | No | I really did not expect such a good course. I gained quite a lot of knowledge. I think you were well prepared and I enjoyed working with you. |
| 9. Mulu | Yes | Teaches me how to be in the future and a lot about the future |

The seven participants who answered "no" had a low expectation of the course and expected it to be dull and boring. Brad said he did get what he expected although he felt that some sessions had not benefited him as much as others. As most participants were expecting a boring course, why did they elect to be part of a voluntary stress management course which would take place out of school hours? It is conceivable that the control group who elected not to be part of the course did not have the time available to commit themselves to eight one-hour sessions at weekly intervals because of school and sports activities. The research group may have been more motivated than the others to make full use of all the opportunities that were offered to them as members of a LEAD group.

4.2.2 Did you understand the information presented?
(Table 3)

Table 3

| Participant | Response | Explanation/Description |
|-------------|----------|--|
| 1. Cara | Yes | There were some things which I didn't understand but later on in the course I understood them |
| 2. Xata | Yes | I do understand the information presented because I was really listening. |
| 3. Gill | Yes | Because of the visual aids and transparencies everything became much clearer. |
| 4. Sheila | Yes | It was not complicated. The information was very interesting and made me think. |
| 5. Syba | Yes | I understood the information as I was always in a period of comparing myself...and to also recognise some of the things I didn't know. |
| 6. Steve | Yes | Some of the terms were hard to understand. Some of the worksheets were hard to do, otherwise I understood most of the information. |
| 7. Ewan | Yes | I understood all information presented. I was only a little bit doubtful about transactions. |
| 8. Brad | Yes | All the information was clearly presented and this was very easy to understand. |
| 9. Mulu | Yes | It makes me to know about things. |

This question was not well phrased because it didn't render any more useful information other than the fact that the participants had understood the content of the course. The question was possibly phrased to give an all-or-nothing answer. It could rather have been structured as, "How much of the information given did you understand?"

4.2.3 Was it appropriate to discuss the subject in this group? (Table 4)

Table 4

| Participant | Response | Explanation/Description |
|-------------|----------|---|
| 1. Cara | Yes | It is important to realize these things which cause stress and it important to know how to handle it. |
| 2. Xata | Yes | (No explanation given). |
| 3. Gill | Yes | Because everything we learn is just like life is. |
| 4. Sheila | Yes | Everyone had something to say, contributions in the group made the subject interesting. |
| 5. Syba | Yes | Because by discussing the subject with the group has been an additional way. |
| 6. Steve | Yes | All of us are going through stress (exams, school work) and this course told us a little more about what is bothering us. |
| 7. Ewan | Yes | We were a very free group, nobody was shy. Everyone was incorporating with each other. |
| 8. Brad | Yes | Stress is found everywhere even on holiday. Everyone experiences stress. Therefore it was appropriate. |
| 9. Mulu | Yes | All the time everything was discussed and we also ask things that we don't know. |

This question was also not clearly formulated because five participants referred to the discussions that were held during the course. Only four participants referred to the stress they experienced in their daily lives. Only the English First Language participants understood the question. The question could have been phrased as, "Was it appropriate to discuss the subject of stress in this group?" This would have enabled the participants to realise that the question was not referring to discussions which had taken place during the sessions but to the importance of learning about stress management during adolescence.

4.2.4 Did you learn something new? (Table 5)

Table 5

| Participant | Response | Explanation/Description |
|-------------|----------|---|
| 1. Cara | Yes | I definitely learned a lot of new things. I have begun to realise the things, and what other people do to cause stress. |
| 2. Xata | Yes | Because I didn't know what to do when somebody was playing games with me but now...I do know. |
| 3. Gill | Yes | Definitely. A lot of sessions had something interesting and I personally learned a lot. |
| 4. Sheila | Yes | I learned that I cause my own stress and I should not blame others. |
| 5. Syba | Yes | I learned a lot. I also discovered that there is still more to come and I'm happy that it's started at this stage of my life. |
| 6. Steve | Yes | Most of the terms used such as the ego states, autonomy and transactions were new to me. |
| 7. Ewan | Yes | I learned a lot: a little history of stress, the symptoms of stress, how to cope with stress, being myself and not some-one else. |
| 8. Brad | Yes | I definitely became more aware of the different ways in which people create stress. |
| 9. Mulu | Yes | How to behave in the future and to handle problems in the future. |

A common theme in these responses was that the participants had developed new insights into their stress. In particular they had learned about their personal responsibility in coping with their stress reactions. It was interesting to note that the English Second Language scholars gave answers which in fact answered the previous question in the affirmative as well as the present question.

4.2.5 Is the course relevant at this stage of your life?
(Table 6)

Table 6

| Participant | Response | Explanation/Description |
|-------------|----------|--|
| 1. Cara | Yes | At the moment I am going through a very stressful period with my parents and my friends and having this knowledge has made me aware of what is happening. |
| 2. Xata | Yes | But now I can tell them much more than they told me because I learn more about what they know. |
| 3. Gill | Yes | The sooner you learn about stress the better. It makes us more prepared for what we are still going to be facing. |
| 4. Sheila | Yes | I am always confronted with difficult situations which cause me to have stress and with this course I am able to face problems and people now and in the future. |
| 5. Syba | Yes | It is relevant because this is the right time for me to gain experience at an early age. My experience will be more developed at this time. |
| 6. Steve | Yes | With school and sport and families, I am getting quite stressed sometimes. Now I know more about the topic, I can cope better. |
| 7. Ewan | Yes | Every piece and bit was relevant in my life except for games because I don't enjoy playing games. |

Table 6 continued:

| | | |
|---------|-----|--|
| 8. Brad | Yes | It is relevant as people experience stress at all ages, however I feel it is most relevant to teenagers as most are rebellious and undecided about life. |
| 9. Mulu | Yes | It is 100% relevant to my life and everything that happened are the things that we learn. |

The participants felt that the course was relevant at this stage of their lives as they had to deal with stress in their daily activities and in their interactions with other people. Some of the participants also felt that it would help to prepare them for the future if they learned about stress management because "it is relevant as people experience stress at all ages, however I feel it is most relevant to teenagers as most are rebellious and undecided about life" (Brad). This question was designed to provide a check for the answers given in question three. Question five in fact gave information which did not emerge from question three because of the latter's unclear language.

4.2.6 Can you use it in your life? (Table 7)

Table 7

| Participant | Response | Explanation |
|-------------|----------|--|
| 1. Cara | Yes | Definitely! I know how people play games and I can avoid them. When I want to go out and the adult in me says "No," I am aware of it. |
| 2. Xata | Yes | I see it because I know that there are ego states in life. There are also strokes, games that are played and also autonomy in my own life. |
| 3. Gill | Yes | Next time something happens that feels like stress you can just think back and then you can deal with any problem. |
| 4. Sheila | Yes | Life is full of ups and downs and in the course I constantly learned...which I apply in my everyday life. |
| 5. Syba | Yes | I can use it as it is relevant and effective. Also proving it by applying it. |
| 6. Steve | Yes | It will always be able to help me cope and make me more aware now and later in life. |
| 7. Ewan | Yes | I can, especially in the situation that I am in. |
| 8. Brad | Yes | It is relevant in my life as I am more aware of the way in which people play games and what I must do in this case. |
| 9. Mulu | Yes | To teach or to tell others about life. |

The participants felt that they could use the information presented in the course by applying the principles of Transactional Analysis to the stresses in their lives. The group indicated that after being part of the course they had not only become more aware of their personal experiences of stress, but had a better understanding of other people's behaviour towards them.

- 4.2.7 Which of the following methods helped you to understand the information presented?**
(Presentation; General discussions; Small group discussions; Worksheets; Transparencies; Other visual aids; Role plays and Other) (Table 8)

Table 8

| Method | Participants | Number |
|-------------------------|--|--------|
| Presentation | Cara, Xata, Gill, Syba, Ewan, Brad. | Six |
| General discussions | Cara, Xata, Sheila, Steve, Ewan, Brad, Mulu. | Seven |
| Small group discussions | Gill. | One |
| Worksheets | Cara, Xata, Gill, Ewan, Steve, Syba, Mulu. | Seven |
| Transparencies | Xata, Steve, Ewan. | Three |
| Other visual aids | Cara, Xata, Gill, Steve. | Four |
| Role-plays | Syba. | One |
| Other | | None |

The researcher concluded that small group discussions and role-plays were the least effective means of helping the participants to understand the information. However it is important to note that a role-play was used in only one session and here it was not successfully executed by those involved. Small group discussions were abandoned by the researcher during the third session because the pupils expressed their preference for discussing each concept as part of the whole group.

General discussions and the completing of worksheets appeared to be the most effective methods of helping the participants understand the information. The researcher's presentation of each concept at the beginning of every session was also effective in aiding understanding.

4.2.8 Which unit helped you the most?
(Introduction; Ego states; Transactions;
I'm OK, you're OK; Strokes; Games; Scripts and
Autonomy). (Table 9)

Table 9

| Participant | Unit | Explanation/Description |
|-------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. Cara | Games Strokes | I have a friend who always "blemishes" me. |
| 2. Xata | Strokes | At home they usually gave me negative strokes but...now they give me "warm fuzzies" when I do something good. |
| 3. Gill | I'm OK, You're OK | I learned...most importantly that it's not wrong to think that you are OK. |
| 4. Sheila | I'm OK, You're OK | If I feel OK with myself then to heck with them. |
| 5. Syba | Autonomy | I can now perceive the facts of life and understand its important uses. |
| 6. Steven | Games Trans- actions | I know now to stay away from playing games. I know about ulterior messages given by people. |
| 7. Ewan | Scripts I'm OK, You're OK | I live according to my "blueprint". I always listen to the goods and bads of my sisters and mother. I always thought that I am "not OK" as being so-called "sick" (my lifestyle). |
| 8. Brad | Games | It was interesting to see the different games that people do play. I know now when a person tries to play a game with me. |

Table 9 continued:

| | | |
|---------|---------|--|
| 9. Mulu | Strokes | Because it help me to know about things that you must not say to others or wrong things that will lead someone to be hurt. |
|---------|---------|--|

Games, Strokes and I'm OK, You're OK were chosen equally as the sessions which had helped the most. The session chosen by each participant as the one which had helped him/her the most, seemed to be the one which was the most relevant to that person's needs at that particular time during the course when insight was developed into personal and other people's behaviour. It was an "aha" type of experience.

This result was not surprising because the course did not consist of self-contained units. Each session built on the knowledge gained at the previous session and self-growth appeared to have taken place in the participants throughout this experiential Stress Management Course.

4.2.9 Which of the following Transactional Analysis positions causes you to become the most stressed? Ego states; Transactions; I'm OK, you're OK; Strokes; Games; Scripts and Autonomy. (Table 10)

Table 10

| Position | Participants | Explanation/Description |
|----------------------|--------------|--|
| Ego States | Steve | I am too much of a "natural child". At home I mess around. At school I also play around a lot. |
| Transactions | Xata | Somebody in my classroom make a crossed transaction with my classmate so I didn't like that because they were just laughing at her. |
| I'm OK, You're OK | Cara | I feel not "OK" and it causes me stress when I look back three years ago and look at what I used to achieve. Sometimes I get really depressed. |
| | Gill | I usually think I am not "OK". I...think I'm ugly, but if some-one compliments me on my clothes etc, I would feel better. |
| | Mulu | When somebody say I'm not all right and when somebody say I'm eating like a pig... |
| Strokes | Sheila | When I do bad I do not get "warm fuzzies" and when I do good I do not get "warm fuzzies", always "cold pricklies". Recently I have just ignored them (my family) and I do not bother about not getting enough good strokes because I have tried. |

Table 10 continued:

| | | |
|----------|--------|---|
| Games | Syba | I play a lot of games when speaking to people, either my friends or parents, and I don't be honest. Whenever I talk plainly without playing games, I sometimes get negative replies from people and that is what makes me to play a lot of games. |
| | Brad | My brother and I are forever playing games. Sometimes it results in either him or me feeling upset. |
| Scripts | Ewan | My mother is trying to force me into a relationship with a girl. She say it is important to date a well mannered girl who comes out of a very good home. She always say I must marry and have a family at the age of thirty. |
| Autonomy | Nobody | None. |

A third of the participants became the most stressed when their feelings of "OKness" were threatened. The two participants who identified the playing of Games as the source of most of their stress, discovered that this was a very strong influence in their lives. Each of the Transactional Analysis positions, except for Autonomy, had meaning for at least one of the participants as the source of most of their stress.

Autonomy was a difficult concept for the group to understand. The participants, who were in standard eight at the time the research was conducted, appeared not to have fully understood what it meant to be an autonomous person. Autonomy is the end point of the growth and development that is expected to take place in a person as a result of being part of a Transactional Analysis Stress Management Course. The participants did not appear to be aware of the fact that they were becoming more autonomous people.

However the explanations and descriptions that they gave did in fact indicate that the new insights that they were developing about themselves and their interactions were leading them to behave and make decisions as more autonomous people who would be able to take responsibility for their own lives and the choices they would be required to make.

4.2.10 What activities, events or interactions with people seem to keep coming up as stressors? (Table 11)

Table 11

| Stressors | No. of participants | Example |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---|
| Parents family | Eight | My mother says I have an attitude problem (Cara). |
| School exams teachers | Seven | I get worked up before a test (Sheila). |
| Friends | Five | Friends want me to be like them and I'm not able to please them (Gill). |
| Sport | Two | No explanations given. |
| Lifestyle | One | No explanation given. |

It is interesting to note that the family (mainly parents) and school were the main stressors to this group of adolescents. Most of the group seemed to find their interactions with other people rather than events were their main stressors. The boys in the group listed their stressors as examinations, school and parents while the girls ordered them as family (mainly parents), friends and school. Introducing adolescents to the life-skills of Transactional Analysis as a strategy of coping with the stress, which involves interactions with people, would appear to be supported by the answers to this question.

4.2.11 How do you usually feel when this stressor comes up? How does your body react? (Table 12)

Table 12

| Participant | Feeling | Bodily reaction |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Cara | Sorry for myself. | Often cry and eat. |
| 2. Xata | Bad and angry. | Sweat, go to the toilet every moment. |
| 3. Gill | Lonely and empty. | Uncomfortable. |
| 4. Sheila | Nervous and tense. | Tension builds up inside me. |
| 5. Syba | Sad, worried and annoyed. | Tired, want to rest. |
| 6. Steve | Tense and depressed. | All tense. |
| 7. Ewan | Can't concentrate. | In a lame state. |
| 8. Brad | Irritated and then, I get angry. | Horribly worked up. |
| 9. Mulu | Lonely. | Exhausted. |

All nine participants expressed negative feelings. Eight participants concentrated their feelings on themselves with emotions such as "bad", "depressed" and "worried" being expressed by them. Only one participant appeared to turn his feelings outwards in saying, "They usually make me horribly worked up and irritated. Thus resulting in me getting angry" (Brad). However the over-riding theme was that most of this group reacted to stressors in a negative way by having "bad" feelings which could inhibit the overcoming of the stress they were experiencing.

Six participants expressed tense bodily reactions to stressors while three wrote about their tiredness. These different reactions may indicate different personality types, where one type of person gets anxious when stressed and in a similar situation another slows down and gets depressed. Selye claims that there is always a physiological reaction to stress and that there is "the non-specific response of the body to any demands" (Selye, 1976: 1).

4.2.12 What do you usually do when confronted with your most common stressor? (Table 13)

Table 13

| Participant | What he/she does. |
|-------------|---|
| 1. Cara | I like to be alone and think about it. I don't let it show. I don't break down. |
| 2. Xata | I don't know what to do. |
| 3. Gill | I usually eat or watch a comedy on video. |
| 4. Sheila | Nothing when it comes to family, listen to friends and cope with school. |
| 5. Syba | I try to calm down and I isolate myself and analyze myself and make a decision. |
| 6. Steve | I used to carry on doing all my normal day-to-day activities. |
| 7. Ewan | I eat. I sleep a lot or listen to very soft music or read the Bible. |
| 8. Brad | Give an irritating comment or ignore them. |
| 9. Mulu | I'm always confident. |

Six participants said they usually withdrew from their stressors for a time, while two participants would react to the stressors. One participant didn't know what to do. Most of the participants said that they found their interactions with people to be their greatest stressors. Before the course, eight out of the nine participants did not confront the people causing them stress but manifested some form of passive or diverting behaviour such as eating, sleeping or wanting to be alone.

4.2.13 What changes in response to your stressors have you noticed since being part of this course? (Table 14)

Table 14

| Participant | Change | Comment |
|-------------|----------|---|
| 1. Cara | Positive | Realize when I play games, give strokes etc. |
| 2. Xata | | They usually have a positive attitude towards me. |
| 3. Gill | Positive | Take life easier than I did before. |
| 4. Sheila | Positive | Refuse to overwork myself to others' expectations. I always feel OK. Nobody can change me into a "not OK" person. I also know that I am responsible for my own actions and ignore people who try to play games. |
| 5. Syba | Positive | Being calm and thinking deeply and control myself. I also try to listen to what my body needs and also when I am annoyed to just keep quiet. I also have a way of reasoning and asking myself questions. |
| 6. Steve | Positive | Now I am more relaxed and take things a little bit more slowly. Exams - I used to get strung up and tense. I also take more time to plan now instead of getting into a rush. |

Table 14 continued:

| | | |
|---------|----------|---|
| 7. Ewan | Positive | I learned to control my tongue and emotions. I learned to prevent ill feelings. I wasn't shy anymore. During exams I'm not moody with my friends anymore and also I don't mind telling them I have studied, and I wasn't shy anymore. |
| 8. Brad | Positive | Became aware of stress and stressors. Still become worked up and frustrated. However I am going to work at ignoring my stressors and relaxing more. |
| 9. Mulu | | If they don't like something they just come to me in order to discuss it. |

It appeared that Xata and Mulu, who are both English Second Language pupils, did not understand the question. They interpreted the question as if they expected a change to occur in their stressors and not in themselves. In improving this questionnaire, words that may be unfamiliar to the participants, such as 'stressor', could be defined at the beginning of the questionnaire so that they could be referred to if necessary. The rest of the group said that they had experienced positive changes in their responses to their stressors since being part of this course. The participants expressed that they had developed more understanding of themselves and their behaviour which gave them more control over their lives. As Gill said, she can now "take life easier than she did before."

4.2.14 Your own comments. (Table 15)

Table 15

| Participant | Comment |
|-------------|---|
| 1. Cara | I loved this course. I would love to carry on with this. Thank you for a wonderful time. |
| 2. Xata | This course was very good to me. My friends on the course were good to me no matter I am not their colour. I will never forget...I learn more things about life and myself. |
| 3. Gill | I think this course was great because I learned lot about life. |
| 4. Sheila | Basically the course was very good, better than I expected. It was a pleasure attending it. |
| 5. Syba | I have benefited a lot from the course and it's also relevant as I am gaining experience at an early stage. |
| 6. Steve | I think this course was quite beneficial to me and I don't regret going for it. The terminology was nearly all new and stress became a bigger subject. |
| 7. Ewan | The whole course was great. I am glad I came. It encouraged me a lot. It gave me a lot of power and strength to face reality. I removed my false appearance. I developed to be quite honest and reasonable with myself. I also learnt to have fun breaks. |
| 8. Brad | This is a beneficial course and also very interesting. I have seen how different people react in different ways to the build up of stress. |
| 9. Mulu | It really help me to underline myself and to know about life. |

This section was included in order to give the participants an opportunity to express any comments that may not have been covered by the researcher's questions. All nine participants commented that they had learned a lot from the course and had benefited from being part of it. It appeared that the participants had not only learned about stress management but had also gained knowledge about themselves and their interactions with other people. An unexpected theme was that many of the participants had enjoyed being part of the research group and wished to carry on learning about stress management.

4.2.15 Comments: Qualitative Results

An analysis of the qualitative data indicated that the Transactional Analysis Course had been successful, as a strategy of stress management, in terms of a phenomenological interpretation. The comments from all the participants were very positive and they indicated that their awareness and manner of coping with the stressors in their lives had changed as a result of being part of the course.

4.3 QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

4.3.1 Assertiveness Scale

4.3.1.1 Analysis of participants' results

The assertiveness questionnaire with its scoring scale is presented in Appendix C. The tabulation of scores for the participant group is as follows: two scores are given for each person, the before-course test score, and the after-course test score. The difference between the two scores is calculated in order to ascertain whether the participants had an increase or decrease in their assertiveness scores and to see what level of assertiveness was occurring. The level of assertiveness was interpreted by the researcher. The assertiveness scores for the participants are presented first. (Table 16)

Table 16

| Participant | Before | After | Assertiveness | Level of Assertiveness |
|-------------|--------|-------|---------------|------------------------|
| 1. Cara | +21 | +43 | Increase | Very high |
| 2. Xata | -3 | -16 | Decrease | Low |
| 3. Gill | -12 | -42 | Decrease | Very low |
| 4. Sheila | +12 | +6 | Decrease | Average |
| 5. Syba | -19 | +1 | Increase | Average |
| 6. Steve | +37 | +34 | Constant | Very high |
| 7. Ewan | -13 | -18 | Constant | Low |
| 8. Brad | +26 | +32 | Increase | Very high |
| 9. Mulu | +7 | -8 | Decrease | Low |

According to Burn's marking scale, scores can vary from -90 to +90, but the scores on the sample population varied from -41 to +65 for university men and -48 to +55 for university women. The degree of assertiveness is the researcher's interpretation based on Burns' scoring table (1988: 173)]. Three of the participants (1,5,8) had an increase in their assertiveness scores. Four participants (2,3,4,9) had a decrease in their assertiveness scores and two participants (6,7) had scores which remained constant. Three participants (1,6,8) had very high assertiveness scores, while two had high scores (4,5). Only one participant (3) had a very low score and three (2,7,9) had low assertiveness scores. The three participants who had

very high assertiveness scores retained this level of assertiveness before and after the course and all attended English medium schools where assertive behaviour appears to be more acceptable than at schools where Afrikaans or Xhosa is the mother-tongue.

This assumption was supported by a change in school for one participant, while the course was in progress, from a Xhosa mother-tongue school to an English medium school. This assertiveness score showed an increase of twenty points.

Although the literature draws an association between high assertiveness and low stress levels it appears in this research study that this was not relevant, either because the assertiveness scale was not here a good measure of assertiveness or because high assertiveness cannot always be correlated with low stress levels.

4.3.1.2 Analysis of non-participants' results

The tabulation for the non-participants follows the same format as the participants' data. (Table 17)

Table 17

| Non-participant | Before | After | Assertiveness | Level of Assertiveness |
|-----------------|--------|-------|---------------|------------------------|
| 10. Loya | +11 | +25 | Increase | High |
| 11. Craig | -6 | -14 | Decrease | Low |
| 12. Nomsa | +2 | +4 | Constant | Average |
| 13. Vula | -15 | -17 | Constant | Low |
| 14. Lata | -1 | +10 | Increase | Average |
| 15. Mada | +6 | -1 | Constant | Low |
| 16. Jama | -30 | -39 | Constant | Very low |
| 17. Heta | -46 | -23 | Increase | Very low |
| 18. Cheryl | +17 | +20 | Constant | High |

Five of the non-participants (12,13,15,16,18) showed no change in their assertiveness scores, while three (10,14,17) showed an increase, although one's score (17) on the second testing would still be seen as a score very low in assertiveness. Only one non-participant (11) showed a decrease in his assertiveness score. All the non-participants except (17) had very little change in their assertiveness scores.

4.3.1.3 Comments: The Assertiveness Questionnaire

In analysing the results of this assertiveness questionnaire it appears that more participants than non-participants underwent changes in their assertiveness scores although the changes were not all in a positive direction. These results were not conclusive because this particular assertiveness test was difficult to score and proved to be inadequate as a research tool.

4.3.2 Stress Questionnaire

4.3.2.1 Analysis of the participants' stress scores. (Table 18)

Table 18

| Participant | Before | After | Difference in scores |
|-------------|--------|-------|----------------------|
| 1. Cara | 31 | 67 | +36 |
| 2. Xata | 25 | 36 | +11 |
| 3. Gill | 12 | 21 | +9 |
| 4. Sheila | 30 | | |
| 5. Syba | 33 | 39 | +6 |
| 6. Steve | 16 | 16 | Constant |
| 7. Ewan | 34 | 45 | +11 |
| 8. Brad | 21 | 23 | +2 |
| 9. Mulu | 56 | 56 | Constant |

The highest score that could be achieved was 114 points. Two participants (6, 9) had stress scores which remained constant. Five scores went up by 11 points or less (2, 3, 5, 7, 8). One score (4) could not be calculated because the participant failed to complete the second questionnaire. One score (1) rose by 36 points. However none of the participants could be considered to be very stressed in terms of this test. No participants showed a reduction in their stress levels on this test. It would seem that this instrument is only sensitive to changes in those testees who are experiencing high levels of stress and is not able to measure every day stress levels.

4.3.2.2 Analysis of the non-participants' stress scores

The non-participant group's scores are tabulated in the same way as the participants. (Table 19)

Table 19

| Participant | Before | After | Difference in scores |
|-------------|--------|-------|----------------------|
| 10. Loya | 32 | 31 | -1 |
| 11. Craig | 14 | 20 | +6 |
| 12. Nomsa | 21 | 19 | -2 |
| 13. Vula | 21 | 16 | +5 |
| 14. Lata | 48 | 26 | -22 |
| 15. Mada | 34 | 26 | -8 |
| 16. Jama | 4 | 22 | +18 |
| 17. Heta | 31 | 40 | +9 |
| 18. Cheryl | 13 | 14 | +1 |

Seven of the non-participants (10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18) had changes in their two stress level scores of ten points or less. Two non-participants (14,16) had changes of 18 and 22 points respectively with (14) in an upwards direction and (16) in a downwards direction. All the non-participants had scores which could not be considered to indicate very high stress levels. There were no changes worthy of further comment in these scores.

4.3.2.3 Comments: The Stress Questionnaire

There is no difference in the scores for the participant group and the scores for the non-participant control group on the stress test that the researcher used. In retrospect, it seemed that this test did not in fact measure the stress adolescents experience in their daily lives but instead appeared to be a measurement of stress "burn-out" (Selye's Stage of Exhaustion). Items such as, "I get depressed, my hands and fingers tremble and I am tired most of the time," which are taken from the scale, would be more appropriate in measuring extreme stress which could be reaching levels at which the person's normal functioning may be impaired in the intellectual, emotional and social spheres. Therefore this stress test did not serve the purpose envisaged by the researcher and a more accurate test of daily stress levels would need to be formulated for further research in this area.

4.4 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The major theme that emerged was that all the participants reacted in a positive manner to the course. It appeared that the content of the course, as well as the experience of being part of the research group, was effective in bringing about the changes that the participants expressed in the evaluation questionnaires. Therefore, in qualitative terms, the participants appeared to have gained insights into their stress reactions as well as experiencing personal growth in terms of the life-skills of Transactional Analysis. The group also noted that their means of coping with daily stressors had changed as a result of the course and they were beginning to take more responsibility for their own stress reactions and were more confident in being themselves.

The whole course was great...It encouraged me a lot. It gave me lot of power and strength to face reality. I removed my false appearance. I developed to be quite honest and reasonable with myself...

(Ewan)

The results of the quantitative analysis were inconclusive because of the limitations of the scales used and possibly because of the small number of subjects. Based purely on the quantitative results, it appeared that the Transactional Analysis course had not been effective as a stress management strategy. However this conclusion was not substantiated in terms of the qualitative data as mentioned previously.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 OVERVIEW

This study attempted to evaluate a new strategy to help adolescents cope with the stresses of every day life. The research project was undertaken because no stress management courses appear to be offered to adolescents either at school as part of the guidance and counselling programme, or in the community. To this end the researcher designed and implemented a stress management course based on the concepts of Transactional Analysis. As stated previously this was a pilot study and presented a new strategy of managing stress. Qualitative research findings indicated that stress was being better managed as a result of the course.

"Theorists have often described adolescence as a 'stormy and stressful' period for the child" (Small, Eastman and Cornelius, 1988: 386). Freud 1958, Erikson 1968, and Blos 1962, 1979, also viewed adolescence as a time of 'storm and stress'. However the present research confirmed the findings of Peterson and Taylor (1980) that "research evidence to support or refute this assumption is virtually nonexistent" (Swearingen and Cohen, 1985: 1045). This study was based on the assumption that adolescence "is characterized by experiences associated

with many physical, social and cognitive changes that occur with the onset of the teenage years" (Cohen, Burt and Bjorck, 1987: 583), but the changes of this particular stage of development do not automatically mean excessive 'storm and stress' for the adolescent.

In introducing the participants to Transactional Analysis as a means of managing stress the researcher accepted that the daily exposure to stressors caused adolescents to become stressed and that a course in Transactional Analysis would not only help them in coping with their stressors in the present but that the skills learned would also be useful to them in their future adult lives. This study found that from a qualitative standpoint the use of a Transactional Analysis Course as a stress management strategy had changed the participants' means of coping with their stress and that this change had been in a positive direction. Being participants in the research group had also been a positive growth experience for the adolescents.

This research confirmed that parent and school 'hassles' were the main stressors to this group (Stark *et al*, 1989: 190). The rank order of the most commonly reported stressors for this group of boys was examinations, school and parents while the girls cited family (mainly parents), friends and school. This is very similar to the findings of Stark *et al*, (1989: 210). The research also appeared to confirm that girls are more at risk from becoming stressed by 'interpersonal events' and boys

by 'achievement-related life events' (Wagner and Compas, 1990: 384). The researcher concluded that this Transactional Analysis Stress Management Course had not only been effective in helping the adolescents cope with their stressors but it also led them to have insights into themselves which in turn led to personal growth. This would increase the usefulness of using Transactional Analysis as a stress management strategy. As was noted in the introduction, at present there do not seem to be any courses being offered in the schools or the community to assist adolescents to cope with the stressors of every day living and give them coping skills for adulthood.

5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

No previous research in this particular area of the use of Transactional Analysis as a stress management strategy could be found, so it was not possible to draw upon any experience in this regard. No guidelines or suggestions were available, and the researcher was operating very much on her own - not an easy situation for one not experienced in the complex field of educational research. Even with the help of others in related fields, the pioneering nature of this study has inevitably created limitations.

The sample used presented its own set of problems. The scholars here are a select group and cannot claim to represent scholars at large. Furthermore, the small number of them prevents any generalisability.

The methodology too is problematic. While many claim that qualitative research can be rigorous and therefore as credible as quantitative research, it no doubt demands much greater finesse, insight and experience than can be offered by a novice researcher. This doesn't necessarily negate the general findings of this study, but it probably means that justice hasn't been fully done to the intentions of the research and the potential in the programme.

Neither the evaluation questionnaire nor the assertiveness scale took the English Second Language speaker into consideration enough, and much of the language used was not clearly understood by these scholars.

Finally, as has already been mentioned, the quantitative scales proved to be inappropriate. The stress questionnaire, for example, did not seem to measure the stress caused by everyday stressors (which was the subject of this study), but appeared to be focusing on more extreme forms of stress.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As this research study was a pilot study it serves as a starting point for further research in the use of Transactional Analysis as a stress management strategy for adolescence. The sample was highly specific and the research needs to be undertaken with a larger group of adolescents and with older as well as younger scholars. The research group was comprised

of selected scholars and the course should be tried with scholars from the general school population. Further research on stress management strategies for adolescents could provide useful information that might help to educate young people to cope with the complexities of today as well as for tomorrow's world where they will need to be fully functioning, responsible human beings who have developed strategies to cope with the changes and stressors that occur in every day life.

Stress management...is not a luxury in South Africa, or something 'nice' to do for humanistic reasons. It is a matter of physical, psychological and social survival.

(Strümpfer, 1985: 69)

POSTSCRIPT

In Table 8 in the results chapter, Ewan said that he lived according to a blueprint. He always thought that he was not-OK and "was so-called sick" because of his lifestyle. While the research was being written up, Ewan shared with the researcher that he thought he may not be a 'straight male', but had always lived according to his mother's script for him. He says he is now attempting to be more honest with himself and others as he tries to live an autonomous life.

Currently he is receiving psychiatric treatment to help him find his identity. This case history conforms to Erikson's "identity versus role confusion" psycho-social stage of development for the adolescent.

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APPENDICES**APPENDIX A****LEAD PROGRAMME**

LEAD is an acronym for Leadership, Education, Advancement and Development. The programme, adopted from America, was initiated by Johnson and Johnson in the East London and Mdantsane areas in 1984. Due to the expansion of the programme it became necessary to have full-time staff for its effective implementation. The establishment of the Institute for Social and Individual Development in Africa (ISIDA), which is committed to developing the country's people in order to create a viable non-racial future for South Africa, at Rhodes University: East London, led to the Institute staff agreeing to run the programme.

The programme's participants are recruited from local schools and the groups are constituted on a non-racial and non-sexist basis. The programme extends over three years, from standard eight to the end of standard ten. The groups have some form of organised activity every month designed to enable them to develop self-confidence, socio-political awareness, self-motivation, strategic thinking skills, communicative competence and values which facilitate effective participation in

teamwork. The acquisition of technical and human relationship skills are also developed. Underpinning all of these areas is the concept that the individual learns to take an increasing degree of responsibility for his or her own life. The progress of scholars who have participated in the LEAD programme is monitored into tertiary education and employment.

APPENDIX B**THE TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS STRESS MANAGEMENT COURSE****B.1 UNIT ONE: INTRODUCTION TO STRESS****B.1.1 Introduction to the course**

The aim of this session is to introduce the group to the concept of stress.

Brainstorm: What is stress? Stress is...(Get responses from the group).

Definition given: Selye, "The wear and tear in the body and the non-specific response of the body to any demand." Practical demonstrations given: kettle boiling, bottle of Coke shaken up and a balloon blown up to breaking point.

We each have our own breaking point when stress becomes distress and our physical and mental functioning is impaired.

B.1.2 The Concept of Stress

The feeling of just being tired, jittery or ill are subjective sensations of stress. Intense pleasure and the ecstasy of fulfilment also cause wear and tear. The physiological changes are the same whether the stress is positive or negative. Good stress or eustress is positive and energizes us into action. Bad stress or distress is negative and performance will break

down with increasing demands. The term "stress" is used to describe any demand that requires some kind of physical or emotional readjustment. A "stressor" (an event that produces a stress reaction), can be pleasant or unpleasant, exciting or disheartening. Any experience can be stressful and what is stressful for one individual may not be stressful for another. (An overhead of Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome is shown in order to illustrate the syndrome. An overhead of the Person-Environment model of Stress is also shown). (Illustrations of these overheads are shown on pages 13 and 14).

B.1.3 This Course

The researcher asks the participants to keep stress diaries to discover what is stressful to them and what their responses to these stressors are. The researcher briefly describes stress management skills such as relaxation training, meditation and exercise as different means of having control over stress reactions. However for the purposes of this research, Transactional Analysis is being introduced as the strategy to help the group understand their own and others' stress reactions and behaviour and to "make their own decisions and express their feelings...whenever people deal with people" (James and Jongeward, 1971: 12).

B.2 UNIT TWO: THE EGO STATES

B.2.1 Introduction

Presentation of a topic for discussion in pairs. The group is asked to discover what each one thinks, believes and feels about the subject under discussion.

The Subject

The simple life style of the past has been replaced today by one in which the majority of people live complex lives with many different pressures, and a resultant by-product of personal stress, due to intense competition to succeed before the age of 40. In an effort to handle the pressure, be it academic, employment or social, personal health, has itself created a new and even more demanding way of life. The young and not so young are engaging in frenzied participation in physical activities, be it aerobics, cycling, running, swimming, weight-lifting or whatever. A new addiction has become evident.

B.2.2 Processing

The researcher writes up on the board the words suggested, under the following columns.

Beliefs
(Parent)

Thoughts
(Adult)

Feelings
(Child)

The researcher explains that people's actions are directed by

the ego state, Parent, Adult or Child, in charge at the time. To find out "who is talking" people need to listen to their words and those of others. These will give cues and clues. An explanation is given of the three ego states.

The Parent is critical and says many of the same things our parents say in telling us what we ought to do, making us feel guilty if we don't match up to Parental standards. The Parent is also caring and loving in meeting our needs and providing comfort.

The Adult thinks, is rational, tests reality and gets the facts before working out the answers. It is important to develop to the point where the Adult is the executive of the personality.

The Child has three parts. The Natural Child is free, fun-loving and impulsive. The Little Professor is clever, creative and original while the Adapted Child acts in response to other people.

B.2.3 Conclusion

A knowledge of the three ego states helps us to understand ourselves and where some of our stress comes from. Stress can come from the Parental messages we hear from others and ourselves.

(Worksheets used for session two are taken from Jongeward and James, 1973: 24, 36, 33).

B.3 UNIT THREE: TRANSACTIONS

B.3.1 Introduction

The researcher gives out "Peanuts" cartoon strips in which the dialogue has been blocked in order for the group to fill in the communication they think is taking place in terms of Parent, Adult and Child transactions (Schultz, 1968: 68,74). The cartoons are discussed in the group in terms of the communication occurring.

B.3.2 Definition

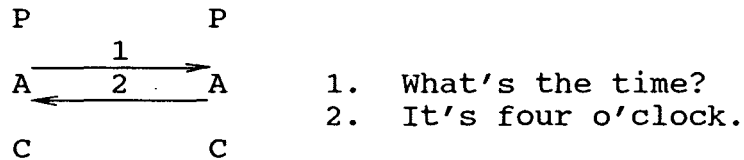
A transaction is the basic unit of all interpersonal "talk". We are the result of all the transactions we have had since we were born. A transaction is an exchange of words, a gesture, a nod, a smile, a frown, a wink, a touch, a salute, and other body movements between people. We use the word "transaction" because every time people contact each other, we are transacting or conducting business with each other. A transaction is made up of a stimulus-stroke and a response-stroke between people. "A stroke makes you know that the other person is there" (Freed, 1976: 22).

B.3.3 Types of Transactions

B.3.3.1 Complementary transactions

These occur when a message (stimulus) sent from one person gets

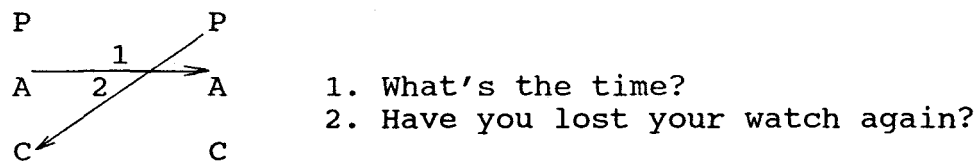
the expected answer (response) from the other person. In this case the lines of communication are open and the transaction becomes easy to understand. An example follows:



Stimulus Response

B.3.3.2 Crossed Transactions

These occur whenever an unexpected response is made to the stimulus. Therefore another ego state is activated unexpectedly and the lines of transacting are crossed. Crossed transactions can be a put down and a source of stress. An example follows:

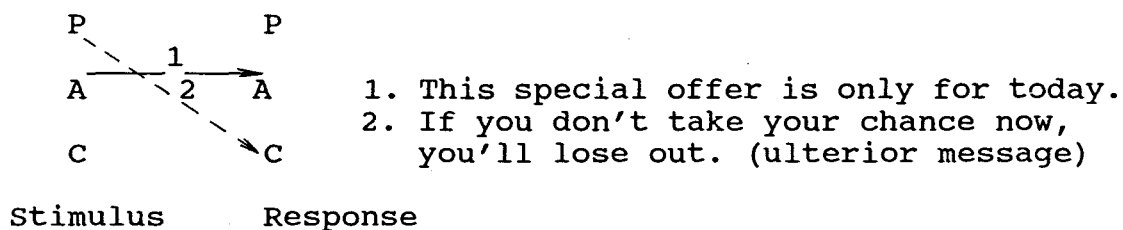


Stimulus Response

B.3.3.3 Ulterior Transactions (Double Transactions)

Ulterior transactions occur when a person says one thing but means something else. Ulterior Transactions have a hidden or double message which is more important to the person receiving the message and to the person sending the message than the

obvious verbal message. An example follows:



An ulterior transaction is often aimed at the respondent's child and the resultant internal conflict may lead to increased stress levels.

(Worksheets used in this session were taken from Jongeward and James, 1980: 43, 45, 47).

B.3.4 Conclusion

Crossed transactions and ulterior transactions are a potential source of stress whereas complementary transactions reduce stress occurring from interactions with people.

B.4 UNIT FOUR: LIFE POSITIONS**B.4.1 Introduction**

Play an audio tape of "The Frog Prince". Discuss - How did the Princess react to the frog? What do you like/dislike about frogs?

B.4.2 Input

Berne says that people are born princes and princesses until their parents turn them into frogs (Freed, 1976). Therefore inside every frog (not-OK person) is a prince or princess (OK person). We need to recognise this in ourselves and others. We are all born OK and then what happens from then on can change us into frogs (not-OK people). Ask the group to share some of the things that could change them into not-OK people. Some of the possible answers are given below.

We are born the wrong sex.
We are not clever.
We are not athletic.
We are too fat/thin, hair too straight/curly, too tall/short.
We have a physical/mental disability.

In terms of Transactional Analysis, OK means you have worth as a person just because you exist - you are able to think, are worthwhile and important. "Before children are eight years old they develop a concept about their own worth. They also formulate ideas about the worth of others. They crystallize their experiences and decide what it all means to them. These

are children's days of decision" (James and Jongeward, 1978: 36). These decisions may be unrealistic and distorted. The psychological positions taken about oneself and about others fit into four basic patterns.

B.4.3 Life Positions

* I'm OK, You're OK. This is potentially a mentally healthy position because the person accepts his/her own Okness and that of other people. The person can solve problems constructively most of the time and transacts in an open, straight manner.

* I'm OK, You're not-OK. This is the position of a person who feels victimized or persecuted, so victimizes and persecutes others. The person blames others for his/her miseries. It's always "their" fault. Delinquents and criminals often take this position.

* I'm not-OK, You're OK. This is the common position of a person who feels powerless when he/she compares him/herself to others. A very strong critical Parent may cause a child to take this position. The child feels he/she is inadequate, powerless, inferior and stupid when compared to the adequate, powerful, superior and clever Adult figures in the environment. From this position the person may withdraw and become depressed.

* I'm not-OK, You're not-OK. This is a hopeless position because the child feels life isn't worth anything at all. The child feels that no matter what he/she does, he/she will never be OK because nobody else is OK. They are all losers. The child gives up and loses interest in living. The child is very unhappy and in extreme cases ultimately commits suicide or homicide.

B.4.4 Exercise

Draw transactions between Parent and Child ego states to represent the four life positions. These are discussed in the group.

B.4.5 Conclusion

Life positions are not fixed. Real independence and autonomy comes when a person's Adult makes a conscious decision that he/she is an OK person and can be a winner in coping with daily life. If a person decides he/she is OK, this self-acceptance can reduce stress levels because the person is empowered to take responsibility for him/herself.

B.5 UNIT FIVE: STROKES

B.5.1 Introduction

A brown paper bag is handed around the group for each person to take out a small parcel wrapped in tinfoil. Some of the parcels contain chocolate and the others green peppers. When each participant has a parcel they are allowed to open them and eat the contents.

B.5.2 Processing

The researcher draws the analogy between getting chocolate and getting positive strokes, and getting green peppers and getting negative strokes. The participants who received green peppers are asked first how they felt when they were given the peppers. The others then expressed their feelings.

B.5.3 Input

The researcher reads the story "The Warm Fuzzy" (Steiner, 1982: 127). (A warm fuzzy is a positive stroke that makes a person feel good while a cold prickly is a negative stroke that makes a person feel bad).

B.5.4 Exercise

The group is asked what people can do or say to make others feel good. Possible suggestions are: a smile, a compliment,

or a hug. A negative stroke is an angry word, an insult, sarcasm and being rejected. (Overheads of Peanuts cartoons are used to illustrate positive and negative strokes). The participants fill in Subjective Stroke Scales to determine how they get their strokes (Freed, 1988: 45). The importance of fun activities, from the Child, in the management of stress is highlighted.

B.5.6 Conclusion

Everyone needs positive strokes to survive and maintain a sense of worthwhileness and well-being. Environments that are empty of good strokes are sterile and stressful.

B.6 UNIT SIX: GAMES

B.6.1 Introduction

Three scholars who go to the same school, role play a classroom situation that had been mentioned in a previous session. The group is asked to process: What Game is being played? Who is getting picked on? Who is doing the picking? Does some-one try to intervene?

Explain to the group that they have just observed the basic roles of Victim, Persecutor, and Rescuer being played in a psychological Game. A switch in roles is often part of the Game. Ask the group if they are aware of situations where they usually play the drama roles of Rescuer, Persecutor and Victim (Exercise, James and Savary, 1980: 235).

B.6.2 Input

Everyone plays psychological Games at times. People play Games because they learn to do so in childhood. It feels safer to be evasive and indirect about one's needs than to risk rejection from a straightforward request. People play Games because they're afraid to ask for what they need (ie strokes). Therefore Games are crooked ways of getting strokes and are played by the Child. Most people are trained not to ask directly for what they need or want from others. Some hint at their needs by looking sad, acting helpless, being angry, smiling hopefully or verbally manipulating those around them.

At the end of a Game one or more of the players collect negative feelings such as anger, depression, or being hurt. Sometimes a player collects self-righteous feelings and feels blameless.

B.6.3 How Games are Learned

According to Eric Berne, Games are patterns learned in early childhood and are passed on from one generation to the next (James and Savary, 1980: 229). Games are learned by imitation and assignment. When imitating, children play identical roles and repeat the same lines as they've heard from their parents. When Games are assigned, children learn to play expected roles through strokes that are given or withheld. Some Games involve blaming others in order to avoid being held responsible for one's actions, (See what you made me do). Other Games are played in which the person takes all the blame when things go wrong, (Schlemiel).

A Transactional Analysis Game is usually played over and over again. It begins, continues and ends the same way. The first Game (Mine's better than yours), is played at a very young age. (Further examples are taken from Berne, 1987: Games People Play).

The researcher shows the participants part of an episode from a current television series to illustrate the playing of Games. (Worksheets used for session six are taken from Jongewood and James, 1973: 79)

B.6.4 Game Patterns

Games in Transactional Analysis theory may vary, but the basic elements are always the same:

- * a series of complementary transactions at the social level.
- * a series of ulterior transactions at the psychological level.
- * a pay-off of negative feelings for one or more of the players at the end of the series of transactions

B.6.6 Giving up Games

In order to give up Games, people need to recognize when the Game begins. Berne calls this the "hook". Games may be stopped in the following ways:

- * give an unexpected response
- * give and receive positive strokes
- * stop exaggerating one's own weaknesses or strengths
- * stop playing rescuer/persecutor/victim
- * structure more time with activities, intimacy and fun

B.6.7 Conclusion

Games are negative scenes in life dramas. People play Games to reinforce old childhood decisions and to act out their psychological scripts. Games cause people to become very stressed. People can devote their energies to getting in touch with their capabilities and developing their potential rather than acting out the parts that Games require.

B.7 UNIT SEVEN: SCRIPTS

B.7.1 Introduction

Whether passively waiting or actively growing, a person is unconsciously following a personal psychological script, that is, a life plan designed in childhood. Berne defines a script as,

...an ongoing program, developed in early childhood under parental influence, which directs the individual's behaviour in the most important aspects of his [or her] life...Personal scripts are like blueprints for life. Unless we become aware of our scripts, we will go through life, unquestioningly clutching the old blueprints no matter how outdated or ill-fitting they are.

(Jongeward and Scott, 1976: 28)

B.7.2 Description

Our scripts are formed from: inherited capabilities, environmental circumstances, cultural expectations and, mostly from the messages received from significant authority figures. As we follow our scripts we play roles, act out themes and select a cast of supporting characters. We base our scripts on our early decisions about ourselves and others. Based on these decisions, children adopt psychological positions generalised into the life positions. Once having taken these positions a person manipulates other people and situations to

reinforce the position. The script is written and the life show begins based on:

- * Early experiences
- * Early decisions
- * Psychological positions
- * Script formation
- * Script-reinforcing behaviour

B.7.3 Childhood Messages

Children receive messages about themselves and others from significant authority figures in their lives. These take the form of values, expectations and limitations, approval or disapproval, encouragement or discouragement and the prompting of proper and improper patterns of behaviour. From these messages children form their first ideas of how they are expected to live their lives as adults.

(Examples of these messages are discussed in the group, Jongeward and Scott 1976: 68).

B.7.4 Issues in Scripts

Life scripts can be:

- * constructive and winning with winning messages
- * non-winning with empty messages
- * destructive or losing with hurtful, distorted messages

Each person's script deals with who that person is, what he/she is doing in life and how other people are regarded.

B.7.5 Collective Scripts

Besides a personal script a person has a family, friends, an ethnic group, religious group and a national heritage which have prescribed expectations about roles and behaviours.

Cultural traditions are passed on from parent to child and from generation to generation. These include expectations on how people of that culture "should" walk, talk, think, feel, act, eat, succeed or fail. These are related to all aspects of life, marriage and child rearing practices. (Ask the group to give examples from their own cultures).

Cultural and subcultural scripts are often carried out through families. Some of the most common family script messages are related to male and female roles and expectations. (An excerpt from a current television programme which illustrates roles being played is shown to the group).

B.7.6 Your Own Script

The experiences children have with their mothers, fathers and parenting figures usually have the most influence in the development of a life script. Parents may initiate experiences, respond to experiences with others or give subtle script-reinforcing messages with their words and actions. Once you are aware of scripty messages you can evaluate your own

family script. A family member who does not live up to the script expectations may be thought of as the "black sheep of the family". (Discuss family scripts that occur in the group). Childhood experiences are the foundations of a life script. Some events that affect people are: death or illness in the family, moving to a new place/school, being an only child or being one of many children, loud arguments, divorced parents, single parent families and a child having a special gift. Childhood decisions are usually responses to childhood experiences. Choosing to turn from a destructive life script in adolescence or adulthood represents a turning point in a person's life and the acceptance of personal autonomy.

B.7.7 Roles and Themes in Life Dramas

All scripts have themes running through them. The roles and themes in human life are present in Greek myths such as "Atlas" and "Prometheus". Script themes are also present in children's stories, for example; Beauty and the Beast, Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood. All scripts have themes running through them:

- * Being the Best
- * Being Helpful
- * Having a Ball
- * Bossing Others
- * Saving for a Rainy Day
- * Being Miserable
- * Sorry for being Alive

B.7.8 Conclusion

Each person lives in a culture that has scripts and has a psychological script. The psychological script contains the on-going programme for the individual's life drama. It is rooted in the messages a child receives from parents. These can be constructive, destructive, or non-productive. If a person is living a script which is destructive or non-productive, internal stress levels can be high. Some scripts give a person a fairly realistic idea of his or her actual potentials and the use of these talents in society, while others misdirect the person, create pathology, including stress and may have a tragic ending.

Playacting can be given up in favour of authenticity. Aware people can determine the course of their own life plans and rewrite their dramas in accordance with their own uniqueness.

(James and Jongeward, 1978: 104)

B.8 UNIT EIGHT: AUTONOMY

B.8.1 Introduction

Achieving autonomy is the ultimate goal of Transactional Analysis. Being autonomous means being self-governing, determining one's own destiny, taking responsibility for one's own actions and feelings and throwing off patterns of behaviour that are irrelevant and inappropriate to living in the present. Everyone has the capacity to obtain a measure of autonomy. Few actually achieve it. Berne says, "Man is born free, but one of the first things he learns, is to do as he is told, and he spends the rest of his life doing that" (Berne 1970: 194). This means that most people are scripted or programmed with a self-fulfilling prophecy. What a person can do with the knowledge gained from Transactional Analysis is to be free from self-imposed failure scripts and make decisions that are appropriate in order to become independent and be in control of his/her life.

B.8.2 Autonomy

A truly autonomous person according to Berne demonstrates three capacities: awareness, spontaneity and intimacy.

*** Awareness:** this is knowing what is happening now. The aware person perceives the world through personal encounter rather than through the way he or she was taught. An aware person listens to the messages of the body, knowing when he or she is becoming tense. This is important in good stress management.

* **Spontaneity:** is the freedom to choose from the full spectrum of Parent behaviour and feelings, Adult behaviour and feelings and Child behaviour and feelings. A spontaneous person is free, making and accepting responsibility for personal choices and able to make independent decisions.

* **Intimacy:** is the process of developing the capacity for open, warm, close relationships where crossed transactions and games are avoided. The intimate person attempts to be open and authentic, existing with others in the here and now and also attempting to see others in their uniqueness.

B.8.3 The Integrated Adult

People moving towards autonomy expand their personal capacities of awareness, spontaneity and intimacy and develop integrated Adult Ego States as more Parent and Child material is filtered through their Adult. The person in the process of integration takes responsibility for everything he/she feels, thinks and believes and develops an ethical system for life. (The integrated Adult appears to be similar to Erich Fromm's "fully developed person" or Maslow's "self-actualizing person").

B.8.4 Stress Management

Effective management of stress involves two stages:

- * **Awareness:** Identifying personal stress reactions and stressors.
- * **Control:** Working towards self responsibility in understanding a personal stress level above which dysfunction may occur.

B.8.5 Epilogue

It takes courage to be a real winner; that is a winner at responding to life. It takes courage to experience the freedom that comes with autonomy, courage to accept intimacy and direct encounters with other persons, courage to choose authenticity over approval and courage to accept the responsibility for personal choices and indeed courage to be a unique person.

B.8.6 Conclusion

There is no magic to transform a person instantly into a successful stress manager. It is something that a person works at, accepting occasional failures without getting discouraged. Each person can choose alternatives by breaking out of the habit of stressful living, and by working at the skills of stress management in order to be responsible for managing personal stress and enhancing wellness. This course has taught stress management through the life management skills of Transactional Analysis.

APPENDIX C

QUANTITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRES

C.1 ASSERTIVENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Read the following items and answer "yes" if it describes you and "no" if it does not describe you. Then indicate how descriptive each item is of you by using this code:

- 3 = very much like me
- 2 = rather like me
- 1 = slightly like me
- 1 = slightly unlike me
- 2 = rather unlike me
- 3 = very unlike me

- 1 Most people seem to be more aggressive and assertive than I am.*
- 2 I have hesitated to make or accept dates because of 'shyness'.*
- 3 When the food served at a restaurant is not done to my satisfaction, I complain about it to the waiter or waitress.
- 4 I am careful to avoid hurting other people's feelings, even when I feel that I have been injured.*
- 5 If a salesman has gone to considerable trouble to show me merchandise that is not quite suitable, I have a difficult time saying "No".*
- 6 When I am asked to do something, I insist upon knowing why.
- 7 There are times when I am on the look-out for a good, vigorous argument.

- 8 I strive to get ahead as much as most people in my position.
- 9 To be honest, people often take advantage of me.*
- 10 I enjoy starting conversations with new acquaintances and strangers.
- 11 I often don't know what to say to attractive people of the opposite sex.*
- 12 I will hesitate to make phone-calls to business establishments and institutions.*
- 13 I would rather apply for a job or for admission to institutions of higher learning by writing letters than by going through personal interviews.*
- 14 I find it embarrassing to return merchandise.*
- 15 If a close and respected relative were annoying me, I would smother my feelings rather than express my annoyance.*
- 16 I have avoided asking questions for fear of sounding stupid.*
- 17 During an argument, I am sometimes afraid that I will get so upset that I will begin to shake or burst into tears.*
- 18 If a famed and respected lecturer makes a comment that I think is incorrect, I will see to it that the audience hears my point of view as well.
- 19 I avoid arguing about prices with clerks and salesmen.*
- 20 When I have done something important and worthwhile, I manage to let others know about it.

- 21 I am open and frank about my feelings.
- 22 If someone has been spreading false and unpleasant rumours about me, I see him/her as soon as possible and have a talk about it.
- 23 I often have a hard time saying "No".*
- 24 I tend to bottle up my emotions rather than make a scene.*
- 25 I complain about poor service in a restaurant and elsewhere.
- 26 When I am given a compliment, I sometimes just don't know what to say.*
- 27 If a couple near me in a theatre or at a lecture were talking rather loudly, I would ask them to be quiet or take their conversation elsewhere.
- 28 Anyone attempting to push ahead of me in a line is in for a good battle.
- 29 I am quick to express an opinion.
- 30 There are times when I just can't say anything.*

(Burns, 1988: 172 -173).

C.1.1 Scoring the Assertiveness Questionnaire

The scores are tabulated by changing the symbols for all items followed by an asterisk (*). The thirty item scores are then added. Scores on this test can vary from +90 to -90. However the university men and women to whom this test was given had scores which varied from -41 to +65 for men, and -48 to +55 for

women. It is on these scores that the researcher based her distinctions between the levels of assertiveness (Burns, 1988: 173).

| | | |
|---------------|---|-------------------------|
| +30 and above | = | very high assertiveness |
| +10 to +29 | = | high assertiveness |
| 0 to +9 | = | average assertiveness |
| -1 to -29 | = | low assertiveness |
| below -30 | = | very low assertiveness |

C.2 STRESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Read each item and circle the number which best reflects how often you have had that symptom in the past two months.

Key to numbers

0 = seldom, if ever
 1 = occasionally
 2 = often
 3 = almost constantly

EMOTIONAL

0 1 2 3 I get irritable
 0 1 2 3 I have difficulty in concentrating
 0 1 2 3 I am nervous, anxious, ill at ease
 0 1 2 3 I cannot get to sleep easily
 0 1 2 3 I am forgetful
 0 1 2 3 I get depressed
 0 1 2 3 I have feelings of restlessness
 0 1 2 3 I get mentally tired
 0 1 2 3 I am apathetic or bored
 0 1 2 3 I daydream a lot
 0 1 2 3 I dislike myself

PHYSICAL

0 1 2 3 I get headaches
 0 1 2 3 My appetite has changed
 0 1 2 3 I stammer or stutter
 0 1 2 3 I bite my nails
 0 1 2 3 I can't sit or stand still
 0 1 2 3 My mouth gets dry

PHYSICAL CONTINUED

- 0 1 2 3 My hands and fingers tremble
0 1 2 3 I clench my jaw and grit my teeth
0 1 2 3 My stomach becomes upset
0 1 2 3 My heart pounds and I breathe rapidly
0 1 2 3 I am often ill
0 1 2 3 My muscles become tense and stiff

SOCIAL

- 0 1 2 3 I cannot relax
0 1 2 3 I overreact emotionally
0 1 2 3 I make frequent mistakes
0 1 2 3 I do not complete tasks
0 1 2 3 I am moody
0 1 2 3 I find excuses or blame others
0 1 2 3 I swear often
0 1 2 3 I eat more sweets including chocolate
0 1 2 3 I use medications daily
0 1 2 3 I seldom have fun
0 1 2 3 I lose my temper often
0 1 2 3 I am indecisive
0 1 2 3 I am tired most of the time
0 1 2 3 I become withdrawn
0 1 2 3 I don't trust anybody

C.2.1 Scoring the Stress Questionnaire

The stress level score is calculated by adding up the value of all the circled items. Scores on this test can vary from 0 to 114. A low score would indicate a low stress level and a high score would indicate a high stress level.

APPENDIX D

QUALITATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

D.1 EVALUATION OF THE COURSE QUESTIONNAIRE

This evaluation form was used as the basis for the qualitative results and discussion in chapter four. The reference numbers used in that chapter are given in brackets.

Question one (Please cross with an X the appropriate response).

- | | | | | |
|-----|--|-----|----|-----------|
| 1.1 | Did you get what you expected? (4.2.1) | Yes | No | Uncertain |
| 1.2 | Did you understand the information presented? (4.2.2) | Yes | No | Uncertain |
| 1.3 | Was it appropriate to discuss the subject in this group? (4.2.3) | Yes | No | Uncertain |
| 1.4 | Did you learn something new? (4.2.4) | Yes | No | Uncertain |
| 1.5 | Is the course relevant at this stage of your life? (4.2.5) | Yes | No | Uncertain |
| 1.6 | Can you use it in your life? (4.2.6) | Yes | No | Uncertain |

Please explain all your answers from question one.

Question two. (4.2.7) Which of the following methods helped you to understand the information presented? (Mark with an X as many as you wish).

Presentation

General discussion

Small group discussion

Worksheets

Transparencies

Other visual aids

Role plays

Other

If "Other" please explain your answer.

Question three. (4.2.8) Which session has helped you the most? Please explain your answer. (Introduction; Ego states; Transactions; I'm OK, you're OK; Strokes; Games; Scripts and Autonomy)

Question four. (4.2.9) Which of the following Transactional Analysis positions causes you to become the most stressed?

Please explain your answer.

(Ego states; Transactions; I'm OK, you're OK; Strokes; Games; Scripts and Autonomy)

Question five. (4.2.10) What activities, events or interactions with people seem to keep coming up as stressors?

Question six. (4.2.11) How do you usually feel when this stressor comes up? How does your body react?

Question seven. (4.2.12) What do you usually do when confronted with your most common stressor?

Question eight. (4.2.13) What changes in response to your stressors have you noticed since being part of this course?

Question nine. (4.2.14) Your own comments.