

**The Experience of Adolescents Who Have Lost a Parent as Expressed
Through the Metaphoric Art Processes**

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Dedications

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, who stood by me through sleepless nights and countless cups of coffee and to my family, who provided support even without seeing or hearing from me for weeks at a time. This thesis is also dedicated to each and every one of my classmates, who were there for me when I needed them the most.

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Abstract

The Experience of Adolescents Who Have Lost a Parent as Expressed Through the Metaphoric Art Processes

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The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of individuals who have lost a parent in their adolescence as expressed through metaphoric art processes. This study used phenomenological methodology as a means of collecting and analyzing the data. A review of the literature included information on the process of bereavement and outcomes of bereavement, the developmental goals of normal adolescence, the effect of general bereavement and parental bereavement on adolescent development, psychological interventions with bereaved adolescents, art therapy theory, and the use of art therapy and metaphor with this population.

Three healthy participants, two female and one male, of different ethnicities participated in this study. They were asked to respond to a demographic questionnaire, create four pieces of artwork, and participate in an open-ended responsive interview in order to capture an in-depth description of their experience of losing a parent in their adolescence as expressed through the metaphoric art process.

A phenomenological data analysis process yielded composite essential structures that seem to suggest that all three participants have similar experiences in six key areas. All three participants indicated that they felt a pervasive sense of loss and a sense of missing something in their lives. They also reported having difficulty communicating their experience at the time of their respective parent's death, describing this experience as feeling jumbled, mixed, and chaotic. Similarly, they had difficulty choosing images in

the art making process that represented the complexity of their feelings at the time of the death. Each of the participants also reported efforts to move past the feelings and thoughts they had at the time of the death, as well as the influence that time has on their ability to express these thoughts and feelings. Finally, the data for all three participants seems to suggest that the process of creating the artwork about the death recreated the cognitive and emotional experience of their parent's death. In this way, the artwork can be used to help individuals process their bereavement, thus lending itself to application in the clinical art therapy field.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The overall purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the use of a metaphoric art therapy process with adolescents experiencing the phenomenon of a normal period of grief from the loss of a parent. Three older, college-age adolescents between the ages of 18-27 were recruited to participate in art making and a verbal in-depth interview about their lived experience of making art and using metaphor and the relationship of art and metaphor to their grief. This research elicited metaphoric art from three participants who have lost a parent when they were between the ages of 15-18. The participants were asked to portray their experience of the loss of their parent through a series of metaphoric art processes. An open-ended responsive interview then took place, which focused upon their cognitive and emotional experience of creating the artistic metaphor as well as the meaning of their metaphor.

Bereavement is the experience of losing to death a person to whom one is attached. Grief describes the emotional distress associated with that loss (Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson, 2006; Zisook, & Kendler, 2007). The loss of a loved one is one of the most stressful experiences one can have in life (Auman, 2007). Although those who are bereaved are more susceptible to adverse negative physical, mental, and social outcomes (Auman; Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson), the majority, 80%-90%, of bereaved individuals experience normal, uncomplicated grief reactions (Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson).

Although painful and disruptive, uncomplicated grief reactions eventually dissipate over time. These individuals overcome the initial sense of disbelief and come to accept the loss as a reality, which allows them to move on with their lives (Zhang, El-

Jawahri, & Prigerson, 2006). As time progresses from the loss, most individuals experience a decrease in bereavement-related distress and an increase in the acceptance of the death. As soon as six months after the loss, bereaved people are generally able to accept the reality that the person has died, find meaning and purpose in their lives, and develop new relationships and friendships. In uncomplicated bereavement, the bereaved individual does not typically experience adverse effects to self-esteem or sense of competence (Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson).

The minority of bereaved individuals can be described as experiencing complicated grief. Zhang, El-Jawahri, and Prigerson (2006) address many different terms that have been used to portray the same phenomenon: pathologic grief, abnormal grief, atypical grief, and pathologic mourning. Complicated grief, another term used to describe the same phenomena, is distinguished as different from traumatic grief, which includes symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder. Zhang, El-Jawahri, and Prigerson propose criteria for a new diagnosis in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V). This category, Complicated Grief Disorder, highlights the main symptoms found in the minority of bereaved individuals suffering from complicated grief.

Complicated Grief Disorder, as proposed by Zhang, El-Jawahri, and Prigerson (2006), describes individuals who are essentially frozen or stuck in a state of chronic mourning. Their mental anguish stems from their denial of the reality of the loss and a reluctance to make the adaptations necessary to function in life without the deceased person. These people experience an intense longing and yearning for the person who has died and feel little hope for fulfillment in the future. Such distress must last in duration

for longer than six months and be associated with social or occupational impairment. Zhang, El-Jawahri, and Prigerson (2006) stress that symptoms consistent with the proposed Complicated Grief Disorder are not the only impairments that may occur as a result of complicated bereavement. Other secondary psychiatric disorders, such as Major Depression or Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, may develop following the loss of a loved one (Wakefield, Schmitz, First, & Horwitz, 2007; Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson). *The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Revision (DSM-IV)* states that the normal bereavement time frame following a death is two to three months, with bereavement being the only life event that excludes a diagnosis of a Major Depressive Episode. However, Zisook and Kendler (2007) found that the symptoms describing complicated bereavement are more similar to the symptoms of Major Depressive Disorder than dissimilar.

Rosen (1991) identifies adolescent bereavement as an area of research that has received sparse attention, while Kuntz (1991) and Meshot and Leitner (1993) add that research is needed in particular for adolescents who have lost a parent. Auman (2007) likewise states that there is a need for research and services for bereaved adolescents. This population is underserved because adolescents seem to exhibit few outward identifiers of bereavement (Auman). The lack of research and services for bereaved adolescents is disconcerting considering that they often experience a higher incidence of emotional disturbance and symptoms for up to two years after parental death than adolescents who have not lost a parent (Auman).

Bereavement in adolescents, according to Dowdney (2000), is often observed in the emergence of depressive symptoms, social withdrawal, and academic problems.

Additionally, parental loss in childhood or adolescence is associated with the development of psychiatric disorders later in life, with the strongest evidence coming from retrospective studies of adults with mental health problems. Several research studies, cited by Dowdney (2000), appear to establish a link between depression in adulthood and parental death in childhood. Not only are such children at risk for the development of depression in adulthood, but they are also have a higher risk of developing mental health problems more immediately after the death of a parent. Gersten, Beals, and Kallgren (1991) found that 9.8% of bereaved children in a representative community sample met the criteria for major depression, compared to only 1.3% of matched controls. Sandler (2001) and Wolchik, Tein, Sandler, and Ayers (2006) suggest that stressors such as parental death can lead to higher mental health problems by threatening the satisfaction of the basic needs of relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Other stressors that can result from parental death, such as decreased economic resources, change in residence, increased expectations and responsibilities, and change in caretakers, are related to the development of mental health problems (Sandler).

From the perspective of human psychological development, loss of a parent in adolescence comes at a time when the central tasks include the second separation and individuation from the parents. Developmentally, conflictual relationships are common in adolescence and may contribute to a more difficult course of grief, especially if this relationship is interrupted by death (Harris, 1990; Tyson-Rawson, 1996). Although ambivalence may be expressed about dependence upon the parents, the parents are always assumed to be available. Additionally, adaptive mourning may not be possible prior to the successful negotiation of psychological separation from parental figures.

Therefore, rather than accept the loss, adolescents can become intensely attached to the memory of the lost parent and may use such defenses as denial, idealization of the deceased, inhibition, and isolation (Harris, 1990; Rosen, 1991). These defenses can impair and distort the grief process and interfere with normal development (Harris, 1990), namely the resolution of normal adolescent developmental tasks (Balk & Vesta, 1998).

Not all adolescents experience negative outcomes after the death of a parent. Tyson-Rawson (1996) suggests that some adolescents develop a new sense of self-awareness, maturity, and growth, giving rise to a stronger sense of self and a stronger sense of the values of others. The change in life circumstances created by the death of a parent can become a powerful motive for resolving the developmental tasks of adolescence. Internal pressures for understanding and external forces for stability heighten the need to accomplish these tasks. As adolescents may be forced to take on new responsibilities for their own welfare and, often, the welfare of other family members, they gain a greater awareness of their own capabilities and autonomy (Tyson-Rawson).

As adolescents move towards a new identity, which is characterized by separation from the family of origin, a stable and dependable family system typically facilitates this process. As the adolescent works through the second individuation and separation phase of life, the family of origin provides a base from which they can venture to explore new roles and relationships and return for validation and consolation (Tyson-Rawson, 1996). Tyson-Rawson suggests that the family's ability to provide this kind of support for the adolescent is a critical factor in the outcome of bereavement. Likewise, the availability of support from peers and important others in the community is a salient factor in the outcome of bereavement following the death of a parent. The existence of a supportive

network and the presence of communication skills that allow supportive messages to be sent to and be received by these adolescents is critical in the resolution of bereavement and creating a sense of hope for the future (Tyson-Rawson, 1996).

As a consistent and supportive family environment is an important factor in the resolution of the grief process, there is research investigating the development of family-oriented treatment programs around this principle. Sandler et al. (2003) experimentally evaluates the Family Bereavement Program (FBP), which is a two-component group intervention for parentally bereaved children ages 8-16. Designed to change potentially modifiable risk and protective factors for bereaved children, this research indicates that the FBP leads to improved parenting, coping, and caregiver mental health. However, the results of the research on the FBP suggests that it is limited to reducing only internalizing and externalizing problems for girls and those children who had higher problem scores at the baseline evaluation (Sandler et al.; Schmiede, Toon Khoo, Sandler, Ayers, & Wolchik, 2006; Tein, Sandler, Ayers, & Wolchik, 2006).

Other comprehensive treatment programs currently in the research target prevention rather than crisis response. Hetzel, Winn, & Tolstoshev (1991) report on a program developed in Australia specifically for adolescents aged 15-18 years. This program, designed to address a wide range of losses, focuses on death education and understanding for adolescents. There is, however, no clinical evidence to support the efficacy of such a program. Rather, these authors provide anecdotal evidence and suggestions for future program development.

There are various treatment approaches to grief reactions that exceed the normal range of symptoms. More specifically, research has investigated treatments for

complicated bereavement. With treatments that are designed more for the treatment of depression, researchers are finding that the symptoms of grief do not resolve with the same clarity as the symptoms of depression (Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson, 2006). There have been no randomized controlled trials of pharmacotherapies for the reduction of grief symptom severity, although open trials for serotonin reuptake inhibitors suggest promise of reduction of complicated grief symptom severity. Other therapies treat complicated bereavement as a trauma and apply exposure therapy to target the assumed experience of traumatic avoidance (Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson).

Treatment of adolescent bereavement includes a range of eclectic approaches. Although randomized controlled trials may be necessary to determine the efficacy of some treatment regimens, many researchers and clinicians approach the issue of bereavement with a more comprehensive understanding. Kuntz (1991) identifies, within her research, that there is a need to assess the grief of parentally bereaved adolescents from multiple points of view in order to engage the whole picture of adolescent grief. To this end, Kuntz included interview, as well as writing responses and artwork of the adolescents, as part of her data. In a study conducted by Harris (1990), the researcher found that adolescents tended not to verbalize their feelings about their loss to their friends or families. Therefore, multiple means of data collection or self-expression may be necessary to construct a clearer picture of the adolescent experience of parental loss. Van Epps, Opie, and Goodwin (1997) in their study likewise suggest that a clearer picture of adolescent bereavement can be achieved through multiple types of data, which includes both interview and artwork in their study.

As artwork is found to be useful in research as a data collection tool (Van Epps, Opie, and Goodwin, 1997), the use of art is also a tool for expression in art therapy, which has proven to be an efficacious treatment for many different populations. Naumburg (1966) states that art therapy is based on the knowledge that every individual has a latent capacity to project inner conflicts into visual form, regardless of training in art. The artwork becomes an expression of the inner experience of the individual and is used to help express thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Art therapy becomes especially useful for those people who have difficulty verbalizing their conflicts in a strictly verbal fashion (Naumburg; Rubin, 1978). Harnden, Rosales, and Greenfield (2004) address in their case study the use of art therapy as a blend of both art and verbal interventions and a means of communication even for those individuals who find verbal expression of feelings uncomfortable. Through a quantitative study with 96 participants between the ages of 2 and 16, Saunders and Saunders (2000) found that art therapy has a significant positive impact on the lives of clients and families. The children in this study were better able to communicate their feelings and were less likely to internalize them in unhealthy ways while participating in art therapy.

Within the literature, there is also support for the use of art therapy treatment for adolescents who have issues related to bereavement. According to Eaton, Doherty, and Widrick (2007) art therapy can provide a unique way of exploring and understanding grief through creative expression and concrete visual imagery which is a safe outlet for expressing thoughts and emotions. Through an extensive literature review, these authors found that expressing grief through artistic expression and visual imagery is a means for recovering from the psychological distress of grief. A case example given by Finn (2003)

of a grief and loss group for adolescent boys supports the use of art in therapy in the treatment of bereaved adolescents as it gave the group members a way of understanding their emotions and finding new ways to cope with loss. Likewise, an extensive qualitative investigation of the experience of art therapy for bereaved children indicates that the arts help to express the emotions and experiences involved in the grief process (McIntyre, 1990). McIntyre states that children often have difficulty finding the support they need to express their grief. However, such reactions to grief as helplessness, fear, anger, confusion, and loneliness can be transformed through art. By providing a safe and focused environment, art therapy helps children work through the grief process (McIntyre).

Art appears to have the quality of providing an alternative means of communication, as documented in the literature (Eaton, Doherty, & Widrick, 2007; Finn, 2003; McIntyre, 1990). By its ability to facilitate the expression of difficult emotions, the structure of the metaphor mirrors the qualities of the art process and is used regularly in the practice of art therapy (Gorelick, 1989; Riley, 1999). Barker (2000) addresses the use of metaphor as an important means of expressing and exploring the self, as well as a tool for clarifying the meanings of the constructs of health and illness. Spall, Read, and Chantry (1991) likewise describe the use of metaphor as a powerful language device for expressing complex thoughts or feelings. The Cancer Metaphor Test was created to explore how cancer patients viewed their illness through the use of metaphor as a means to better assess their perceptions of the disease (Domino et al. as cited in Spall, Read, & Chantry).

In 1991, Spall, Read, and Chantry conducted an exploratory study on the use of metaphor with palliative care, hospice, adult oncology, and bereavement counseling patients and found that metaphors have a greater therapeutic and communicatory value if the metaphor generates from the patient. These researchers suggest that it is possible for a metaphor to be used in an unhelpful way if the metaphor is misunderstood or misinterpreted by health care professionals. In that case, the metaphor fails to communicate the patient's intended meaning to the health care professional. Overall, however, they found that "metaphor seems to facilitate effectively the process of enabling patients or clients to explore, express, and explain difficult situations from a personal perspective" (Spall et al., p. 352). Young (2008) also found that metaphors originating from a bereavement writing group helped the group members identify and deal with death and grief. The use of figurative language in this group helped it to bond quickly and strongly, which also assisted its members in the integration of their experiences of loss and grief in a safe and productive manner.

Riley (1999) states that adolescents are constantly using their own individualized metaphors-- metaphor is a creative aspect applied to their communication. Riley also indicates that art therapy has always sought and utilized metaphorical communication as inherent to the art product. As such, adolescents are comfortable talking through the metaphor. Young (2008) found that creating metaphors helps bereaved individuals identify and deal with particularly challenging aspects of death and grief, including such taboo subjects as abuse and suicide. As previously mentioned, Young's work with groups suggests that not only is the use of metaphor in bereavement counseling useful for individuals, but it can help in the group therapy context as well.

Summarily, bereavement and the resolution of bereavement for adolescents seem to pose challenges that are different than those of adults in the same circumstances. The emotional and cognitive developmental issues, such as the conflicts surrounding attachment and dependency as well as cognitive and language limitations, suggest that the process of metaphoric art expression may be an appropriate intervention. The data collected in this study, enhances the understanding of the bereaved adolescent's experience of parent death and consequently contribute to the formulation of art therapy strategies for treatment and evaluation. Additionally, the artistic process provides a means through which the adolescent can express experience, memories, and emotions that he or she may not be able to put into words, which provides a common language through which the adolescent and therapist can communicate and facilitate the therapeutic relationship (Eaton, Doherty, & Widrick, 2007).

Overall, the research suggests that the use of multiple means of collecting data provides a more inclusive picture of the experience of individuals, including adolescents and those experiencing bereavement. The use of art with adolescents has empirical support (Finn, 2003; Harnden, Rosales, & Greenfield, 2004; McIntyre, 1990; Saunders & Saunders, 2000), as does the use of metaphor as an alternative means of communication (Riley, 1999; Young, 2008). There appears, however, to be no literature addressing the use of metaphor with bereaved adolescents within the context of artwork. As the research cited above suggests, the use of artwork and metaphor are both useful tools in eliciting the experience of this population. As there appears to be paucity of research in the area of adolescent bereavement due to the loss of a parent and how this would be expressed using artwork and metaphor, this research will investigate the experience of adolescents

who have lost a parent using artistic processes. As adolescents typically deny the finality of their loss (Harris, 1990), it is important to investigate the ways in which adolescents who have lost a parent can express their experience by making it concrete in an artistic image.

The research question for this study is: How do individuals who have lost a parent in adolescence express the experience of having lost a parent through metaphoric art processes? This retrospective phenomenological research study explored the experience of individuals who have lost a parent in adolescence as expressed through the metaphoric art process. For the purposes of this study, the term adolescence is defined as a normally-developing person between the ages of 15-18. Parental death must have occurred within this age range. This age range was chosen in accordance with stages of adolescent grief as outlined by Black (2005). Individuals within this age range respond to grief in a manner that is far different from younger adolescents. In order to minimize risk, this study was designed to be retrospective. The individuals recruited for the study were between the ages of 18-27 years. Additional precautions to minimize risk included having no history of psychiatric illnesses according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000).

This study is delimited by the small number of subjects recruited. As such, the results can not be generalized to the overall population. Additionally, these results can not be generalized to adolescents younger than 15 years of age as this study focuses on the experience of adolescents who have lost a parent between 15-18 years of age. Also, care should be taken when generalizing to the bereaved adolescent population as this is a retrospective study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In order to understand the impact of the death of a parent on an adolescent's psychological, physical, and social health, the topics included in this literature review will explore the constructs of general bereavement, normal adolescent psychological development, bereavement as specific to adolescence and developmental issues that arise in the event of a parent's death, as well as exploring the available literature on established treatments. As specific to the interests of this study, art therapy theory and literature that explores the use of art therapy with the adolescent population and the use of metaphor in therapeutic settings will also be addressed. All of the above mentioned areas of research intersect in the exploration of using metaphoric art as a means of understanding and potentially treating and assessing the experience of parental bereavement in normal adolescence.

Bereavement

Definitions of Bereavement

Bereavement is defined as the experience of losing to death a person to whom one is attached (Valente, Saunders, & Street, 1988; Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson, 2006). It includes all responses over time to a death and is a slow process of recognizing that a person has died and of creating some meaning out of the death. Bereavement includes mourning, the social expressions of bereavement, and grief, the emotional or affective responses to death (Valente, Saunders, & Street). Changes in cognitions, emotions, continuity of life, and physical health are experienced by bereaved persons. They struggle to restructure the meaning of life by asking why the death occurred and wondering if any

act could have prevented the death, as well as becoming aware of their own mortality and the mortality of their other loved ones (Valente, Saunders, & Street).

Clinical Criteria of Bereavement

In the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition, text-revised (DSM-IV-TR) (American Psychiatric Association [APA], 2000), bereavement is categorized as a clinical condition that is not considered a mental disorder. Additionally, the symptoms associated with a major depressive episode are considered to be a normal part of bereavement and a normal reaction to the death of a loved one. According to the DSM-IV-TR, a full depressive syndrome is a normal reaction to a loss and is associated with feelings of depression. Other symptoms include poor appetite, weight loss, and insomnia. Such a reaction may not be immediate, but rarely occurs after the first two months. “Normal” bereavement varies considerably according to different subcultural groups (APA, 2000).

A diagnosis of a major depressive episode is generally not given for bereavement conditions unless the bereavement condition persists for longer than two months. Symptoms that are not considered to be part of normal bereavement include feelings of guilt about actions, thoughts, reactions, or feelings other than actions taken or not taken by the survivor at the time of the death, thoughts of death other than the survivor feeling as though he or she should have died with the deceased person, marked psychomotor retardation, morbid preoccupations with worthlessness, marked functional impairment, and hallucinatory experiences other than seeing or hearing the deceased person (APA, 2000)

Stage Model Theories of Bereavement

Bereavement models suggest that the mourning process is a series of tasks to be accomplished. Several bereavement models suggest that bereavement is processed in a series of stages, many of which are similar across theories (Bowlby, 1980; Clayton, 1982; Worden, 1991). For instance, Worden (1991) and Bowlby's (1980) bereavement models suggest that there are four tasks in the mourning process, and Clayton proposes three very similar stages to the bereavement process. The first in this series of tasks involves learning to accept the loss (Worden). Bowlby (1991) and Clayton (1982) describe the first stage as a phase of numbing that typically lasts from a few hours to a week. Additionally, Bowlby acknowledges that this stage can include the possibility of outbursts of extremely intense distress and/or anger. In this first stage, Worden states that denying the facts of the loss can vary in degree from a slight distortion to a full-scale delusion. People can protect themselves from the reality of the loss by denying the meaning of the loss, denying the loss itself, practicing selective forgetting, and denying the irreversibility of the death (Worden).

The second task in the stage bereavement models suggested by Clayton (1982), Bowlby (1980), and Worden (1991) is experiencing the pain of grief and the emotional reactions that acknowledging this pain can bring. Clayton describes this stage as a state of depression lasting from a few weeks to a year. Within this stage, Worden states that bereaved people can also deny the feelings and pain associated with the loss by avoiding painful thoughts. According to Bowlby, the second phase is that of yearning and searching for the lost figure, which may last for months or years. Anger is also common

in the second phase of mourning. In healthy mourning, the urge to search for and recover the deceased eventually fades over time.

Adjusting to a new environment where the deceased is missing is the third task described by Clayton (1982), Bowlby (1980), and Worden (1991). The realization of what it is like to live without the deceased often begins to emerge around three months after the loss because the survivor may not be aware of all of the roles played by the deceased for some time after the loss occurs (Worden). Bowlby maintains that disorganization and despair are key components of the task of adjustment. This phase is characterized by discarding old patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting so that new ones can be made. However, a bereaved person can despair that nothing can be salvaged and fall into depression and apathy (Bowlby). As the final stage of Clayton's model of bereavement, adjustment and recovery are the main features of this stage. Many bereaved people are on their way to recovery around six months after the death. Recovery is marked by acceptance of the death and is accompanied by a return to the level of functioning that preceded the death (Clayton).

Similarly to the final stage in Clayton's (1982) model of bereavement, the fourth task in the bereavement models suggested by Worden (1991) and Bowlby (1980) is that of emotionally relocating the deceased and moving on with life. This task involves withdrawing energy from the previous relationship and forming new relationships with others (Worden). The fourth and final stage of Bowlby's phases of mourning is a phase of a greater or lesser degree of reorganization. In this phase, the bereaved person discovers that he or she must make an attempt to fill unaccustomed roles and acquire new skills in order to move on with life. Within these stages, it is possible for any individual person to

oscillate between any two of them, but most individuals move through this succession of stages over the course of weeks and months after the loss (Bowlby). Although most people move through the stages without significant problems (Clayton, 1982; Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson, 2006), 10-20% of people experience a complicated grief reaction (Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson).

Research on Bereavement Processes

Clayton (1968, 1971, 1979) conducted several research studies identifying symptoms of bereavement and recovery from bereavement. The first sample of bereaved people was comprised of forty bereaved Caucasian relatives of people who had died at a general hospital (Clayton, Desmarais, & Winokur, 1968). Participants were interviewed within 16 days after the death and again within four months. At the time of the first interview, only three symptoms of bereavement were present in at least 50% of the sample—depressed mood (87%), sleep disturbance (85%), and crying (79%). Anorexia/weight loss, loss of interest in television and the news, and difficulty concentrating occurred in 49%, 42%, and 47%, respectively. At the time of the follow-up interview, 81% of the sample had improved and 4% was worse. For those who had improved, they reported that the improvement transpired within 6-10 weeks following the death.

The second sample of work comprised another group of Caucasian people (n=109) who had lost a spouse and were identified from obituaries and death certificates (Clayton, Halikes, & Maurice, 1971). Within the first month, the majority of subjects reported the use of medication to treat sleep disturbance or nervousness, difficulty concentrating or poor memory, crying, anorexia/weight loss, depressed mood, and sleep

disturbances. These results are consistent with the symptoms experienced by widows and widowers that were included in the first sample of work (Clayton, Desmarais, & Winokur, 1968).

The second and third samples of work followed similar protocol and found similar results (Clayton, Halikes, & Maurice, 1971; Clayton, Desmarais, & Winokur, 1968). A group of younger (average age 36 years) widowed people (n=62) comprised the third sample (Clayton & Darvish, 1979). These individuals were first interviewed within a month of the death of their spouse. Both the second and third samples of participants were re-interviewed at one year from the death of their spouse and were matched with married, age-matched non-bereaved people in order to assess relative functioning. At the end of the first year, participants in both samples tended to have improvements in somatic symptoms; however, insomnia, restlessness, and periodic low mood seemed to persist. Somatic symptoms improved to a far greater degree than did psychological symptoms. Approximately 42% of the bereaved were experiencing a full depressive episode at one month following the death, which decreased to 16% of the sample at the one year follow-up (Clayton & Darvish). Clayton (1990) reports that, compared to the matched controls, the one year incidence of full depressive episode was 47% in the bereaved versus 8% in the controls.

Overall, there was little significant difference between men and women symptomatically or between those who were affected by a sudden death versus a lingering death. Also, few differences existed between those who defined their marriages as good or bad or between those who considered themselves to be religious and those who did not. Regardless that there were no differences in physical symptoms or

hospitalizations in comparing control to bereaved participants, the rate of use of alcohol, hypnotics, smoking, and tranquilizers increased following bereavement. Clayton's work on bereavement processes suggests that symptoms of bereavement typically diminish over time, that the presence of a major depressive episode is not uncommon among the bereaved, and that the bereaved experience the symptoms of depression during the bereavement process. In all samples, the majority of participants showed an improvement in symptomology within four months post death (Clayton & Darvish, 1979; Clayton, Desmarais, & Winokur, 1968; Clayton, Halikes, & Maurice, 1971).

Similar to the studies conducted by Clayton (1968, 1971, 1979), but with a focus upon adolescent bereavement, Balk and Vesta (1998) found that bereavement symptoms diminish over time. Through a longitudinal case study, Balk and Vesta followed the course of bereavement for a traditional-college-age female (age 19) whose father had just died due to a four-year struggle with colon cancer. These authors used two quantitative instruments to gather data in this study: the Impact of Events Scale (IES) and the Grant Foundation Bereavement Inventory (GFBI). A qualitative aspect was added when the subject of this research presented her diary as a method of data collection. The IES is a 15 item standardized instrument that gathers data about psychological intrusions and psychological avoidance, whereas the GFBI is a structured interview designed to be administered to bereaved adolescents and gather quantitative data on aspects of bereavement, such as attachment, reunion fantasies, disbelief, identification, and disloyalty.

In the above case study, Balk and Vesta (1998) compared the scores of the study participant (which were taken 14 times throughout the four years following bereavement)

to scores gathered in a separate longitudinal study with 80 bereaved college students on a university campus. The results indicate that as time from the death increases, the instances of thoughts of intrusion, avoidance, wishes of reunion, and feelings of disbelief declined. Any peaks in thoughts of intrusion and avoidance can be linked to situational disturbances for example, death of an extended family member. In the identified study, both journal entries and the scores on the quantitative scales confirmed an ongoing attachment with the deceased. Although the intensity of her grief lessened over time and she could function without concentrating on her father constantly, Balk and Vesta found that it was clear that she maintained the sense that he was with her as confirmed by her journal entries. The adolescent in this study also expressed the importance of a journey to find herself as a constant theme in her journal. Searching for a sense of identity and the importance of the journey to find oneself is a developmental goal for adolescence (Balk, 1995; Gemelli, 1996; Levy-Warren, 1992; Newman & Newman, 2006) and has been found to be affected by parental bereavement (Balk & Vesta, 1998; Harris, 1990; Rosen, 1991).

Outcomes of Bereavement

Bereavement outcomes are varied in nature and duration. Outcomes of bereavement can both negatively and positively impact a person, depending upon their circumstances. The outcomes of bereavement that are addressed here will be those best supported by the literature, which include spirituality, psychological distress, and traumatic or pathological grief. Outcomes of bereavement that are more specific to adolescents will be covered within the section concerning adolescent bereavement. The

literature presented here represents general outcomes of bereavement that are not specific to any particular population.

Spirituality

A sense of spirituality seems to have an important impact on the course of bereavement (Balk & Vesta, 1998; Becker, Xander, & Blum, 2007; Batten & Oltjenbruns, 1999; Leighton, 2008). In the aforementioned study by Balk and Vesta (1998), the subject of the case study found her sense of spirituality to be an important part of her maintenance of a relationship with her deceased father. Likewise, Batten and Oltjenbruns (1999) conclude that spiritual growth is an integral component to bereavement. Through an open-ended interview process, Batten and Oltjenbruns gathered information about four adolescents (age 15-18 years), who were referred from a hospice organization. They had all recently lost their sibling through death at least two years prior to the interview. All of the deaths were sudden and all who had died were males. The interview focused upon the adolescent's own situation, the relationship between religion, spirituality and bereavement, and personal outcomes to the death of the sibling.

The results identified major themes including meaning-making strategies, new perspectives on self, others, and sibling relationship, life, death, and God/higher power. All of these themes lent themselves to a quest for understanding life's meaning or spiritual growth. Batten and Oltjenbruns (1999) suggest that spiritual growth following the death of a loved one is linked to cognitive capacity—as the person ages, he or she is better able to think abstractly about death and has a broader understanding of spirituality. Piagetian theory likewise suggests that cognitive development affects a person's ability to think abstractly about death (Balk, 1995; Newman & Newman, 2006). Through their

study, Batten and Oltjenbruns also suggest the possibility that a person can develop spiritually years following the death of a loved one that took place during childhood when the bereaved individuals attain the cognitive capacity to reflect on the crisis and reconstruct their values and beliefs.

Becker, Xander, and Blum (2007) conducted systematic review of bereavement literature and the influence of spirituality on the outcome of the bereavement process (i.e. the ability to return to a previous level of functioning) suggests that this area of research is far from conclusive. Due to the overwhelming number of White, protestant female participants in the studies included in the review, it is difficult to apply conclusions about the effect of spirituality on bereavement to other people of other cultures or religious understandings. In most cases, the relationship between the bereaved and the deceased was close, typically family members (37% of participants in the reviewed studies had lost a parent). Due to the absence of standardized outcome measures and comparable study designs, Becker, Xander, and Blum conclude that a formal meta-analysis with statistical pooling of results across studies is not possible. Regardless, these authors conclude that 87.5% of studies report that participants experience positive effects of spiritual and religious beliefs on bereavement. Only one study (out of 32 total studies) reported some negative effects (increase in depression). Religion was also seen as a coping response to bereavement (Becker, Xander, & Blum).

Psychological Distress

In addition to spirituality as an outcome of bereavement, several authors suggest that the bereaved are susceptible to psychological distress as well (Schut & Stroebe, 2005; Stroebe, Schut, & Stroebe, 2005/2007). One such outcome is a higher risk of

mortality due to bereavement, popularly known as dying of a broken heart (Stroebe, Schut, & Stroebe, 2007). Based upon their results, these authors find that nearly all research on mortality due to bereavement is conducted with people who have lost a spouse because this type of bereavement is fairly common, as compared with child loss, and has a great personal effect (as compared with parental loss in adulthood). Most of the findings (Stroebe, Schut, & Stroebe, 2007) in this review indicate an early excess risk of mortality with some researchers noting risks of mortality that persist longer than six months after bereavement. A greater risk of mortality is associated with white people as compared to black people, and widowers as compared with widows (as compared with married, same-sex counterparts). Sex-difference patterns can vary across the different types of loss, however (Stroebe, Schut, & Stroebe, 2007).

Stroebe, Schut, and Stroebe (2007) also conclude that there is a pattern within the literature of a greater occurrence of physical and psychological health complaints in bereaved people as compared with matched controls. Physical health complaints include physical symptoms like headaches, dizziness, and chest pain; high rates of disability and illness; and greater use of medical services and drug use. Additionally, some results suggest that bereaved individuals who are most in need of health care may not be obtaining such help. Psychological reactions are most intense in early bereavement. Such symptoms include suicidal ideation, loneliness, insomnia, depression, anxiety, distress, somatic symptoms, and social dysfunction within six months of the death. Stroebe, Schut, and Stroebe's research is non-conclusive about the influence of culture or religion on the psychological expression of grief. Regardless, these authors suggest that the fundamental manifestations of grief are universal.

Traumatic or Pathological Grief

A systematic literature analysis on the efficacy of bereavement intervention programs by Schut and Stroebe (2005) determined that adjustment to bereavement can take months to years, with reactions being substantially different across individuals and cultures. Although most individuals eventually recover, mental and physical health problems can be extreme and persistent for a minority of bereaved people. Studies on pathological grief, grief persistent enough to be equivalent to the diagnostic criteria for a mental disorder, report that anywhere from 5%-33% of the bereaved qualify as such persistent grief. However, the prevalence rate of pathological grief is difficult to interpret because there are no consistent criteria or definitions of pathological grief (Schut & Stroebe). Zhang, El-Jawahri, and Prigerson (2006) propose the inclusion of Complicated Grief Disorder in the next edition of the DSM, the DSM-V. This set of diagnostic criteria allows for the identification and diagnosis of pathological or complicated grief. Complicated bereavement contrasts with normal bereavement because survivors of the former are essentially frozen or stuck in a state of chronic mourning. Those with complicated grief suffer mental anguish over their psychological protest against the reality of the loss and are reluctant to make the necessary adaptations to life in the absence of the deceased (Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson). Complicated grief is a different construct than Major Depressive Disorder and can be reliably distinguished from it (Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson; Zisook & Kendler, 2007).

Related to complicated grief, Kaltman and Bonanno (2000) investigated the type of death as related to traumatic grief symptoms. Eighty-seven participants who had lost a spouse were enrolled in this study, of which 71 remained in the study through 14 months

post-loss, and 56 remained in the study through 25 months post-loss. The majority of this sample was Caucasian (80.5%) and female (69%), with an age range of 24-56 years ($M=45.8$). Data collection procedures included a measure of self-reported depression and a structured clinical interview, which included post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms. Both data collection measures were administered at 14 and 25 months post-loss. Results indicate that bereavement subsequent to violent death is associated with higher levels and more enduring distress than bereavement under other circumstances. This research also indicates that grief includes symptomology other than symptoms of depression commonly associated with loss. In order to better understand the bereaved person's experience, it is necessary to assess PTSD, depression, and grief-related symptoms, prior trauma exposure, the circumstances surrounding the event, and the bereaved person's subjective reaction at the time of the loss (Kaltman & Bonanno, 2000). The chances of experiencing the death of a friend or family member becomes more frequent as a person ages, therefore creating a tendency for clinicians to normalize the bereavement experience. Although most young adults have experienced the death of a loved one, bereavement is still among one of life's most stressful experiences (Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson, 2006). Although the majority of bereaved individuals respond to grief in a normal, non-pathological way, a fraction of individuals have reactions to bereavement that are more serious and can interfere with normal mental and physical functioning.

Adolescence and Bereavement

Normal Adolescent Development

In order to understand the bereavement process in adolescence, a review of the cognitive, emotional, physical, and social developmental challenges of this age group is necessary. For the purpose of this literature review adolescence is defined as ages from 10-22 years (Levy-Warren, 1992) as the available literature does not seem to differentiate between younger and older adolescents (Adams, 2005; Balk, 1995; Levy-Warren). The current study, however, focuses upon older adolescents ages 15-18 years of age. Adams (2005) suggests that there is no single definition of adolescence. The adolescent experience is known as emerging adulthood, youth, the second decade of life, or the teenage years. Constructing a worldwide definition is even more challenging due to the growing understanding of the variety of experiences that defines the adolescent experience. Adolescent experience in any given region of the world is different from that in another (Adams). Rather, Adams (2005) and Levy-Warren (1992) maintain that adolescence is considered a stage in life that begins sometime around the onset of puberty and ends sometime when the person gains adult rights, responsibilities, and recognition by family, society, and law. The issues inherent to the developmental phase of adolescence, which will be discussed next, have repercussions throughout adult life (Levy-Warren).

Regardless of the imprecise definition of adolescence, Levy-Warren (1992) contends that adolescent development requires change in three areas: autonomy, competence, and sexual identity. Roughly speaking, adolescence takes place between the ages of 10-12 and 20-22 years (Levy-Warren). Additionally, adolescence is no longer

considered to be a unitary developmental period. Rather, it is divided into at least three sub-phases: early, middle, and late. Early adolescence is characterized by a relative turning away from the parents and a move towards the peer group along with vast physiological changes. Middle adolescence involves de-idealization of the parents in conjunction with pursuit of intimate relationships within the peer group. Finally, late adolescence entails an integration of identity and focus on developing personal standards and goals (Levy-Warren, 1992; Newman & Newman, 2006).

Adolescence is characterized by a number of distinctive features: a search for an emancipated identity, the emergence of social reasoning and cognitions, and a quest for meaning (Balk, 1995; Levy-Warren, 1992; Newman & Newman, 2006). Levy-Warren asserts that adolescents become more autonomous from their parents, their friends, and their sociocultural worlds during this period of development and turn towards the outside world. They turn towards others for advice, direction, and models of behavior, which provides them with more information about themselves and the development of an identity. Adolescents are also aware of the abstract world of ideas and concepts that is now available to them because of their maturing cognitive development (Balk, 1995; Levy-Warren, 1992; Newman & Newman, 2006).

In order to better understand the adolescent's ability to think abstractly and how this may interface with understanding and processing bereavement, a review of Piagetian theory is necessary (as cited in Balk, 1995; Fowler, 1996; Newman & Newman, 2006). Piaget asserts that human intelligence progresses in stages that provide increasing coherence between the mind and reality (as cited in Balk, 1995). Before a child reaches formal operational thought, he or she can use mental operations to explain changes in

tangible objects and events, but cannot explain abstract concepts (Newman & Newman, 2006). By the time a child has reached adolescence, he or she can reason about abstract concepts without visible representations in the stage of *formal operations* (Balk; Newman & Newman). The distinguishing feature of formal operational thought is the ability to separate and distinguish between reality and possibility and the ability to raise hypotheses about an event and follow the logic that the hypothesis implies (Newman & Newman). Additionally, when a child has reached formal operational thought, he or she is able to think about the changes that come with time, foresee the consequences of his or her actions, and think in relativistic ways about self, others, and the world (Newman & Newman). Fowler (1996) claims that the *formal operations* stage of cognitive development is what allows adolescents to both refine a concept of death and creates the context where questions related to the meaning of life can be asked. Without the ability to think abstractly, these issues are impossible to consider (Batten & Oltjenbruns, 1999).

It is also necessary to create a context in which the tasks of adolescent development can be understood, as well as the structure of the adolescent-parent relationship. Erikson phases of psychosocial development describe adolescence as a period of psychosocial crisis involving the establishment of an emancipated identity versus succumbing to identity or role confusion (as cited in Gemelli, 1996; Newman & Newman, 2006). Becoming separate and autonomous from parents and developing individual points of view are part of the tasks associated with a successful emancipated identity (Balk, 1995; Gemelli; Newman & Newman). Significant role confusion leads adolescents to adopt a false identity that is derived from some combination of internal and external rebellion. When adolescents are unable to integrate the many diverse social,

gender, peer, and sexual roles, a false identity may be established. Often these adolescents will then search for a new person or group that provides them with an identity as a way of suppressing their sense of role or identity confusion (Gemelli; Newman & Newman).

As adolescence is characterized by the separation and individuation from the parent figures, it is natural to assume that there will be conflict involved in this process (Newman & Newman, 2006; Rae, 1992). Adolescents take a risk in leaving the security, structure, and stability of the family unit where the expectations placed upon them are relatively well-defined. It is not uncommon for the adolescent to feel incapable of mastering this developmental task. If the adolescent becomes too anxious, he or she may retreat into the comfort of a dependent relationship on the parental figures or develop inappropriate attachments outside of the family unit (Rae, 1992).

Adolescent-parent interactions are often marked with negative emotionality and poor interpersonal communication, which results in ineffective behavioral management techniques (Rae, 1992). Cohen, Adler, Beck, and Irwin (1986) conducted a research study on parental perceptions of their adolescent children through the use of questionnaires. They found that parents tend to react to their child in a manner that is consistent with adolescent stereotypes, ranging from the teenager as a victimizer, being powerful and violent, or as a victim, being passive and powerless. Additionally, these authors found that younger parents tend to view their adolescents, especially firstborn children, more negatively than older parents (over 38 years of age). This result suggests that a primary stressor for parents of adolescents may be a lack of knowledge about the developmental process and that a greater maturity on the part of the parents can buffer

some of the stress of the adolescent's changing behavior. An unexpected result of this research indicates that single parents tend to perceive more positive changes in their adolescents than other parents. Rae (1992) claims that resistance to authority causes parents to attribute negative personal qualities to the adolescent (such as "rude" or "lazy").

Rae (1992) contends that there are four typical areas of adolescent-parent conflict. Most adolescents use rebellion to test limits, search for competency and autonomy, separate from parental standards, and to develop an independent value system. Erikson (1968) asserts that behaviors such as mood swings, acting out, and social alienation are the result of role diffusion that is part of the adolescent's testing of the world. During this stage of testing the world, the adolescent develops a self-identity by assimilating past experiences and applying them to new situations (Erikson; Newman & Newman, 2006). The degree of negative affect and rebellion that an adolescent exhibits is more a measure of the amount of force that is required to overcome the bonds to his or her parents and separate from them than it is a measure of hostility towards the parent (Rae).

Adolescence is primarily marked by a turning away and de-idealization of the parents as well as a search for individual autonomy (Balk, 1995; Erikson, 1968; Gemelli, 1996; Levy-Warren, 1992; Newman & Newman, 2006; Rae, 1992). Adolescents are becoming more autonomous from their parents resulting in an increase in conflict in the adolescent-parent relationship (Cohen, Adler, Beck, & Irwin, 1986; Rae).

Developmentally, adolescents are attempting to restructure the meaning of their own lives through the individuation and separation from the parent (Rae). However, this conflict and search for autonomy can be interrupted by the death of the parent, resulting in

difficulties in completing this stage of development as the adolescent attempts to restructure the meaning of the death of the parent (Valente, Saunders, & Street, 1988).

Bereavement in Adolescence

Understanding how adolescent development intersects with the situation of bereavement involves the new ability of adolescents to process the concept of death. This new ability to think in formal operations is what allows adolescents to refine their concept of death (Batten & Oltjenbruns, 1999; Fowler, 1996). The developmental changes involved in adolescence create the context in which questions involving the meaning of life can be asked. As adolescents have the cognitive capacity to think abstractly, a shift in the concept of death and the questions asked in relation to death evolve (Batten & Oltjenbruns). Cognitively, adolescents struggle to restructure the meaning of life. As a result, however, adolescents are able to ask if anything could have prevented the death and become more acutely aware of their own mortality and of the fear that other loved ones could also die (Valente, Saunders, & Street, 1988). Balk (1983) found that adolescents understand that irrevocably bad things happen in life, find ways to cope with adversity, and realize that people should be valued while they are alive.

Adolescent Manifestations of Bereavement

Bereaved adolescents react to death in ways that are similar to the reaction of adults with sadness and painful memories, but grief is often shorter in duration (Black, 2005). Balk (1983) interviewed 33 Caucasian middle/upper-class adolescents ages 14-19 twice at four and 84 months after a sibling's death. Emotions that were present during the first and second interviews were anger (75.8%, 27.3%), confusion (88%, 3.1%), depression (81.8%, 45.5%), loneliness (66.7%, 33.3%), shock (88%, 30.3%), and fear

(57.5%, 24.2%). Similar emotional reactions in response to adolescent loss of a parent were found by Meshot and Leitner (1993). According to Black (2005), adolescents from the ages of 15-17 years typically feel overwhelmed by survivors' emotional dependence and grief and worry about their own vulnerability and death. Complicated bereavement in adolescents of this age can include mood swings, withdrawal from friends and groups, poor school performance, and high-risk behaviors such as drug use (Black, 2005; Dowdney, 2000). Such manifestations of bereavement are far different from bereavement characteristics of younger adolescents and, as such, should be approached differently (Black).

Impact of Bereavement in Adolescence

Bereavement experienced by adolescents can have a variety of influences, including impacting the completion of developmental tasks in adolescence. It can also impact an adolescent's spiritual development, sense of self, and the development or emergence of psychopathology (Balk, 1991; Becker, Xander, & Blum, 2007; Ens & Bond, 2007; Kuntz, 1991; Harris, 1990). The impact of bereavement on the completion of developmental tasks in adolescence will be addressed separately and at a later point as it is especially relevant to loss of a parent in this stage of development. As different kinds of bereavement may impact different facets of adolescent life (Ringler & Hayden, 2000), each aspect of bereavement reactions will be addressed in relation to parental bereavement specifically as opposed to other types of adolescent loss such as peer loss or sibling loss.

A systematic review of the literature by Becker, Xander, and Blum (2007) yielded no literature that related specifically to the impact of parental death in adolescence on

spirituality. Out of the thirty-two studies that met inclusion criteria for this systematic review, Becker, Xander, and Blum found that only one study, by Balk (1991), focused upon the impact of death on adolescent spirituality as compared to general spirituality or spirituality in other specific situations (spousal death, child death, etc.). However, the study by Balk focused upon the impact of adolescent sibling death on attitudes towards spirituality as opposed to adolescent parental death. Ens and Bond (2007) addressed adolescent experience of death non-specifically through the use of the Revised Death Anxiety Scale with 226 participants (57.5% female; ages 11-18, $M=14.82$). When comparing the death anxiety of adolescents who had lost a family member such as a parent, sibling, or grandparent, to death anxiety in non-bereaved adolescents, Ens and Bond found that there are nonsignificant differences in death anxiety levels. However, only 14 adolescents in this study had experienced the death of a close family member, thus limiting the generalizability of these results.

Parent death in adolescence has an impact on various components of the individual's sense of self. Kuntz (1991) used a semi-structured interview process in a qualitative research study with 26 parentally bereaved adolescents (11 females) from the ages of 11-22 who had lost a parent within six weeks to six years of the study ($M=2$ years, 7 months). Themes that emerged from the interviews included withdrawal, fearfulness, aloneness, chronicity of grief, sadness, unpreparedness, presenting of facades, and increased maturity. Harris (1980) also finds that increased maturity may be a byproduct of parental loss, and themes of loss, unfairness, shock, and disbelief were products of parental loss in adolescence as identified by Meshot and Leitner (1993).

Vulnerability to injury, disease, and psychopathology is a prominent concern of bereavement literature regarding the death of a parent during adolescence. Harris (1990) reports that initial responses to loss of a parent include intense emotional, cognitive, physical, and behavioral reactions associated with impaired school performance, sleep disturbances, and strained peer relations. Through the use of semi-structured interviews and standardized measures with eleven adolescents (ages 13-18, M=15), Harris followed the participants through the year after parental death and elicited in-depth evaluations at 6 weeks, 7 months, and 13 months post-death. These results indicate that such symptoms of bereavement related stress are sustained over time, but to a lesser degree than are expressed immediately following the death of a parent. Harris suggests that bereavement in adolescents may be particularly problematic as adolescents do not have independent access to treatment and can feel overwhelmed by the surviving parent's grief.

Lin, Sandler, Ayers, Wolchik, and Luecken (2004) found similar reactions to death as Harris (1990), but conclude that mental health problems in bereaved children and adolescents are a function of both family and child variables. Children's resilience to parental death was positively predicted by their surviving caregiver's provision of warmth and discipline and negatively predicted by caregiver mental health problems. In a sample consisting of 179 children aged 8-16 years and their caregivers, Lin, Sandler, Ayers, Wolchik, and Luecken used several quantitative measures to determine levels and sources of environmental stress, caregiver discipline and warmth, and various child variables. These variables were identified as active inhibition of emotional expression, externalizing problems, internalizing problems, and self-esteem at between 4-30 months post-loss. Schmiede, Toon Khoo, Sandler, Ayers, and Wolchik (2006) argue that mental

health vulnerability is a result of problems in the relationship of the adolescent with the remaining parent and over-involvement with family stressors and caretaking roles.

Mireault and Bond (1992) determined that college students aged 17-25 years who had experienced the death of a parent before the age of 18 perceived themselves as more vulnerable to future losses than did a non-bereaved control group. This result is directly related to the loss and abandonment items on this questionnaire. Gutierrez (1999) found that adolescents who had lost a parent are not generally clinically depressed, do not express serious levels of suicidal ideation, and have relatively minor histories of suicidality. A sample consisting of 25 (age 13.4-19.6 years, $M=16.4$) predominately Caucasian (92%), parentally-bereaved participants whose parents had died more recently had greater negative perceptions of the deceased parents. Adolescents reporting higher levels of depressive symptoms were less attracted to life and more repulsed by life. This author also found a positive correlation between repulsion by life and suicidal ideation (Gutierrez).

Developmental Issues with Parental Bereavement in Adolescence

One of the main developmental issues affected by the death of a parent in adolescence is the successful negotiation of the task of second separation and individuation from the parental figures (Erikson, 1968). Developmentally, conflictual relationships are common in adolescence and may contribute to a more difficult course of grief, especially if this relationship is interrupted by death (Harris, 1990; Tyson-Rawson, 1996). Although ambivalence may be expressed about dependence upon the parents, the parents are always assumed to be available. Additionally, adaptive mourning may not be possible prior to the successful negotiation of separation from parental figures. Therefore,

rather than accept the loss, adolescents can become intensely attached to the memory of the lost parent and may use such defenses as denial, idealization of the deceased, inhibition, and isolation (Harris, 1990; Rosen, 1991). These defenses can impair and distort the grief process and interfere with normal development (Harris), namely the resolution of normal adolescent developmental tasks (Balk & Vesta, 1998).

Harris (1990) states that, in addition to the adolescent's own negotiation of the death of the parent figure, the grief of the surviving parent may hinder his/her ability to provide emotional support to the adolescent. In this situation, a vulnerable parent may become excessively dependent upon the child as a way to replace the sense of loss intimacy or relationship. A false sense of independence and increased sense of maturity on the part of the adolescent may encourage the parent to depend further on the adolescent (Harris). Although adolescents depend heavily on the support of their peers during the bereavement process (Rask, Kaunonen, & Paunonen-Ilmonen, 2002; Ringler & Hayden, 2000), peer support may be insufficient to support mourning (Harris).

Through a descriptive study of 11 participants, ages 13-18 years, who had lost a parent between one and six months prior to involvement in the study, Harris (1990) elicited interviews and standardized self-report measures of depression, behavior problems, and stress-specific symptoms. Adolescents in this study were found to rarely share their immediate reactions with family or friends, mostly in fear that they would be seen as overwhelming or that emotional expression was unacceptable. Several younger teens in this study also displayed little desire to relinquish the lost parent and had few resources to handle the overpowering memories. Bereavement in older adolescents was marked by intense denial and avoidance, which prevents attention to and resolution of

grief (Harris). Most teens in this study also expressed in their interviews that they welcomed the opportunity to discuss the death with an uninvolved adult and would not have otherwise discussed the death if not for their involvement in the study (Harris).

Yue-Tze Ng (2004) suggests that bereavement interferes with the adolescent's efforts to resolve psychosocial tasks. Yue-Tze Ng conducted a study with a sample of 70 bereaved families with 125 children between the ages of 6-17 years. The sample was divided into a pre-adolescent group (ages 6-11; n=60) and an adolescent group (ages 12-18; n=65). Data collection occurred at 4 months, 13 months, and 25 months after the loss of a parent and included six instruments, including a child behavior checklist, a competence scale for children, and a locus of control scale for children. This author found that, while self-esteem and self-efficacy did not improve the likelihood of positive emotional outcomes of parental death for the pre-adolescent, these factors appear to be protective factors for bereaved adolescents when considered independently of other variables. However, when considered in context with the parent's depression and passive coping of the death of their spouse, the adolescent group's self-esteem and self-efficacy failed to consistently predict positive emotional outcomes. For example, when two bereaved adolescents' parents had the same severity of depression and passivity, the adolescent with better self-perception had better adjustment shortly after death, which is a result that did not carry through later in the bereavement process.

Use of Support in Adolescent Parental Bereavement

Support of the child from the remaining parent or caregiver appears to have an impact on the successful negotiation of developmental tasks in adolescence. Research suggests that other supports are also necessary and helpful in helping adolescents find

resolution for the grief of having lost a parent. Yue-Tze Ng (2004) suggests that adolescents need more stability to negotiate their developmental tasks than do pre-adolescents as familial changes and stressors had a greater impact on the adolescent's emotional and behavioral health. Other studies have had conflicting reports on the use of peer support in the resolution of adolescent parental bereavement (Gray, 1989; Harris, 1990; Rask, Kaunonen, & Paunonen-Ilmonen, 2002; Ringler & Hayden, 2000).

As discussed earlier, Harris (1990) conducted an exploratory study on the effects of parent loss on adolescents. According to Harris, condolences or offers of support were perceived as unwelcome reminders of the loss. Participants in this study described little opportunity, time, or support for their grief, often because the surviving parent was so preoccupied with his or her own grief. For these adolescents, relatives, clergy, social workers, and friends of the family were rarely mentioned as helpful. Peer relationships were found to be helpful in some cases, but this support was contingent upon the quality of the relationship; if the relationship was disrupted, it left the adolescent vulnerable. Adolescents in this study were very isolated in their grief and used very little, if any, support (Harris). In contrast, Gray (1989) found that 40% of adolescents who had lost a parent within five years of participating in the study reported that a peer had been most helpful at the time of their parent's death, whereas 28% described the surviving parent as most helpful.

Psychological Interventions with Bereaved Adolescents

Psychological interventions for bereavement with adolescents often differ from those for adults and vary in their composition, focus, and outcomes. Treatment options that are currently evaluated in the literature include family-oriented treatment programs

(Sandler et al., 2003; Schmiede, Toon Khoo, Sandler, Ayers, & Wolchik, 2006; Tein, Sandler, Ayers, & Wolchik, 2006), preventative programs (Hetzel, Winn, & Tolstoshev, 1991), pharmacotherapy (Hensley, 2006; Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson, 2006), cognitive behavioral therapy (Boelen, de Keijser, van den Hout, & van den Bout, 2007; Clements, DeRanjeri, Viril, & Benasutti, 2004; Fleming & Robinson), narrative and solution-focused brief therapy (DeSocio, 2005; Holmes, 1999; Gray, Zide, & Wilker, 2000; Leighton, 2008), and art therapy (Eaton, Doherty, & Widrick, 2007; Finn, 2003; Harnden, Rosales, & Greenfield, 2004; McIntyre, 1990; Saunders & Saunders, 2000).

Family Oriented Treatment Programs

The research available concerning family oriented treatment approaches for adolescent bereavement consist primarily of empirical evaluation of the Family Bereavement Program, a specific type of bereavement program that targets the family system. Within the Family Bereavement Program, behavioral change methods such as modeling and role-playing teach the program skills, while homework is assigned as a way of applying the skills outside of the sessions. The skills targeted for children include positive coping, stress appraisals, control beliefs, and self-esteem. Caregivers also attend sessions in which the skills targeted are related to care-giver mental health, management of stressful life events, and improved discipline in the home. Within both the child and care-giver programs, improving the quality of the caregiver-child relationship is also a major component (Sandler et al., 2003; Schmiede, Toon Khoo, Sandler, Ayers, & Wolchik, 2006; Tein, Sandler, Ayers, & Wolchik, 2006).

The Family Bereavement Program (FBP) has undergone extensive empirical evaluation of its methods and effects (Sandler et al., 2003; Schmiede, Toon Khoo,

Sandler, Ayers, & Wolchik, 2006; Tein, Sandler, Ayers, & Wolchik, 2006). The FBP was designed to change the variables that are hypothesized to affect the mental health of bereaved children and adolescents. These variables include increasing the positive quality of the relationship between the caregiver and child, decreasing mental health problems of the caregiver, and decreasing children's exposure to negative events. The process of decreasing the children's exposure to negative events includes decreasing the occurrence of negative events in the family (such as serious conflicts between family members) and encouraging caregivers not to involve children in stressors that were primarily the caregiver's responsibility, such as financial troubles (Sandler et al.).

Sandler et al. (2003) evaluated the efficacy of the FBP as an intervention for parental bereavement with 135 children ages 8-16 years who had lost a parent between 4-30 months prior to the start of the study. The results indicate that the FBP led to improved parenting, coping, and caregiver mental health and to reductions in stressful events at posttest. At 11-month follow-up, the FBP led to reduced internalizing and externalizing problems only for girls and those who had higher problem scores at baseline evaluation. A similar evaluation of the FBP was conducted by Schmiede, Toon Khoo, Ayers, and Wolchik (2006) with 244 children and primary caregivers from 156 families. The rate of recovery for girls in the FBP condition of this study was significantly different from that of girls in the control condition across all outcomes. Girls in the treatment condition showed significant fewer depressive symptoms at 11 month follow-up whereas girls in the control condition increased slightly in depressive symptoms. Boys in both conditions showed reduced symptoms over time (measured at both baseline and 11 month evaluation).

Preventative Programs

Little information is available on preventative programs for bereaved adolescents. Hetzel, Winn, and Tolstoshev (1991) elaborate upon a school-based program on preventative health education which was developed by a team of health workers from an Australian health agency. It is designed to address a wide range of losses, with aims that include acknowledgement and valuing the normal loss experiences of adolescence, recognizing and affirming feelings of grief and loss, utilizing and developing individual and group coping skills, and developing guidelines that support the school community's response in situations of grief. The five session program was piloted with a sample of 530 students between 15-18 years of age. Results of this exploratory program conclude that a majority of students found the program to be valuable and that they have learned to respond differently to subsequent losses.

Pharmacological Interventions

Similarly to information on preventative programs for adolescent bereavement, research on the efficacy of pharmacotherapy interventions with this population is also lacking. A review of the literature by Hensley (2006) suggests that most treatment data has focused on widows and widowers, but that data suggests that antidepressants are well tolerated and tend to improve the symptoms of depression more than the symptoms of grief. Zhang, El-Jawahri, and Prigerson (2006) also assess the general bereavement literature and suggest that pharmacotherapy may only be useful for traumatic grief symptoms. These authors, however, report that there have been no randomized controlled trials of pharmacotherapies for the reduction of grief symptom severity. Open trials of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors suggest the promise of the reduction of traumatic

grief symptom severity, but placebo-controlled trials are needed before definitive statements can be made. As of yet, no research appears to be available that addresses the need for or efficacy of pharmacotherapy interventions with the bereaved adolescent population specifically.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Cognitive behavioral therapy operates on the premise that people are actively involved in constructing their own realities and connect their own idiosyncratic meanings to events. The therapist guides the patient and brings to the client's attention information that may be outside of their current focus, allowing them to reevaluate a previous conclusion or construct a new idea. Cognitive behavioral therapy offers insights into how one's core beliefs and schemas about himself or the world can be modified so that the person can accommodate the loss experience (Fleming & Robinson, 1996).

Cognitive behavioral interventions are typically used in cases of complicated grief rather than normal grief, and focuses primarily upon emotional, social, and practical difficulties that coincide with bereavement (Boelen, de Keijser, van den Hout, & van den Bout, 2007). In a controlled study with 54 bereaved individuals, Boelen, de Keijser, van den Hout, and van den Bout found that cognitive behavioral therapy was more effective in the treatment of complicated grief than supportive counseling. Clements, DeRanieri, Vigil, and Benasutti (2004), in contrast, state that supportive counseling is helpful as long as clear and concrete goals are set for therapy. These authors conclude that concrete goal setting can be a method of stress reduction during the chaotic aftermath of a sudden death. These goals provide direction with tasks on which to focus, thus providing a sense of control to the bereaved.

Narrative and Solution-focused Brief Therapy

The use of narrative therapy suggests that there is no one approach to bereavement therapy and that an eclectic mix of theories and approaches may be needed for each individual patient (Holmes, 1999; Leighton, 2008). In narrative therapy the patient presents in a state of confusion and uncertainty. As a way of navigating their past experiences and developing a way of moving forward in their lives, they seek help with their individual story. After learning how to put their feelings into words, the feelings are then reflected back by the therapist. The individual, elaborated story evolves as the patient rechecks the reflection to see if it feels right (Holmes, 1999). DeSocio (2005) contends that the use of narrative therapy with adolescents may assist in resolving and integrating self-disparities and creating a theory of self.

Creating a narrative can assist in the development of a sense of meaning (Holmes, 1999), which is part of the psychosocial crisis of adolescent development as proposed by Erikson (1968). Within the context of creating a narrative, the use of metaphor and story connect bodily experiences to the external world. By linking an external event, such as the death of a parent, to internal feelings, meaning can be given to the distress and pain that is felt and feelings can be objectified as the distance between the person and the feelings is increased (Holmes). Additionally, the narrative approach can be a powerful way of engaging the patient and forming a therapeutic alliance as the patient experiences the clinician as a person who genuinely wants to know the patient's side of the story (Holmes). Solution-focused brief therapy operates on a similar principle, suggesting that bereavement groups focus on exploration and creating new meanings to their losses. By searching for strengths, recognizing growth, looking for exceptions, and exploring

solutions, bereaved individuals can be empowered to construct new perceptions (Gray, Zide, & Wilker, 2000).

Narrative therapy is relevant to the treatment of adolescents because attachment research suggests that people who are able to create a narrative and reflect upon their experience in words are more likely to be able to form secure attachments than those people who lack the capacity to create a narrative (Holmes, 1999). Therefore, it is possible that those adolescents who can reflect and tell their story may be better able to sustain an attachment with the lost parent and further develop their attachment with the remaining parent. Habermas and Bluck (as cited in DeSocio, 2005) contend that adolescents have both the motivation and tools for integrating a life story that imparts meaning and coherence to their lives. DeSocio proposes that narrative approaches to psychotherapy may achieve therapeutic goals by assisting adolescents in the construction of positive life stories that can influence their identity formation. However, no research was found that supports the use of narrative therapy with bereaved adolescents specifically.

Art Therapy

Art Therapy Theory

The evaluation of the use and efficacy of art therapy interventions with bereaved adolescents will be discussed after an introduction into art therapy theory. Art therapy serves as a communicative outlet (Naumburg, 1966; Rubin, 1978; Saunders & Saunders, 2000) that allows the projection of inner thoughts (Naumburg, 1966) and expression of thoughts and emotions (Eaton, Doherty, & Widrick, 2007), as well as facilitates the

therapeutic relationship (Eaton, Doherty, & Widrick; Harnden, Rosales, & Greenfield, 2004).

The process of art therapy is based upon the recognition that fundamental thoughts and feelings are derived from the unconscious and are more easily expressed in images than in words (Naumburg, 1966). These images may have to do with dreams, fantasies, fears, conflicts, and childhood memories and serve as a way of encouraging a method of symbolic communication between therapist and patient. As patients begin to picture their inner experiences through art, they frequently become better able to articulate verbally about these feelings and experiences (Naumburg). The purpose of the art therapist is not to interpret the art expression of the patient, but to encourage the patient to discover for himself the meaning of the art product (Naumburg).

As Naumburg (1966) indicates, art therapy serves as a means of symbolic communication between the therapist and patient. Art therapy becomes especially useful for those people who have difficulty verbalizing their conflicts in a strictly verbal fashion (Rubin, 1978; Naumburg). Saunders and Saunders (2000) conducted a quantitative study on the efficacy of art therapy in reduction of problem behaviors and building a therapeutic relationship and concluded that one of the central features of art therapy is its ability to help children become more communicative about their feelings. As children become more communicative, they are less likely to either internalize their feelings in unhealthy ways or act their feelings out in destructive ways. In their study, poor communication was improved and defiance and avoidant behavior both decreased. At intake, clients had difficulty making eye contact with therapists, trusting them, and verbally expressing themselves. By exit, these behaviors improved significantly.

Saunders and Saunders (2000) conducted a quantitative study on the efficacy of art therapy with 94 children and adolescents (aged 2-16 years) over a three year period. All but five clients were White, and 64% were male. The average number of sessions attended was 16.8 and the median number was 10. Intake and exit surveys were completed by the therapist on each client in order to measure positive therapeutic relationship. Beginning of therapy and end of therapy evaluations showed that females were slightly more engaged than males and that the therapeutic engagement with the therapist increased from beginning to end of therapy. Children were also rated on symptomatic behavior at both intake and exit, with results showing that the decrease in behavior scores from intake to exit were statistically significant at the .001 level.

Art therapy has also demonstrated its use as a mode of expressing thoughts and emotions (Eaton, Doherty, & Widrick, 2007; Junge, 1985; Riley, 2001; Saunder & Saunders, 2000). Riley (2001) states that art therapy can be effective for adolescents as they see it as a non-threatening form of treatment. Through the art, the therapists can gain some idea of the concerns and life circumstances of the adolescent. Eaton, Doherty, and Widrick (2007) also express the value of art therapy as a means of providing a safe outlet for expressing thoughts and emotions in order to facilitate recovery from psychological distress. Likewise, Junge (1985) finds that art therapy serves as a means of facilitating recovery from bereavement through expression and non-verbal processing of the meaning of death for children and families.

Through a systematic literature review, Eaton, Doherty, and Widrick (2007) have state that art therapy has been used as an intervention for the negative psychosocial consequences associated with a variety of traumatic experiences. Although these authors

found that there is a common lack of methodological specificity in the research on art therapy efficacy, they acknowledge that the essence of art therapy is often unstructured and unconstrained as it allows the client the freedom to self-actualize. The process of art therapy involves the unfolding and discovery of what a person may be thinking and feeling, allowing the person to grow both emotionally and spiritually (Eaton, Doherty, & Widrick, 2007).

In addition to the task of expressing feelings and emotions as a form of communication, art therapy also serves to facilitate the therapeutic relationship. Wadson (1987) states that the development of a positive therapeutic relationship between the client and therapist is critical in facilitating the art therapy process. In a case study presented by Harnden, Rosales, and Greenfield (2004), the art component of art therapy served as a mediator between a suicidal adolescent girl and the therapist. In this way, the therapist was able to get closer to the patient as they worked together on issues of trust, abandonment, self-esteem, and feelings of rage and isolation. These authors understand that using art therapy contributed to the resolution of the patient's depression and reduction of her post-traumatic stress disorders symptoms, as well as the examination of her developmental needs and identity formation. Eaton, Doherty, and Widrick (2007) also conclude through a systematic literature review that art therapy is an effective tool for establishing a relationship between a child or adolescent client and his or her therapist. Additionally, these authors have observed that art therapy is also an effective method of treatment for the negative psychosocial consequences of childhood trauma.

Art Therapy and Bereavement in Adolescence

Given the potential consequences of losing a parent to death in adolescence and the effectiveness of art therapy with adolescents, the amount of literature on the use art therapy with bereaved adolescents is lacking. Although literature exists regarding art therapy and bereavement, there is a paucity of literature specifically directed at adolescent parental loss. As previously suggested, art therapy seems to be an efficacious treatment for a variety of issues including depression and suicidal ideation (Harnden, Rosales, & Greenfield, 2004), behavioral problems (Saunders & Saunders, 2000), and traumatic symptoms (Eaton, Doherty, & Widrick, 2007). The literature also suggests that art therapy is an useful treatment for adolescent bereavement as it provides a means of recovering from psychological distress (Finn, 2003) and provides a different way of understanding the emotions surrounding bereavement (McIntyre, 1990). Zambelli, Clark, Barile, and de Jong (1988) likewise suggest that creative therapies help promote communication so that a child can become effectively involved in the mourning process.

Although not a reflection of the use of art therapy with adolescents, Schut, Keuser, van den Bout, and Stroebe (1996) focus on the use of art therapy within a multi-modal treatment facility for adult bereavement. In a case example with a 42-year-old woman grieving the loss of a child, art therapy was shown to be more valuable than behavior therapy because the woman was better able to relate to the art work and increased her ability to talk about her problems within the context of a group. The art served as a means of reflecting her ongoing grief process during and by means of the creation of the art work. Through being able to symbolize the death of her daughter, she was able to confront her emotions and find resolution in her grief. In addition, case

illustrations by Junge (1985) suggest that art can be used to facilitate the grief process through creating a symbol of the deceased family member. By creating a book about the deceased as a symbol of the deceased, communication about the death was facilitated in families where this communication may have not otherwise occurred (Junge).

Simon (1982) and Zambelli, Clark, Barile, and de Jong (1988) suggest that adults and children use art materials as a means of expressing their feelings about conflicts in the bereavement process. These individuals may not recognize their need to express these feelings or may have been so shocked by the loss that they repressed or forgot the loss before it could be mourned (Simon). Often, children and adolescents have difficulty in articulating their feelings about grief, but can be enthusiastic about representing it in the artwork (Zambelli, Clark, Barile, and de Jong). According to Simon and Schut, de Keuser, van den Bout, and Stroebe (1996), bereavement art represents an attempt to work through the conflict. The stress in bereavement exists in the lack of proper mourning rather than the excess of mourning (Simon). Those who are in conflict over bereavement have failed to complete the mourning process. Through case illustrations of adults and children, Simon concludes that some works of art are directly influenced by the need to resolve bereavement and can happen spontaneously in therapy. Welsby (2008) also suggests that bereavement art can happen spontaneously in art therapy through her work with a 14 year old girl. In the case studies illustrated by Welsby, art therapy serves as a holding space for difficult emotions for adolescents whose families were unavailable to assist them with processing their grief.

Finn (2003) provides a case example of the use of art with a child and adolescent bereavement group consisting of five students (ages 11-13) attending an alternative

middle school for children with behavior problems. The group met for one hour per week for nine weeks. At the end of the ninth session, each participant was asked to complete a self-rating scale of how well they were able to better understand the emotions they felt and the differences between positive and negative coping skills. The results of this group case study indicate that art therapy is a means of recovering from psychological distress as it allows bereaved children and adolescents a different means of understanding and expressing their emotions. According to Zambelli, Clark, and Heegaard (1989) similar program was created at a hospice organization for children ages 4-16 and a school for children ages 5-12. The use of art therapy with this population appeared to improve family communication, provide support for the bereaved children, and promote the acceptance of the death as well as facilitate the grieving process. Additionally, art therapy assisted the children with developing a sense of self-worth, social cooperation, problem solving and increased personal efficacy.

McIntyre (1990) suggests, through a phenomenological research method with ten children with a slightly younger population (ages 9-12), that art therapy provides a way of transforming the reactions to bereavement through art. McIntyre states that children have difficulty finding the support they need to express their grief and, without support, this grief can become repressed. However, such reactions to grief as helplessness, fear, anger, confusion, and loneliness can be transformed through art. Both McIntyre and Baughman (2007) contend that art therapy helps children and adolescents work through grief by providing a safe and focused environment for expression that other forms of intervention do not offer. By releasing unspoken pain and connecting adolescents to their emotional self, creating artwork establishes a foundation for healing. Through creating a

concrete representation of a feeling, a child or adolescent can become an active participant in their bereavement process, allowing them to acknowledge their feelings and promote change (Baughman).

The Use of Metaphor

The structure of the metaphor mirrors the qualities of the art process and is used regularly in the practice of art therapy (Gorelick, 1989; Riley, 1999). Riley also states that adolescents are constantly using their own individualized metaphors. Riley indicates that art therapy has always sought and utilized metaphorical communication as inherent to the art product. As such, adolescents are comfortable talking through the metaphor (Riley). As well as serving as a means of communication, metaphor also serves as a way of exploring and expressing difficult situations (Barker, 2000; Spall, Read, & Chantry, 1991; Riley; Young, 2008) and as a group bonding tool (Young).

Spall, Read, and Chantry (1991) explore the use of metaphor by professionals in a variety of contexts, including palliative care, bereavement counseling, hospice care, and adult oncology nursing. Through the use of focus groups, this exploratory study engaged 31 participants from these different groups, four of which came from a well-established bereavement counseling organization. The results of this study suggest that the value of the metaphor as a communicative device is greater if it originates from the client. If the professional is providing the metaphor, it is seen as much more useful if it is provided in the context of education or helping to normalize a certain experience (e.g. “grief comes in waves”) (p. 348). Spall, Read, and Chantry identify five uses of metaphors within the context of their study-as a mechanism to avoid or distance oneself, as a way of focusing,

as an aid to understanding, as an aid to communication and connection, and to facilitate grief work.

Through a community-based bereavement writing group, Young (2008) identifies the use of metaphor as a way of helping group members identify and deal with particularly difficult aspects of death and grief. Ten middle-class women who had experienced a wide range of loss including loss of a parent or caregiver, death of other family members, and death of a spouse, participated in a bereavement writing group. The group met once per week for two and one half hour sessions for eight weeks to write and share based upon two prompts per session. Young found that the metaphors generated by the group to capture their emotional experience of death typically fell within two groups: one connoting breakage, the other erasure. By sharing metaphors, Young concludes that people are able to experience healing transformations far beyond what can be accomplished individually. Through the use of metaphors, the group was both able to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and connect with the experiences of the other group members.

It is clear that the use of metaphor and art therapy have many commonalities. Both seem to improve communication between individuals, giving a broader understanding of a certain phenomenon. The use of metaphor often mirrors the art process (Gorelick, 1999; Riley, 1999), and both are ways of exploring and expressing difficult situations, understanding emotions, recovering from psychological distress, and transformation. Both art therapy and metaphor have been used in bereavement contexts successfully for these purposes, but the literature is lacking in specific information on the use of artistic metaphors in the treatment and understanding of the experience of

bereavement. Riley states that adolescents are comfortable with the concept of metaphor as a communicative means, and Finn (2003) and McIntyre (1990) conclude that art therapy is a useful tool for treatment of child and adolescent bereavement. However, there is little literature available that connects the concepts of adolescent bereavement, the loss of a parent, art therapy, and the use of metaphor.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

Design

This study is a phenomenological research design. Through a phenomenological method of inquiry, the present study elicited a rich description of the lived experience of bereavement in individuals who had lost a parent during adolescence as expressed through a metaphoric art process. The study employed a retrospective perspective by recruiting individuals who had lost a parent during adolescence but who were distanced from that event by several years. The rationale for this retrospective aspect was to minimize risks to participants. By using a phenomenological method of inquiry, it is possible to discover the essential qualities and structures of the phenomenon of retrospective bereavement in the participant through the use of metaphor. A phenomenological approach gives greater access to various levels of understanding than other traditional qualitative methods. As described by Quail and Peavy (1994), the following phenomenological characteristics and assumptions are foundations for the conceptualization of the research:

1. Phenomenology is the study of how phenomena are given in experience. The value is placed upon the individual's experience of the world.

Phenomenologists turn to the world as it is lived and experienced before it is abstracted in to theory or explanations as a guide to human understanding.

2. The participant's descriptions are considered to be valid data. An account that is retrospective or lacking in facts of the actual occurrence is not important. What is important is that the participant has experienced the phenomena that is sought and is able to illuminate their experience through description. The

researcher needs as many participants as is necessary to elicit the data, even if a single case is all that is needed.

3. Phenomenologists seek the patterns and structures of the phenomena they are studying. These forms, structures, and essences emerge from and are not imposed on the data. The essence, not the literal meaning, which is sought.
4. The researcher strives to attain an attitude free of presuppositions. This is accomplished through two exercises. The first is an attempt to set aside opinions, theories, or explanations of what may appear; the second is a suspension of belief in the existence of what appears. These exercises allow the researcher to remain open to what emerges in the research (Quail & Peavy, 1994).

Location

The present study took place on the Drexel University Center City Campus in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. All research, including informed consent, screening, and data collections processes occurred in a private Bellet Building conference room on the Drexel University Center City campus.

Time Period for the Study

The study began immediately after IRB approval and ended June 13, 2009.

Enrollment Information

This study was designed for ten participants, but only three healthy Drexel University students between the ages of 18-27 who had lost a parent between the ages of 15-18 were enrolled as participants in this study.

Participants were males and females from various racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic backgrounds, as the research suggests that these factors do not have a significant impact on the experience of bereavement (Oltjenbruns, 1991).

Participant Type

All participants in this study were healthy adult students at either the undergraduate or graduate level at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In order to meet enrollment criteria for the study, participants must have lost a parent between the ages of 15-18 years old and be between the ages of 18-27 years old at the time of data collection.

Participant Source

The participants in this study were recruited from undergraduate and graduate student bodies from Drexel University, which includes both Center City and West Philadelphia campuses.

Recruitment

Potential participants for this study were notified of the study by a flyer posted on Drexel University Main Campus and the Drexel University Center City Campus (Appendix A). Those individuals interested in participating in the study called the telephone number listed on the flyer to speak to the researcher. These telephone calls were only answered in a private place to ensure privacy and confidentiality for the caller. An initial self-selection process was used to recruit participants. The researcher asked the volunteer if they had read and understood the requirements for the study as outlined in the flyer and if they had determined that they qualify for the study using the script provided in Appendix B. No protected health information (PHI) was elicited over the

telephone, so the researcher only asked the volunteer if they qualified for the study based upon the inclusion and exclusion criteria published on the flier. The volunteer was informed over the telephone that any other enrollment criteria questions would be asked after informed consent procedure in the form of a demographic questionnaire (Appendix E), which was part of the data collection. When this had been explained to the volunteer, the researcher asked the volunteer if he or she was interested in participating in the study. If he or she felt as though all inclusion criteria were met and expressed an interest in participating in the proposed research study, the researcher set up a time to meet with the volunteer in order to obtain informed consent and collect data.

Participants were paid a stipend of \$30.00. In the event that the volunteer discontinued his or her participation in the study, the volunteer was paid a prorated stipend. If the participant elected to discontinue involvement with the study after the informed consent or demographic questionnaire, he or she was paid a stipend amount of \$5.00. In the event that the participant decided to discontinue participation after the art process or during the interview process, the participant was paid a prorated amount of \$20.00 and \$25.00 respectively. The volunteer was told that the informed consent would take approximately twenty minutes and that data collection should take approximately one hour and thirty minutes with a ten minute break, making a total of two hours.

All informed consent and data collection procedures occurred in a private conference room on the Drexel University's Center City Campus. During the initial scheduled meeting, the researcher presented the volunteer with two copies of the consent form (Appendix C). The title, purpose, and procedure for the study was explained to the volunteer (see Appendix D for script). The volunteer was then asked if he or she would

be interested in participating in the study. If the volunteer agreed, he or she signed both copies of the consent form.

After the consent forms had been signed, the data collection process began. As part of this process, the researcher asked the volunteer demographic questions and about the loss of his or her parent. As a guide for this process, the researcher used the Demographic Questionnaire form (Appendix E). As the process continued, the researcher filled out the question form with the answers given by the participant.

For this research study, participant enrollment occurred on a first come first serve basis. If more than ten volunteers met the criteria, then the first ten who completed the informed consent and qualified for inclusion in the study were enlisted as participants. After ten participants had been enrolled, the recruitment process ended, and all flyers posted were taken down.

Participant Inclusion Criteria

To qualify for inclusion in this research study, participants:

- Must have been an undergraduate or graduate student enrolled either part time or full time at Drexel University.
- Must have been undergraduate or graduate students must have been enrolled in and attending school for at least three consecutive terms.
- Must have been between the ages of 18-27, inclusive
- Must not have had a current mental health diagnosis
- Must have lost either parent when he or she was between the ages of 15-18, inclusive

Participant Exclusion Criteria

Participants were determined ineligible for this research if they:

- Were faculty or staff of Drexel University
- Were enrolled in the Creative Arts in Therapy Program at Drexel University
- Were currently diagnosed with a current mental health disorder

Investigational Methods and Procedures

Instrumentation

Metaphoric Bereavement Art

This study included the creation of metaphoric art. During this session, the participant was asked to complete four art pieces. By creating a series of art pieces designed to lead the participant to his or her artistic metaphor, the process of creating a metaphor evolved slowly, which theoretically creates less discomfort for the participant. A final free drawing was also included in the four-piece series in order to help the participant resolve any residual anxieties about the experience into the artwork.

The metaphoric art series included a free drawing, a seasons drawing, a personal metaphor, and a free drawing. The free drawing is one in which the individual chooses to create whatever they desire with the materials provided. This art piece served as an introduction to the task and showed what the participant is initially willing to share, as well as helped to reduce initial anxieties (Cohen, Hammer, & Singer, 1988). Following this drawing, a second drawing of the seasons was created. A seasons drawing is one in which the individual responds to a prompt to create an image inspired by the seasons. For the metaphor drawing, participants were asked to create a drawing of a metaphor that could be used to describe their experience of having lost a parent during their

adolescence. The fourth picture was another free drawing in which the individual chose to create whatever they desire. The purpose of this final drawing was to offer the opportunity of emotional release and closure on the experience (Cohen, Mills, & Kijak, 1994).

Open-ended Responsive Interview

The open-ended responsive interview was designed to gather in depth data on the lived experience of the participant regarding the phenomenon being investigated. A series of objectives and open-ended questions regarding the participant's experience of creating an artistic metaphor to describe their experience of having lost a parent as an adolescent was addressed in the interview. Broad-based, open-ended questions were asked initially to begin the interview process and to add structure to the interview, allowing for the adherence to the research study goals. As the interview proceeded, more specific probative questions, based upon the response of the participant, were asked in order to elicit more information and create a more in depth description of the participant's experience of the phenomenon. Although all questions could not be predetermined due to the nature of an open-ended interview, an interview guide (Appendix F) was used to outline the interview objectives and provide examples of the questions that could be posed during the interview.

Data Collection

Data Collection I- Informed Consent (20 minutes)

In the initial meeting, the researcher explained to the prospective participant the purpose and procedures of the study, their rights as a research participant, the risks and benefits as well as the confidentiality measures of the study as per the consent form. The

prospective participant was informed that it is his or her right to discontinue the study at any point for any reason, especially if the study caused him or her any discomfort. If participation is discontinued, the participant was paid \$5.00 for completing the demographic questionnaire, \$20.00 for completion of the artwork, and \$25.00 for partial completion of the interview. The researcher informed the volunteer that demographic information, such as age, socio-economic status, race, and ethnicity will be collected (see Appendix E) but that identifying information will not be included in the research paper.

Volunteers were informed that they would be asked to complete four prompted drawings and would participate in an interview concerning the experience of creating metaphoric art to describe their experience of the death of their parent, as well as comment on each of the drawings and the overall experience. The prospective participants were also informed that an audio-tape recorder would record the interview. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researcher, after which the audio recordings were stored in a locked, secure cabinet in the Hahnemann Creative Arts in Therapy offices at Drexel University until the conclusion of the study at which time the tapes were erased, cut, and discarded. Each drawing, audio tape, demographic data sheet, and the transcribed interview was marked by a participant identification number and not the participant's name. The participant was informed that the drawings would be reproduced through digital photographs for research purposes and published in the researcher's master's thesis, but that there would be no identifying information linking those drawings to the participant. Therefore, the participant's identity would be entirely anonymous. The participant was given the opportunity to have their artwork returned to them at the conclusion of the study or, if they decline to have artwork returned to them, it

was explained that the artwork would be duplicated and then destroyed. To assure the participant of this anonymity, the researcher explicitly stated that the participant will be identified in the study as a number and not by name. Once these procedures were explained by the researcher, the participant was asked to repeat the purpose, procedures, risks and benefits, research participant rights and confidentiality measures in the study in his or her own words to confirm understanding. If they demonstrated that they understood the procedures and indicated that they wish to participate, they were asked to sign two consent forms, one that was given to the participant, the other that was locked in the secure file at the Hahnemann Creative Arts in Therapy Program offices.

Data Collection II-Demographic Questionnaire (10 minutes)

After the informed consent process, the researcher then informed the participant that the process of collecting the data for the study would begin. At this time, the participant was assigned a participant identification number. The participant was informed that the data collection process should take approximately one hour and forty minutes, which included a ten minute break. As part of the data collection process, the demographic questionnaire form (Appendix E) was used. Questions included in this process are demographic information and age at the time of death of a parent, as well as student status. Mental health status was not asked as part of the post-consent process. The criterion of mental health status was determined through the initial self-selection process.

Data Collection III-Metaphoric Art Process (40 minutes)

Each participant was asked to complete a series of four drawings that assisted them in creating their own metaphor for their experience of having lost a parent during adolescence. The researcher provided a range of media, including markers, colored

pencils, collage materials, glue, scissors, and a variety of paper sizes and colors. The participant was asked to create a free drawing in which he or she can chose to create whatever they desire with the materials provided. For this drawing, the prompt was, "Please create a drawing of your choice." Following this drawing, a second drawing of the seasons was obtained. For this drawing, the participant was asked to create a drawing that has to do with the cycle of the seasons. The prompt for this drawing was, "Please create a drawing that has to do with the cycle of the seasons." Participants in the current research study then created their own metaphor for their experience of having lost a parent during adolescence after responding to the prompt for drawing the seasons. Participants were prompted by a request to "please create a drawing of a metaphor that describes what it was like for you to have lost a parent during your adolescence." The fourth and final drawing was another free picture, modeled after Cohen, Mills, and Kijak (1994). This drawing was prompted by a request to "please create a drawing of your choice." The purpose of this final drawing was to offer the opportunity of emotional release and closure on the experience (Cohen, Mills, & Kijak).

Intermission (10 minutes)

Participants were informed that they may take a ten minute break during this time to do as they please. They were asked to please return to the same room at the conclusion of the ten minute break to proceed with the interview process.

Epoche (10minutes)

During this procedure, the researcher set aside pre-conceived notions and biases about the phenomenon under investigation. By describing personal experiences with the phenomenon under study, the researcher can assume an abstention from influence that

could bias the description of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Epoché is essentially a return to the phenomenon as it is lived, in contrast to beginning with scientific preconceptions, and allows for the fresh research access to the matter being investigated (Wertz, 2005).

While the participant was taking an intermission from the research study, the researcher engaged in epoche. During this time, the researcher investigated her own preconceived notions about the phenomenon of losing a parent during adolescence and the experience of what it is like to create a metaphor about having lost a parent. The researcher documented these discoveries in a notebook that was referred to during the data analysis process.

Data Collection Procedure IV-Open Ended Responsive Interview (35 minutes)

Each participant completed an audiotaped, open-ended responsive interview following the metaphoric art process. Audiotaping the interview allowed for accurate collection of the data and allowed the researcher to be more fully present during the open-ended interview. The goal of this interview was to elicit the participant's experience of creating an artistic metaphor that describes having lost a parent during adolescence.

An open-ended responsive interview is one that begins with objectives and broad based questions. The broad based questions were pre-determined and were followed by probative questions that were posed in response to the participant's answers. These probative questions were designed to elicit a more in depth description of the participant's lived experience of the phenomenon under exploration. The interview guide described in Appendix F was used to guide each interview. This guide gives examples of

the interview objectives and the pre-determined broad based questions that were initially explored during the interview. The research objectives included:

- To explore the meaning of the drawings and of the metaphor for the experience of having lost a parent in adolescence.
 - Can you tell a story about each of the drawings?
 - Probe: What are the people thinking?
 - Can you tell a story that involves all of the drawings?
- To explore the cognitive experience of creating a metaphor to describe their experience of having lost a parent
 - What were your thoughts as you created each of the drawings?
- To explore the emotional experience of creating the metaphoric art used to describe the experience of having lost a parent.
 - What emotions to the drawings convey?
 - What were your emotions as you created the drawings?
 - Which drawing is most meaningful to you?
- To gain an understanding of how the participant might use art and metaphor to describe their experience to others and if this process is useful at the time of the study or if it would have been useful at the time of the parent's death
 - What are your thoughts about the whole series of drawings?
 - What were your thoughts as you created your metaphor?
 - How would you describe the meaning of creating this metaphor for you personally?

Data Collection V-Debriefing (5 minutes)

At the conclusion of the open-ended responsive interview the participant was asked to state how they felt in order to determine if they were in any distress. They were also asked if they had any questions. At this time, the researcher thanked the participant for his or her time, thus ending the data collection.

Data Collection VI-Validation Interview

Approximately one month following the data collection and after a preliminary analysis of the data the researcher contacted the participants individually via telephone and relayed the major findings of the study in order to ensure that the findings were consistent with the experiences of the participants. At this time, the participants were encouraged to address any discrepancies that existed between the researcher's findings and the experiences of the participants. Any discrepancies or changes were incorporated. To conclude the participant involvement, the researcher gave the participant a \$30.00 stipend for participating in the study.

Data Analysis

The data analysis procedure followed a phenomenological approach in order to systematically determine the in-depth lived experience of this phenomenon. The responses from the interview were transcribed verbatim from the audio recorder used during the interview into Microsoft Word.

The first step in the data analysis is the epoche. During this procedure, the researcher set aside pre-conceived notions and biases about the phenomenon under investigation. By describing personal experiences with the phenomenon under study, the researcher can assume an abstention from influence that could bias the description of the

phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Epoché is essentially a return to the phenomenon as it is lived, in contrast to beginning with scientific preconceptions, and allows for the fresh research access to the matter being investigated (Wertz, 2005).

The next step is phenomenological reduction, which includes bracketing, horizontalization, and textural description. First, the researcher bracketed significant statements in the interviews about how the participants are experiencing the phenomenon under research. Each statement made by the participants was then treated as fundamental to the research and a list of essential, non-overlapping statements was created as a means of structure and organization of the subject matter in a process called horizontalization (Creswell, 2007; Wertz, 2005). These statements were then be grouped into meaning units, called clusters (Creswell; Moustakas, 1994). Following the grouping into meaning units, textural descriptions were written about the identified meaning units (Moustakas, 1994), which included verbatim examples as part of the description (Creswell).

Following phenomenological reduction, the researcher engaged in imaginative variation. The task of this process was to seek possible meanings through the use of imagination, varying the frames of reference, approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives. This process allowed the researcher to create different ways of understanding and analyzing the phenomena of the study that relate to the object in question and go together to create the essence of the essential features of the experience. Structures gained from the imaginative variation are integrated into themes gained from the identification of meaning units, resulting in a revision of the essential structures of the experience. From this process, a structural description of the essences of the experience

was derived, which gave the conditions necessary to precipitate the experience and connect with it (Moustakas, 1994).

As the final step in the phenomenological data analysis, following the imaginative variation and theme revision, essential structures of the phenomenon were extracted and the structural synthesis written. The researcher detailed her relation of the experience and then reported of the experiences of each participant, including a structural synthesis and identification of the essential structures of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). In this process, the researcher reflected on the setting and context in which the phenomenon was experienced. This process was then followed by a composite narrative of the phenomenon incorporating both the textural and structural descriptions to arrive at a textural-structural synthesis of meanings and essences of the phenomena. This process was repeated for each individual, after which a composite analysis of all of the participants was completed. The composite analysis involved combining statements from all of the participants and extracting meaning units from these statements in which each participant was equally represented. If there was a potential meaning unit, but all participants were not represented, the meaning unit was not created. After creating the meaning units, the data analysis process followed the same steps as previously described for the individual participants. The result was a structural description of the common experiences of all three participants. This final description is the essence of the experience and became the culmination of the phenomenological research (Creswell, 2007).

Operational Definitions of Terms, Concepts, Variables

Adolescence

For the purposes of this research, the term adolescence is defined as a normally-developing person between the ages of 15-18, inclusive, in the grief process due to the loss of a parent. Parental death must have occurred in the participant's adolescence (after the age of 15). This age range was chosen in accordance with stages of adolescent grief as outlined by Black (2005). Individuals within this age range respond to grief in a manner that is far different from younger adolescents.

Retrospective

For the purpose of this study, retrospective is operationally defined as the historical experience of adolescent bereavement for the participants in this study. Participants were between the ages of 18-27 reflecting back upon parental loss that occurred between the ages of 15-18. Consequently, the participants reflected back upon the time period in which they have lost a parent so as to create a greater distance between the loss of a parent and the reflection of this loss.

Bereavement

For the purposes of this research, bereavement is a specific type of loss, loss from another's death (Zisook & Kendler, 2007). Bereavement reactions, or the grief following a death of a significant other (Zisook & Kendler), are included in the concept definition of bereavement. Bereavement encompasses all responses over time to a death and is a slow process of recognizing that a person has died and creating some meaning from the death (Valente, Saunders, & Street, 1988).

Grief

Grief refers to the collection of feelings, behaviors, cognitions, and alterations in functioning that comes from a loss of any kind (Zisook & Kendler, 2007). Grief includes all of the emotional or affective responses to death (Valente, Saunders, & Street, 1988).

Mourning

Mourning refers to the social and culturally sanctioned ritual related to the loss (Zisook & Kendler, 2007; Valente, Saunders, & Street, 1988).

Normally Developing

The term “normally developing” when applied to the participants is defined as not having a present history of psychiatric illnesses according to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Those individuals with resolved psychiatric diagnoses at the time of the study were excluded. “Normally developing” also means that the participant is a matriculated college-level student.

Metaphoric Art

Metaphoric art refers to the concept of creating a metaphor to describe a psychological experience and describing this metaphor through the non-verbal process of creating artwork. The structure of the metaphor mirrors the qualities of the art process (Gorelick, 1989; Riley, 1999). The artwork is a means of clarifying the metaphor and is understood in the context of any verbal associations made in reference to it.

Possible Risks and Discomforts to Subjects

The risks for this study are considered to be minimal. It is possible the participants experienced some discomfort as they answered some of the questions about

the death of their parent and created an artistic metaphor describing their experience of the loss. It is possible that in the process of creating the art and responding to the interview that issues related directly to parental death emerged and caused some discomfort. During the art-making process, it is also possible that some of the participants, particularly those who were not familiar with art therapy, felt some discomfort or anxiety. Additionally, due to the self-selection process for mental health status, some individuals who have a mental health diagnosis could have potentially been enrolled, which might have raised the risk for them.

Special Precautions to Minimize Risks or Hazards

The risks were minimized for participants through the retrospective nature of this study. As opposed to having adolescents under the age of 18 reflect upon their experience of having lost a parent, participants in this study were older and were distanced from the actual parental loss. Therefore only retrospective references to parental loss through the process of the metaphoric art and discussion were made.

Additionally, the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the research decreased the potential risk for the participants so that individuals who were more vulnerable due to current mental health issues were excluded as participants in the research. As another precaution, only undergraduate and graduate Drexel University students who had been enrolled in and attended classes for three consecutive terms were included as participants. This exclusion decreased the possibility that those individuals who were suffering from mental health diagnoses were not included in the research as these individuals typically withdraw from undergraduate or graduate level studies early in their educational careers.

Efforts were made to minimize and control the risk involved in the methodology. Regarding the minimal risk involved with the metaphoric art session, the participants were given a free drawing as both a first and last drawing, which served to both introduce the participant to the idea of creating artwork and helped resolve residual anxieties about the process of creating artwork. Also, special precautions were taken involving the nature of the art media that was available to the participants. The art media selected for use in the proposed research were chosen for their ability to support control and reduce regression. Also as a precaution in the metaphoric art session, all art media supplied to the participants was non-toxic, which reduced any potential risk of physical injury. During the open-ended responsive interview session, efforts were made to minimize potential risk by notifying the participants that if they became uncomfortable with any question, they may pass on answering that question and may move onto another question.

As final precautions to minimize risk to participants, the researcher informed the participants of counseling services available if they appeared to be experiencing any anxiety that is greater than the expected degree. The counseling services available, to which such participants were referred, are Drexel University's Student Counseling Centers. Each participant, as a student of Drexel University, has access to these services, and these services are offered free of charge. These counseling centers are offered at two locations, both on the main campus in West Philadelphia and at Drexel University's Center City campus. The Student Counseling Center at Main Campus is located at 201 Creese Student Center, 3141 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104. This facility can be reached by email at counseling@drexel.edu or by telephone at (215) 895-1415. Drexel University's Student Counseling Center at the Center City campus is

located on the 3rd Floor of the Bellet Building on the corner of 15th and Race Streets in Philadelphia and can be reached by telephone at (215) 762-7625. There is also a Peer Counseling Helpline available to students, which operates Monday-Friday, 8pm-midnight. This helpline can be reached at (215) 895-1523.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Major Findings

In this phenomenological study, the major findings are the composite essential structures which describe the lived experiences of adults reflecting back on their experience of having lost a parent during the developmental stage of adolescence. These essential structures were analyzed using the participant's significant statements and associations to their artwork within the interview. The essence of these participants' experiences of having lost a parent during adolescence as expressed through metaphoric art processes was explored to enable current and future therapists within the art therapy field to have a better understanding of possible experiences when working with bereaved adolescent populations.

In this chapter, the data will be presented for each participant, followed by a composite analysis for all three participants. The composite essential structures for all three participants are 1) Feeling a sense of missing something; 2) Difficulty communicating the jumbled, mixed, and chaotic feelings at the time of the event; 3) Difficulty choosing images that represent the complexity of expressing the event through art processes; 4) Trying to move past the feelings and thoughts; 5) The influence of time on the expression of thoughts and feelings; and 6) Recreating the cognitive and emotional experience of a parent's death through creating the artwork.

Participants

Three participants were recruited, met the inclusion criteria, and were enrolled in this research study. The recruitment period lasted approximately seven weeks, at the end of which the recruitment flyers were taken down due to the limited time period available

to complete the data analysis. Within this time period, three participants volunteered to participate in this research study, and all three participants met the requirements to be enrolled in the study.

Two of the three participants were female, and each participant represents a different ethnic background. Although the participants were of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, all of the participants lost their respective parent around the age of 17. PID1 is a 25 year old African-American female who lost her mother to death when she was 17 years old. She reported that her mother died of breast cancer, which is an illness that took place over long period of time. PID2 is a 21 year old Caucasian female who lost her father to death at the age of 17. She reported that her father died of cancer, although did not specify which type. Like PID1's mother, the health of PID2's father declined over a long period of time. Finally, PID3 is a 24 year old male of Indian descent who lost his mother to a sudden illness when he was almost 17 years old. PID3 did not specify which illness was the cause of his mother's death, but did indicate that the period of time from which she became sick to when she died was only a few days.

During the data collection process, there was one deviation from the initial data collection protocol. This deviation was due to a malfunctioning voice recorder. A deviation of protocol form was filed with the Institutional Review Board at Drexel University for PID2. Therefore, PID2 was given the option to re-record the interview portion of the data collection process and did so one week from the original data collection session. The artwork portion of the data collection process was not repeated for PID2. Data collection sessions for PID1 and PID3 followed original data collection protocol.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using the phenomenological method in order to explore the in-depth essence of the lived experience of individuals who have lost a parent in their adolescence. The data analysis process was completed for each participant individually, followed by a composite analysis of the data from all three participants. The final data synthesis follows the same steps that were taken to analyze the data from each individual participant. All of the participants' interview statements were combined and meaning units were derived from these statements that equally represented each of the participants. If a potential meaning unit did not equally represent each participant, the meaning unit was not created. The data analysis process continued from this point using the same methods used for the individual participants. First the steps of the phenomenological data analysis will be described, followed by the presentation of the data.

Epoche

The first step in phenomenological data analysis is the process of epoche. By engaging in the process of epoche, the researcher attempts to set aside her own personal experiences so that the focus can be directed to the participants (Creswell, 2007). Creswell recognizes that the process of setting aside one's previous knowledge, assumptions or opinions regarding the phenomenon can not be done entirely, but efforts are made to set these assumptions aside so that the researcher can enter into the data collection process with a clear and unbiased mind. During the data collection process for each participant, the researcher engaged in the process of epoche, alone, before the interview portion of the data collection process.

Phenomenological Reduction

The phenomenological reduction process of the data analysis involves bracketing and horizontalizing the data. This process allows for the identification of the meaning units and creating a textural description of each participant's experience (Moustakas, 1994). As the data is analyzed, it is explored and examined to ensure that the meaning and intent is completely understood and conveyed. This process is described in the following sections.

Bracketing and Horizontalization

Through bracketing, the researcher developed a list of non-repetitive significant statements. As the statements are reviewed, repetitions and irrelevancies are eliminated while ensuring that each statement is given equal worth (Creswell, 2007). After the researcher transcribed the interview data verbatim, the data from each participant was bracketed and horizontalized so that a list of separate, non-prioritized significant statements was created for each participant. Horizontalization involves taking each statement and allowing it to stand on its own so that each statement has equal worth, thus creating a list of significant statements (Creswell).

Meaning Units

Following the bracketing and horizontalization step of data analysis, the significant statements elicited are grouped into larger units of information called meaning units (Creswell, 2007). This step allows the researcher to gain a better understanding of the underlying themes present in the participant's statements.

Textural Description

Phenomenological data reduction calls for a written narrative description of what the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon following the creation of the meaning units (Creswell, 2007). In this description, the meaning units are elaborated upon using verbatim examples from the participant's interview. The result is a description of the most essential constituents of the experience (Moustakas, 1994)

Imaginative Variation

In the imaginative variation process, the researcher is able to reflect on the description of the experience of the participant while being open to other meanings and prospects. New possibilities can be considered through utilizing one's imagination to analyze the experience from alternative perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). As there is not a single road to truth, imaginative variation allows the researcher to explore the possibilities that are connected to the essences and meanings of an experience. Imaginative variation involves recognizing the underlying themes and contexts that account for the emergence of the phenomenon and considering the universal structures that precipitate feelings and thoughts about the phenomenon (Moustakas). For this study, the imaginative variation involved creating a story through which the researcher was able to reflect on the essence of the experience of losing a parent during adolescence.

Revision of Meaning Units

The original list of meaning units is revised after creating the imaginative variation. This revised list includes the insights and alternative perspectives gained from the imaginative variation and gives additional insight into the participants' experiences of losing a parent during their adolescence.

Structural Synthesis

Finally, the data analysis involves the identification of the essential structures of the experience into a unified statement of the essence of the experience (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas recognizes that the essences of an experience are never fully exhausted, but rather represent the essences at a particular time and place from the vantage point of the researcher after an exhaustive reflective and imaginative study of the phenomenon.

Presentation of the Phenomenological Data

Participant 1

In this section, the meaning units, textural description, imaginative variation, revised themes, and structural synthesis are presented for Participant #1 (PID1).

Table 1

Meaning Units, Participant # 1 (PID1)

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
<p><i>The little boy [in the artwork] is...alone...isolated. He's wondering why he's...by himself</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You always know that you're different than other kids • Like being alone with your thoughts • The little boy [in the artwork] is definitely alone, maybe isolated • I did feel like the only one because I was the only one that it was happening to • I don't think if he wants to be alone, that he's very happy to be alone • He's probably wondering why he's sitting here by himself right now • People sense that [he doesn't want to play] so they are leaving him alone • I felt like there was just a lot of time spent in my own head. • Sometimes when you do feel alone or isolated, it's because you feel like

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
<p><i>You don't understand what I'm going through</i></p>	<p>you're the only one going through it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That's not the same thing as someone who's gone through it • You don't really know that • I thought people outside of my family were not legitimately interested • Even if I were to tell you, you can't really understand • It's so hard to expose what is going on inside of me • I always felt like as a kid, people didn't really want real answers • Even with someone else who has lost their mother to breast cancer as well is different than my experience of that. • They don't know what to say • Like you might have cried for five minutes during a movie but you don't understand what I'm going through
<p><i>The praying hands...I became more solid in my beliefs</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's a greater purpose • I just felt like I became more solid in my beliefs • I just realized that there's a greater purpose to some things you just don't understand • You come to grips with what you really believe in • And then the praying hands [in the artwork], just because my family's pretty religious
<p><i>Just knowing that they needed to band together for support</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I feel like prayer with other people in our congregation or just with each other really helped • Having other kids that could have been more open would have been huge • But letting them know that, I understand where you're at and I know that feeling too. • Female power; especially with breast cancer • just knowing that they needed to band together for support [referencing the artwork]

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • probably many people go through the same feelings • So I don't know if the face you put on over the emotions would be the same, but probably underneath like that same sense is probably there for everybody. • there is someone that I can talk to about it and you can totally relate • So I think that that could have been good to have somebody to vent to • Just wanting to be around other kids your age
<i>You don't necessarily have to think about it</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a care in the world • Just going with it • I never necessarily took the time to sort it out • I try to be really happy because you don't have to think about all that went on or happened • Now I want to be happy and have pleasant thoughts • Not acknowledging that something really bad is going on in your life • I don't think I would have realized that I was in denial • In my family I don't talk a lot about my mom's passing • Why am I thinking about this right now? • It isn't something I've reflected on recently • I just went with it and never really stopped to take it all in
<i>Waiting to hear for an answer</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe waiting to hear for an answer or seeking advice or whatever spirit is going to lead them to a resolution • What am I going to do? • How am I going to get through whatever I'm going through? • A lot of questions and not a lot of answers • just not knowing, and going through treatment and thinking things were

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
	going to get better
<i>The man with the food...is craving or wanting something</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to feel a sense of being satiated • Craving or wanting something and trying to get that anyway possible • I remember when I was younger, just eating whatever • I'm definitely an emotional eater • The interesting thing that I notice on this is that I really only have one face showing, and that's him [references man with the food in the artwork],
<i>[The woman in the picture] wants to feel pretty and feminine</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She probably wants to feel pretty and feminine [referencing artwork] • Hoping that she looks attractive • The idea of having one part of a person taken away can make you not feel like a woman or not feel attractive or desirable • There are times where I want to feel attractive and feel feminine • I probably focus on my breasts way more than other people do
<i>It wouldn't help if I were really upset and sad with them too</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I wasn't quite incredibly emotional • Because I was the oldest child, I knew I had a younger brother and sister who were looking to me • If I was really upset or crying all of the time, then they probably wouldn't have felt like they could come to me • If they were really sad or upset, it wouldn't help if I were really upset and sad with them too • A lot of times I felt like I should try not to be sad
<i>You feel blue and foggy...it seems like a blur. You see and experience a lot of things...like a collage of stuff pushed together</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's like rapidly changing TV channels • You see and experience a lot of things [referencing the collage of images] • Experiencing emotions so fast that you don't really know what you're experiencing • It seems like a blur • It feels like a collage of stuff pushed together

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can't pick one of them, but just a whole bunch of stuff • For a while you feel blue and foggy • That sense of jumbledness and not really knowing what to do • The haze of all of it • It's just harder to express all of the different things that you remember about a parent or a loved one's death and trying to capture all of that • There's a lot going on • It was really hard to narrow down and focus on one aspect because so many things came to mind • You don't even know what you are feeling at that time • not really sure of what exactly was going on because of their age
<p><i>It's like the 'heart to heart'...There were some really good times</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were some really good times that we had as a family • We made a point to do that, take trips and just even laughing about something • We had a lot of conversations and just talking about life • It's the 'heart to heart' [in the artwork] • I don't feel like I lacked any time with my mother towards the end • You can experience something good • You'll find a good feeling or a good place on your own • You think of family time with holidays [referencing the artwork]
<p><i>It puts things you've experienced into perspective</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It enables you to put things into perspective and not be so melodramatic about stuff that can occur • Sometimes in life really crappy stuff happens • There's nothing you can do to prevent it, nothing you can do to stop it • Things might be bad now, but they will get better and they will go back to some semblance of what you knew before • Talking about sins or hardships or

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
	<p>things they are facing in their own lives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the time, I never would have been able to be as astute at characterizing myself • I think perspective is very hard to have when you're going through something
<p><i>It was really hard to try to find things [images] that captured the various aspects of what I was thinking and feeling</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't really want someone who is smiley, smiley or who looks really sad • I felt like they were a little more cliché • It's not representative of what I feel I was going through sometimes • Trying to find things that really represented a true feeling and not what's supposed to be a feeling • Not really any of these really capture how I'd feel now • It was really hard to try to find things that captured the various aspects of what I was thinking and feeling and also not in a trite way
<p><i>Your ability to express it becomes better</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think your ability to express it becomes better • The less raw something is, the more you can talk about it • Talking about it back then would have dredged up a lot of emotion • My ability to communicate those things will be much better five years from now • As a child, you're not equipped to have a conversation about what you are feeling • If you don't know what to say, you don't really say anything as a kid • It's very hard when you're a kid to talk to adults in general

Textural Description

The following meaning units describe the experience of Participant #1: 1) *The little boy [in the artwork] is...alone...isolated. He's wondering why he's...by himself,* 2) *You don't understand what I'm going through,* 3) *The praying hands...I became more solid in my beliefs,* 4) *Just knowing that they needed to band together for support,* 5) *You don't necessarily have to think about it,* 6) *Waiting to hear for an answer,* 7) *The man with the food...is craving or wanting something,* 8) *[The woman in the picture] wants to feel pretty and feminine,* 9) *It wouldn't help if I were really upset and sad with them too,* 10) *You feel blue and foggy...it seems like a blur. You see and experience a lot of things...like a collage of stuff pushed together,* 11) *It's like the 'heart to heart'...There were some really good times,* 12) *It puts things you've experienced into perspective,* 13) *It was really hard to try to find things [images] that captured the various aspects of what I was thinking and feeling, and* 14) *Your ability to express it becomes better.*

PID1 understands the event of losing a parent as a very “isolating” experience. She stated that it felt as though she was the “only one going through it” even though she had other siblings. Although she may have wanted to be alone in this event, she may not have been “very happy to be alone.” In many ways, the death of her mother separated her from the people around her, identifying her as “different from other kids.” PID1 used the artwork as a frame of reference from which to talk about her feelings and experiences. She referenced the images of individuals being alone and isolated in her artwork as she spoke about the experience. In reference to the image of the little boy sitting alone on a see-saw, PID1 postulated “why he's sitting here by himself right now,” thus using the image of the little boy as a way of expressing that “I felt like there was just a lot of time

spent in my own head” (Figure 1-3). PID1 expressed a sense of being misunderstood; that individuals who had not experienced the loss of a mother could not “understand what I’m going through.” The experience of not being understood and thoughts that people were “not legitimately interested” relate directly to feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Even though PID1 considers the experience of having lost her mother during her adolescence as isolating and lonely, she feels as though it helped her to understand and solidify her values and beliefs, especially that there is a “greater purpose” in life. The image of the praying hands in her artwork illustrated that religion was an important part of her experience “because my family’s pretty religious” (Figure 1-3). Again, the image in the artwork was used as a reference from which to speak about the elements in her life that affected her bereavement. Although she may not have felt it at the time of the death, she acknowledges that there were many supports available for her and her family while her mother was ill and after she had died. PID1 considered prayer with members of her congregation and with her family members to be a source of support, as well as the community that is built around people affected by breast cancer. However, she believes that “having other kids that could have been more open would have been huge” in helping her feel connected and understood. For her, it would “have been good to have somebody to vent to” or another adolescent who had experienced the same type of loss to “talk to about it.” For PID1, having had the ability to be connected to other adolescents with similar experiences would have provided a considerable source of support. In the artwork, PID1 used the collage images of individuals together and the phrase “band of outsiders” to illustrate how she and her family “needed to band together for support” (Figure 1-3).

Throughout her mother's illness and after her death, PID1 admits that she "never necessarily took the time to sort it out." Rather, she "just went with it and never really stopped to take it all in." She recognizes now that she was in denial of the feelings surrounding her mother's illness and death, stating that "it isn't something that I've reflected on recently." As she was creating the artwork and talking about her associations to the images, she expressed that the feelings and thoughts associated with her mother's death seemed to be out of place and even asked herself, "Why am I thinking about this right now?" The denial of these emotions is connected to PID1's feelings of needing to be the support for her "younger brother and sister who were looking to me." Many times, she felt as though she "should try not to be sad" because "it wouldn't help if I were really upset and sad with them too." For PID1, there was certainly the pressure of needing to be a source of support for her other family members.

PID1's denial of emotion is also connected to her understanding of the event of her mother's death as a "sense of jumbledness and not really knowing what to do." When her mother was ill and after she had died, PID1 contends that she was "experiencing emotions so fast that you don't really know what you're experiencing," which is not unlike "rapidly changing TV channels." She had difficulty describing the experience in metaphor because she found herself unable to "pick one of them" because the experience was "just a whole bunch of stuff." As she referenced the artwork, she stated that "you see and experience a lot of things" to the point of "not knowing what you are feeling" (Figure 1-3). PID1 used a variety of images and phrases in her artwork that she describes as a "collage of stuff pushed together." As she described the metaphor illustration, the idea of "rapidly changing TV channels" to describe her experience of bereavement arose from

the initial description of bereavement as a “blur.” For PID1, the artwork served as a way of elaborating and developing her feelings and experiences surrounding the death of her mother.

As PID1 looked through collage images, she expressed that she found it difficult to find an image that was “representative of what I feel I was going through sometimes.” “Trying to find things that represented a true feeling” is a concern that PID1 expressed; a concern that is related to her inability as an adolescent, and maybe even as an adult, to truly know what she was feeling. PID1 found it difficult to describe her experience because she felt that “none of these [images] really capture how I’d feel.” She was concerned about not appearing to have emotions or thoughts that were “cliché” or “trite” in nature or finding things to represent a “true feeling and not what’s supposed to be a feeling.” In some ways, she feels as though people expect her to be sad and upset about her mother’s death. Although she was certainly sad and upset, she demonstrated concern over being stereotyped in such a way or being characterized in ways that were “not representative of what I feel I was going through sometimes.”

Although PID1 had difficulty describing her experience, she attests that “your ability to express it [the experience] becomes better” as time passes. “As a kid,” PID1 believes that “you’re not equipped to have a conversation about what you are feeling.” Even if this conversation could have taken place, “talking about it back then [at the time of the death] would have dredged up a lot of emotion.” However, as time increases from the event, she believes that it becomes easier to communicate emotions and thoughts about the death. PID1 acknowledged that she would have had considerable difficulty describing how she was feeling at the time that her mother died as she was not even sure

of what she was truly feeling at that time. Having had eight years pass since her mother's death, PID1 believes that she is much more capable of describing her experience now than she was back then. As even more time passes, she is sure that "my ability to communicate those things will be much better five years from now."

As more time passes from her mother's death, PID1 understands that, although "perspective is very hard to have when you're going through something," having had such an experience has allowed her to be able to put other life experiences into perspective. Such an experience has helped her to "not be so melodramatic about stuff that can occur." She acknowledges that she has learned through experiencing the death of her mother that a situation will eventually get better and "will go back to some semblance of what you knew before." Although she is sure that she would not have been able to "be as astute at characterizing myself" at the time of her mother's death, she realizes now that "there's nothing you can do to prevent it, nothing you can do to stop it" and that it will eventually get better.

In her experience, PID1 describes the process of losing her mother as a time in which there were "a lot of questions and not a lot of answers." She struggled with "just not knowing" what to do or how she would be able to "get through whatever I'm going through." In many ways, she hoped to be led "to a resolution." Connected to the idea of "waiting to hear for an answer or seeking advice" is that of "craving or wanting something." PID1 describes her feelings about losing her mother as "trying to feel a sense of being satiated." Not having answers to her questions about her mother's illness and death left her "craving or wanting something and trying to get that any way possible." In order to fill the void, she remembers using food as an emotional crutch and a way of

coping through the events surrounding her mother's death. PID1 used the artwork to illustrate this aspect of her bereavement coping and suggested that her inclusion of "the man with the food" is "interesting" because "I notice on this is that I really only have one face showing, and that's him" (Figure 1-3).

Although the events surrounding her mother's death were emotionally trying and difficult, PID1 remembers that "there were some really good times that we had as a family." She believes that, even though something bad happens, "you can experience something good." Her good relationship with her mother and her family helped her to "find a good feeling or a good place on your own." As such, she expressed that she didn't feel as though she "lacked any time with my mother towards the end." Through referencing the artwork, she stated that her time with her mother was "like the 'heart to heart'" image included in her metaphor illustration (Figure 1-3). Her connection to her mother as a daughter and as a woman also had an effect on PID1's sense of femininity and body image as a woman. In particular, she chose an image of a woman's torso to illustrate her concerns over wanting "to feel pretty and feminine" considering that she witnessed her mother go through the experience of having a mastectomy. "The idea of having one part of a person taken away can make you not feel like a woman or not feel attractive or desirable" was a concern of PID1 that is connected to her mother's experience of breast cancer. As a result, PID1 is concerned about feeling "attractive or feminine" and attests that she is much more vigilant about taking care of her own body, particularly her breasts, as a result.

Imaginative Variation

Once there was a little rabbit named Tina. She lived in neat and tidy little rabbit hole with her brother, her sister, and her mother and father at the edge of a lush golden field that was always full of food and plenty of shade in which to relax. The large open field was very flat and had rows of trees surrounding it on three sides. Some of the trees were so far away that Tina almost had to squint to see them in the bright sunlight. On the furthest side of the field was an old farmhouse. Tina had never seen the farmhouse up close, but she sometimes saw black clouds of smoke rising from the chimney. All day long she would run and play in the large field with her rabbit friends. Sometimes other types of animals, like squirrels and songbirds, would join her and her friends. They spent much of the day enjoying the cool fresh breeze that rustled the long stalks of grass and wildflowers and would dip and dart amongst the plants together. Tina enjoyed the time that she spent each day with her friends, but always looked forward to settling down in her cozy rabbit hole with her family as the sun set over the tips of the tall and distant trees.

Tina spent much of her time in the evenings laughing and enjoying the company of her family. She was older than her brother and sister, so she sometimes felt like had to take care of them, even if they just needed a shoulder to cry on or a little extra help. Her mother and father spent much of their days taking care of the younger ones and foraging for food to provide for the family. Once the sun when down, however, the family was devoted to each other and would laugh and tell stories as the light dimmed on the outside world.

One evening, as the sun was slowly beginning to set over the tips of the distant trees, throwing long dark shadows intertwined with bright golden hues on the grasses and plants of the field, Tina said goodbye to her friends and began her journey home to her cozy rabbit hole to be with her family. However, when she reached the edge of the field, she felt that something was different. She hastened her steps to a brisk hop, stopping abruptly at the edge of her rabbit hole. Tina dashed inside, finding her father, brother, and sister distraught and in tears and gathered around her mother. Her mother looked sick; the rosy pink color was gone from her long soft ears and her eyes seemed distant and empty. Tina did not know what was happening; she tried to ask questions, but each question she asked went unanswered. Although she felt very upset and confused, Tina tried her hardest not to cry because she knew that she had to take care of her brother and sister and help them.

Much of that night was sleepless. Tina felt as though she had to remain strong for her family, but inside felt very confused and helpless. She tried to think about what was happening with her mother and what she could do about it and all of the questions she had, but she ended up feeling so confused that she was unsure of what she was feeling altogether. The entire experience of losing her mother was like a blur; her own feelings and thoughts became so jumbled that she was not actually sure of what she was really thinking and feeling. All she knew was that she had to remain strong.

The following morning, Tina awoke from a short and troubled sleep. She was devastated to find that her mother had passed during the night. Her brother and sister were wailing and crying and rushed to Tina, clinging and burying their faces in her fur. Although she was upset herself, Tina knew that the family somehow had to go on. She set

her feelings and emotions aside and began to take care of the daily chores that her mother had always done. She busied herself with the things that needed to be done; somehow this helped her to keep her mind off of her mother.

Over the next few days, Tina felt an ever-growing hole in her life that was once filled by her mother and the closeness that they had shared when she was alive. She tried to fill this void with more chores and time spent with her brother and sister. However, she spent less and less time with her friends. When they asked what was wrong, she found it hard to find the words to explain it to them and secretly wondered if they would even understand her at all or if they would even care. After all, she figured that they had no frame of reference anyway. Even though she had her family to talk to, she felt alone and isolated and wondered if the feelings and thoughts she was having were out of place.

A few years later, Tina became more comfortable with her experiences and found that, as time went on, she had less and less difficulty describing what it was like to lose her mother. She learned to appreciate those times that they had together and learned that she was able to work through anything that happened to her. Even though she is more comfortable with herself and her experiences, Tina still finds herself being wary and hyper vigilant from time to time, always wondering if she could get sick like her mother had.

Revised Meaning Units

Table 2

Revised Meaning Units, Participant 1 (PID1)

Revised Meaning Units: Participant 1 (PID1)	
•	<i>A sense of obligation to siblings</i>
•	<i>Facing one's own mortality</i>
•	<i>Association with peers vs. Association with family</i>
•	<i>Adoption of new roles</i>
•	<i>Voluntary vs. involuntary isolation</i>
•	<i>Denying true feelings/avoidance</i>
•	<i>Fear of the unknown</i>
•	<i>Appreciation of family</i>
•	<i>Wisdom with age</i>
•	<i>Filling the void or hole</i>
•	<i>Difficulty finding the words</i>
•	<i>Blur of emotions and feeling chaotic</i>
•	<i>Feelings, thoughts, and emotions that are out of place/out of context</i>

Structural Synthesis

The following essential structures have been identified: *Adoption of new roles, fear of the unknown, avoidance and filling the void, isolation from others, appreciation of family, difficulty finding the words/blur of emotions, and wisdom with age.*

The first essential structure is that of adopting new roles. PID1 emphasized throughout the interview that she did not allow herself to express her emotions at the time of her mother's death because she felt a sense of obligation towards her siblings to be a person that could support them and comfort them, much like her mother would have done for her. She also remembers thinking that other adolescents would not understand her emotions and thoughts, and she emphasized feeling as though she was different from her peers, which changed the way that she interacted with other adolescents.

The second essential structure that has been identified is fear of the unknown. PID1 describes having had many questions that went unanswered when her mother became ill and after she had died. When her mother was ill, there was the fear that she would not survive the cancer and that the treatments would not be effective. PID1 also expressed a fear of her own mortality and the hereditary nature of cancer. After witnessing her mother undergo treatments that stripped her of her femininity, PID1 has become very vigilant about taking care of her own body and those parts of her that exemplify her femininity out of the fear that she may suffer the same fate as her mother. In many ways, PID1 was confused by and afraid of the feelings that she had about her mother's death, never allowing herself to take the time to sort out these feelings and acknowledge them.

The third essential structure is that of avoidance and filling the void. Throughout the interview and through referencing her artwork, PID1 describes themes of avoidance and denial. She feels as though the denial of these feelings was partially to support the other members of her family and also because she felt as though she should hide these feelings from others as they would not be able to understand her emotions and thoughts.

Instead of demonstrating these emotions and thoughts outwardly, PID1 covered them with the opposite emotion of happiness. During the interview, PID1 even suggested that her last drawing, one that she identifies as very happy and comforting, would have been the drawing that would have been elicited from her at the time of her mother's death. The themes of sadness and stress present in her metaphor illustration, she stated, would not have been present when she was an adolescent because she adopted the facade of happiness to cover these emotions. Similarly, the last drawing her series reestablishes the facade of happiness by following the emotion-laden illustration of her metaphor. Even within her metaphor illustration, PID1 stated that she denies the viewer access to the faces of the people she has represented in the art work. Part of PID1's avoidance of her feelings and emotions is her efforts to fill the void left in her life by her mother's death. Her bereavement coping involved using food as an emotional crutch, and she alludes to the importance of this factor by drawing attention to her image of "the man with the food" during her interview.

The fourth essential structure that was identified was that of isolation from others. PID1 emphasized throughout the interview the isolating effect that experiencing a parent's death has on an adolescent. Although she considered herself to be very well supported by her community and family both during her mother's illness and after her mother's death, PID1 still regards the experience as isolating in nature. PID1 established that this isolating feeling was due to the feeling that anyone who had not experienced the death of a parent could understand how she was feeling at that time. She felt very much alone in her grief and alone in her experience. The image of the boy sitting by himself on the see-saw allowed her to use that image and speak through it to describe what the

isolation felt like for her. PID1 identified that she felt different from her peers after her mother had died. Even those individuals that reached out to her were disregarded as she felt as though no one could truly understand her or were not interested enough to want the truth of how she was feeling. In this way, PID1 voluntarily isolated herself from others by considering them to be incapable of understanding her grief.

Appreciation of family is the fifth essential structure that was identified. PID1 stated throughout the interview that she could recall having had very good experiences with her family. She seemed to appreciate them even more when she found out about her mother's illness, saying that her family made an effort to spend time together. As an adult, PID1 stated that she does not feel any regret concerning the time that she had with her mother before she had died and appreciates this time even more for what it was. She finds that knowing that she can have such good feelings even after something as difficult as a parent's death has even influenced her philosophy of life.

The sixth essential structure is that of difficulty finding the words and the blur of emotions. Although PID1 used the artwork throughout the interview as a means of elaborating upon a point of interest or as a reference point during the interview, she expressed clear difficulty with trying to find images that truly captured her emotions and thoughts at the time of her mother's death without seeming cliché or stereotypic. Her initial metaphor for the third artwork was that of feeling foggy and blue. However, as she continued to describe her metaphor, she found that her metaphor changed when she realized that it was difficult for her to find the images and words that she wanted to use to express herself. As her metaphor evolved, she likened the experience to feeling like her experience of her mother's death was a collage of things pushed together and her

experience was not unlike changing the channels on the television in rapid sequence. For PID1, not knowing what she was feeling at the time of her mother's death was a barrier to being able to connect with others, particularly her peers and people outside of her family.

The seventh and final essential structure is that of wisdom with age. PID1 emphasized that her ability to reflect on her experience has improved dramatically since she was an adolescent. She insists that, as the time increases from the death of her mother, she is increasingly more capable of describing the event in more objective terms and gaining more insight from her experience. She also stated several times that her philosophy of life has changed in many ways since her mother's death. Rather than being disabled by the events in her life, she knows that she is able to work past any of her troubles and find the positive aspects in the experience. PID1 finds that having had such a trying experience has allowed her to put many of the events in her life into perspective. Her statements suggest that this healthy attitude towards life is one of the positive consequences of experiencing the death of her mother.

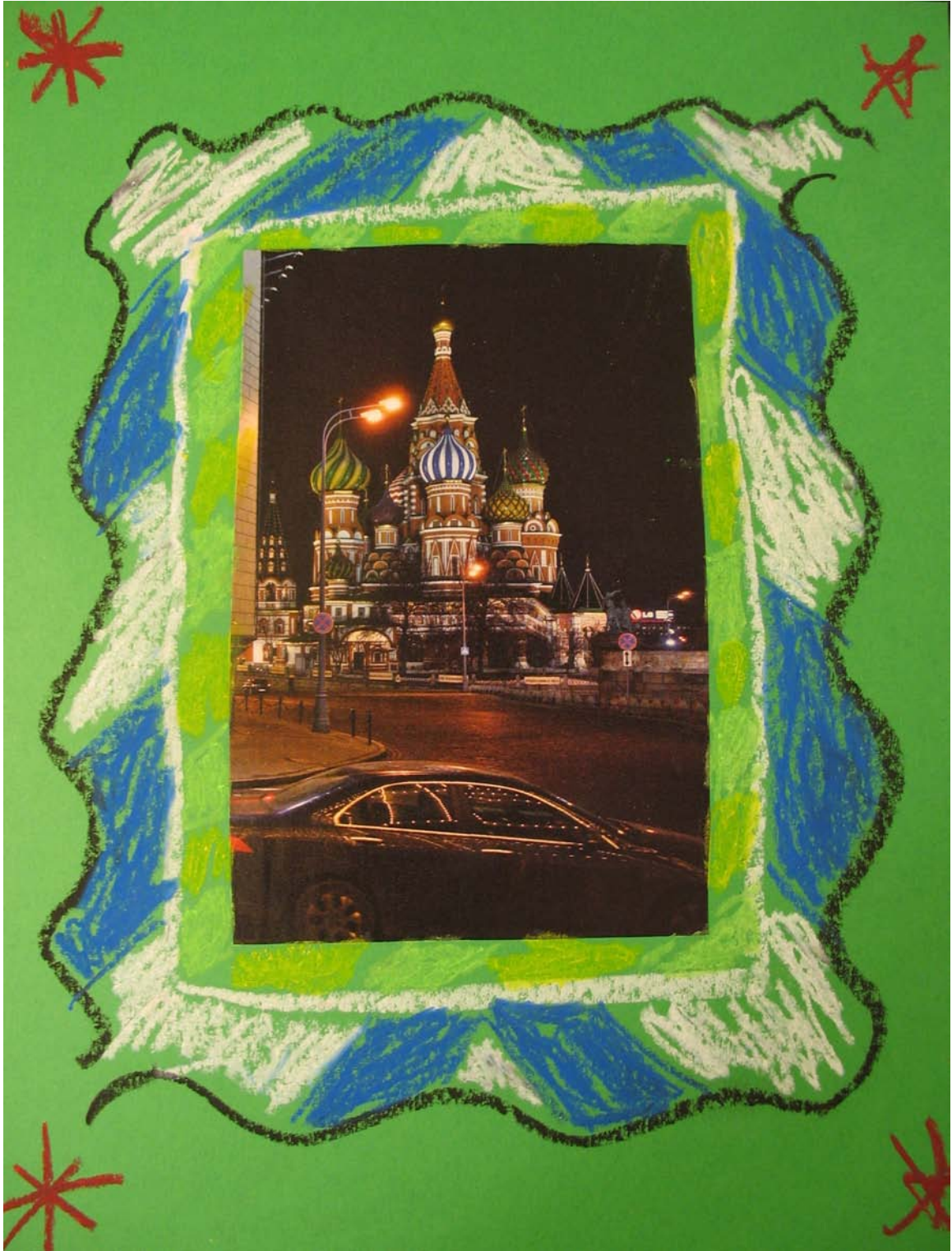


Figure 1-1. “A Picture of Budapest in a Frame.” First free drawing from PID1.

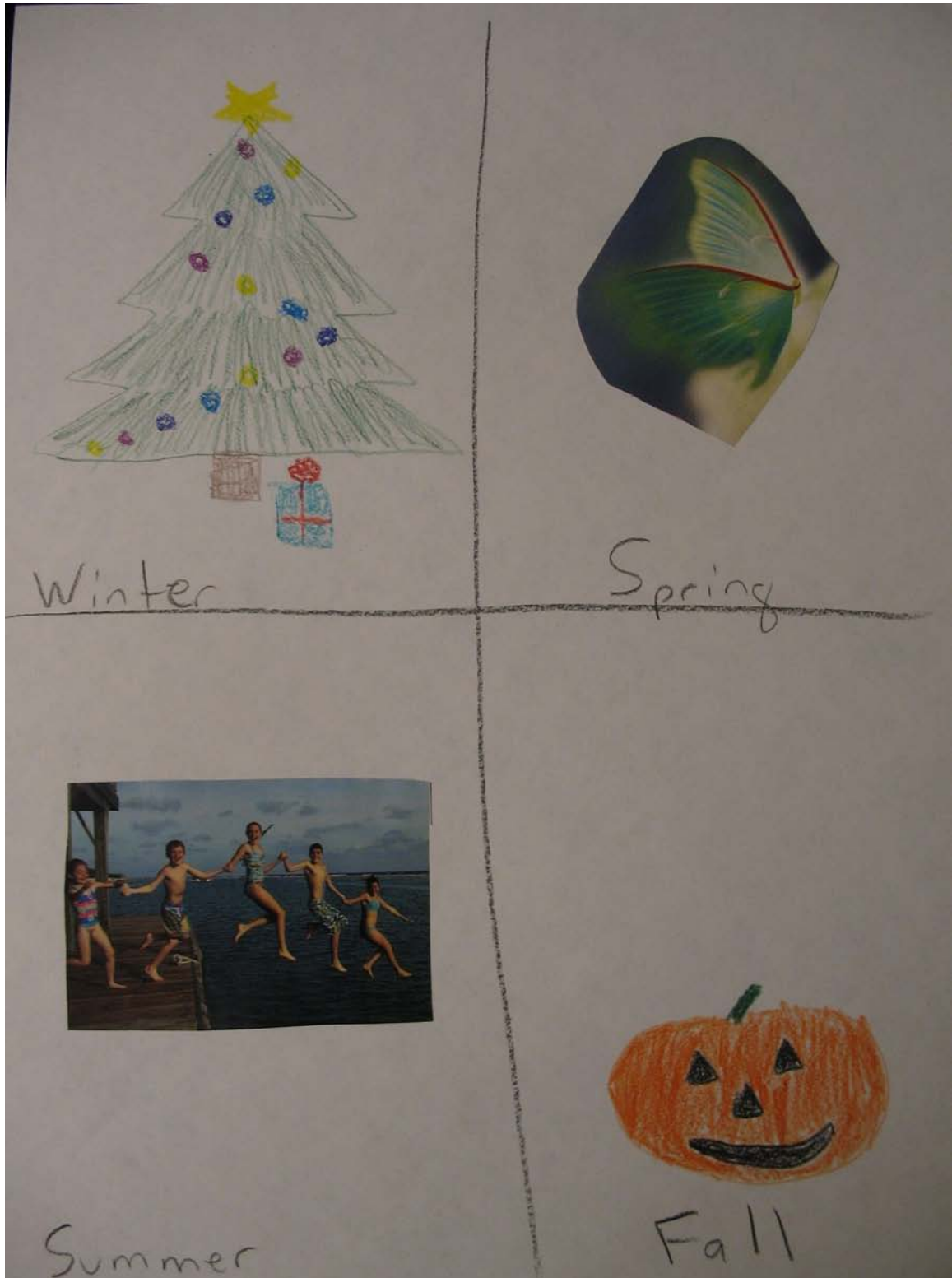


Figure 1- 2. Drawing of the cycle of the seasons from PID1. PID1 stated that she focused on the holidays in each season as a way of representing the seasons.

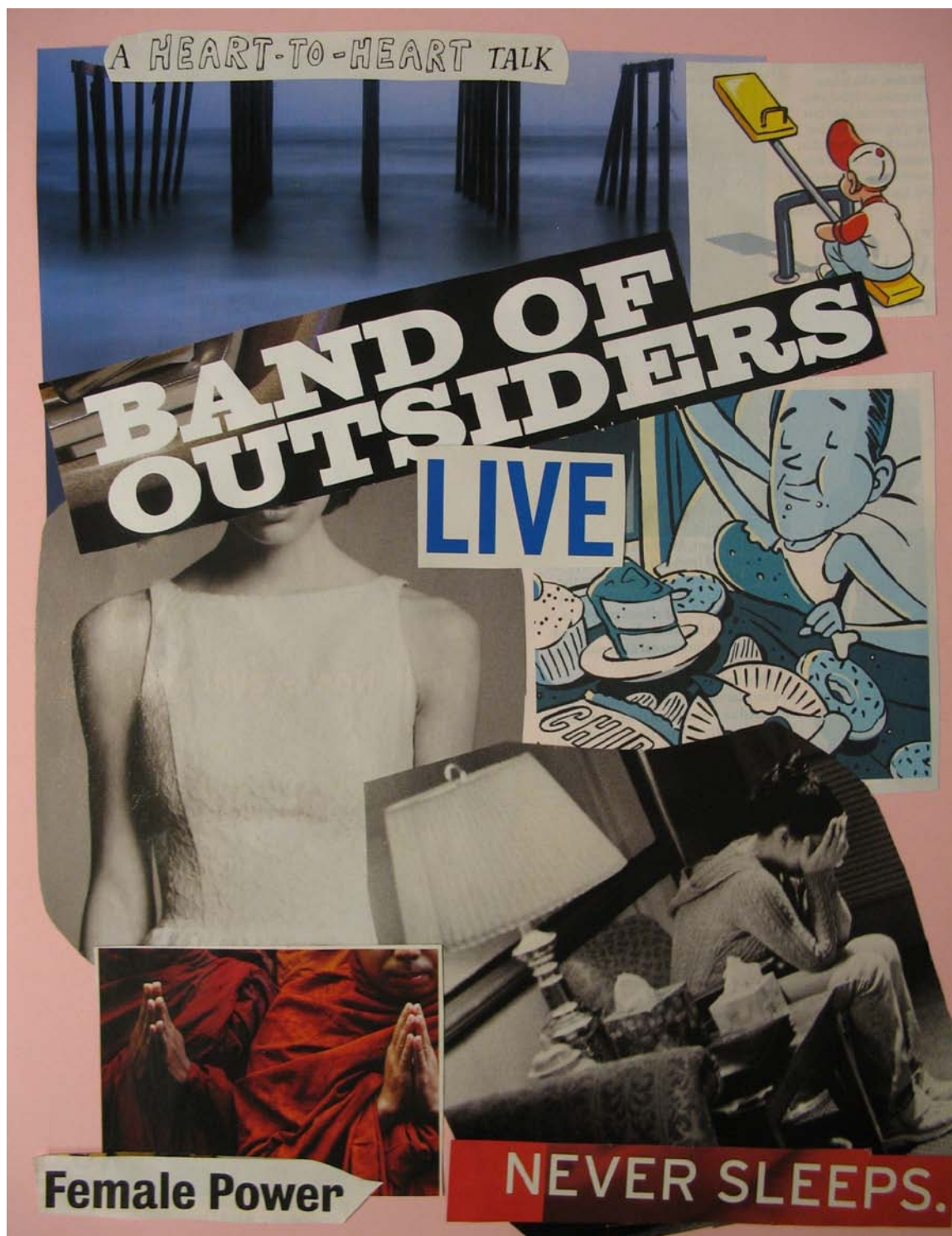


Figure 1 -3. Drawing of a metaphor describing the experience of having lost a parent in adolescence from PID1



Figure 1-4. Second free drawing from PID1. PID1 described it as “a nice scene.”

Participant 2

In this section, the meaning units, textural description, imaginative variation, revised themes, and structural synthesis are presented for Participant #2 (PID2).

Table 3

Meaning Units, Participant #2 (PID2)

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
<p><i>Angry...because he just leaves you...you didn't get enough out of it</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I mean, if your dad dies at a young age, you are probably always going to feel like you didn't get enough out of it • But even more so when he didn't give you half of the opportunity you deserved. • I think a lot of kids and in so many different demographics feel like their parents don't give them enough of what they deserve. • When you choose to be a parent, that's your responsibility to your child. • Any kind of parent that is absent in any way • Also maybe not feeling like they got enough from [your parent] • Angry because you've just lost a father and because he wasn't the coolest to you and he just leaves you and that's it. • About what I'll have and never have because of that.
<p><i>The holes are so big...missing too much of yourself... You let things slip through</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cutting holes in it [the artwork] to represent that this is me and maybe what I'm missing • I guess I had just realized each year I grew in a certain way I'd be like missing things. • I can't think of the word that I'm looking for... • Losing that parent and never getting opportunity to learn those things or

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
	<p>see that person change or see a difference between the years or anything like that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maybe the holes are so big that you are just missing too much of yourself to realize things. • Maybe thoughts or people or whatever it is fall through the larger holes. • Maybe you let things slip through; you don't realize. • I don't have things in my life that other people have and I have to make up for it in other ways. • He had layers that he didn't fulfill things in and he was missing. • I think from when I was 17 years old I was just unaware of a lot of things that I wasn't going to have. • Maybe things you wouldn't do by yourself that I had to do because you don't have your dad in that certain way • It was really hard to see him go because I don't think he ever reached the potential of who he was as a person. • The other side is almost like a net; it's more close-knit [referring to the artwork] • The connections...these holes are a little closer together [in the artwork]. • All of these [holes] seem to go in the same directions [on pink side of the artwork] and they are all pointing in the same direction. • These ones [on the red side of the artwork] kind of go inwards and outwards, so maybe they are fighting each other.
<p><i>Shapes represent different parts of me... layers</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's different shapes and that adds to the aspect of there's a whole

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
	<p>lot of different parts of me; there's not just one thing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They're not all the same shapes. • All of them have to do with attributes of my life I guess. • That's what I kind of put into them...parts of me. • I guess that day to day attitude can change; not like a totally personality change, but I'm more one thing than another some days • From a year to year thing or from one big event to another big event in my life, I think I am one specific layer • I'm sure that some people can be a mosh of things at once. • It's not simple or one specific idea. • It's not just about being a layer; what are you in that layer? • You are things and you aren't things. • So I just added a couple more to just give the idea that you're more than one and you're different between each layer in different ways.
<p><i>Where they [the image of the shoes] are going to and where they are coming from</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They're probably thinking where they are going to and where they are coming from • You can really, really relate to who you are and what you've gone through over the years • Who I think I am today and was before. • It kind of just represents what I'm doing and who I am right now in my life. • Maybe if I look back on an experience I'll see things a different way and who I am in a different way. • Like you are not your full potential

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
	<p>yet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's holes because you can see the old while forming the new.
<p><i>Eager to change and things like that and grow...from layer to layer...I'm willing to see what I am missing</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have all of these things that I'm willing to see that I'm missing here or grow in this particular way. • I layered them together [in the artwork] in different colors and with different holes because it's supposed to symbolize different layers of who I am growing • You can see that from layer to layer I guess and comparing like how I want to grow • Just seeing through all of those layers and just continue growing. • It's kind of like bittersweet because it's about something sad but you can learn from it and you can grow from it. • I don't like regret things, but you wish things could have happened but you still work forward I guess. • You grow from year to year and you realize that it's ok to not know everything and to need people and things like that. • You grow up and you realize it's not about being this perfect person because no one's ever going to be perfect. • It can be anything, but you have to realize and see that window of opportunity.
<p><i>I'm trying to do the opposite of that with my life</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I've taken the time to learn that I don't want that with my life. • I'm not trying to make up for what he was; I'm just doing it for me. • I think I've learned something different in having lost a father and how that's affected me and how I see things and how I understand things and how I want to do things

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
	<p>in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He's never taken the opportunity to take care of himself or the people around him.
<p><i>I think it was easy to relay the experience now comparing it to then [when he died]...because I wasn't as willing to express myself</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can see myself making it...it probably would have been one big angry mess. • I think it was easy to relay the experience now comparing it to then. • I think I would have had a harder time because I wasn't as willing to express myself. • I would have probably made it a lot more difficult for you to understand. • I don't think I would have been able to have gotten it out in such a clear thought. • I think it would have been a lot of different ideas coming out all mixed together. • I think [I would have had the same kinds of insights as I had today] because I've always been artistic, so yes. • I guess this side, the red one, because I think red is a very abrasive color to begin with and because the holes are really not even cut open yet and some of them are really big. • I think then I was kind of like, 'I'm glad it's done with and I don't have to deal with this anymore' and it would have been a closed book for me. • At that time, I wouldn't have even cared to think more into because I was just frustrated with him at the time. • It was just so raw and I was just so angry then compared to now for a lot of reasons.

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
<p><i>At first I didn't understand why I was doing something, but then your brain kind of starts working...you get more thoughtful about why you are drawing.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You keep pushing it and you get a good understanding. • You realize a lot and your own personal thoughts and how that made you feel. • At first that didn't come to me, but once I figured out after I did the first snowflake thingy, it came pretty easily. • You kinda like get more thoughtful about why you are drawing • It's more technical because I had no idea what I was doing at first • I was just like, whatever, I'm like a little kid. • Maybe inside that's how I feel or see things for each particular season, why I give certain things textures more than others.
<p><i>She couldn't decide...how do you express something that is a lifetime of changes?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One day there was a girl and she couldn't decide where she wanted to live • The last one, it just took me a moment to be like, what do I want to do? • I was just trying to think about who I am. • I thought about when it happened and who I was today, and I thought, 'well, it's not just that black and white.' • It's so many ideas; how do you express something that is a lifetime of changes?
<p><i>Who's going to relate to her as an image?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any change in it can alter what you are trying to sell and who you are trying to be, almost like fitting a personality. • Who's going to relate to her as an image?
<p><i>It's [the artwork] is supposed to represent that experience and who you are...and what I've gone through</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The last one just brings calm again because you've gone through all of these things and you are these

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
	<p>things, so what are you right now because of it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Just like, how do you feel at the end of all of these things you think about • It's supposed to represent that experience and who you are. • I think it more symbolizes who I am as a person and what I've gone through. • I put the most thought into who I was and what became of all of that because of that death. • The things that surround you all the time are the things you think about the most and understand the most. • You won't have that specific person, so it's going to make you think and feel in a way that is different from other people • I willing to realize that I'm not perfect. • Now I relate to my mom so much more; I never gave her the time of day when I was younger. I think it's so much more than even if I still had my dad, because I don't and I appreciate her twice as much.
<p><i>I think when that happened I didn't want to have to need anyone</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think I was a little more arrogant then. • I was just like, 'whatever, it is what it is and I'm just going to do what I want' • I wanted to be very strong and independent. • When I was younger, I didn't think about that as much. I was like, 'whatever, it is what it is and I'm just going to go on'. • I think I was just like, 'I'll make a game plan and I'll just stick to that game plan. • We're quick to say, 'we're right

Meaning Unit	Participant's Statements
	<p>and you don't understand'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When I was younger, I was just like, 'I'm just going to make this work and I'm just going to do it. I'm strong enough to figure it out.' • If I had any choice in any situation, I wouldn't talk to anyone. • No, I just thought that it was my personal business and no one would really understand me and things like that.

Textural Description

The experience of Participant #2 (PID2) was categorized into the following meaning units: 1) *Angry...because he just leaves you...you didn't get enough out of it*, 2) *The holes are so big...missing too much of yourself...You let things slip through*, 3) *Shapes represent different parts of me... layers*, 4) *Where they [the image of the shoes] are going to and where they are coming from*, 5) *Eager to change and things like that and grow...from layer to layer...I'm willing to see what I am missing*, 6) *I'm trying to do the opposite of that with my life*, 7) *I think it was easy to relay the experience now comparing it to then [when he died]...because I wasn't as willing to express myself*, 8) *At first I didn't understand why I was doing something, but then your brain kind of starts working...you get more thoughtful about why you are drawing*, 9) *She couldn't decide...how do you express something that is a lifetime of changes?*, 10) *Who's going to relate to her as an image?*, 11) *It's [the artwork] is supposed to represent that experience and who you are...and what I've gone through*, and 12) *I think when that happened I didn't want to have to need anyone.*

PID2 acknowledged throughout the interview that her relationship with her father before he had died had a tremendous influence on her thoughts and feelings about his death. Although she stated that “if your dad dies at a young age, you are probably always going to feel like you didn’t get enough out of it,” she emphasized that his being “absent” in her life furthered this feeling. She believes that her father “didn’t give you half of the opportunity you deserved” because “he was an alcoholic my whole life” and had “never taken the opportunity to take care of himself or the people around him.” She feels that there is a definite unfairness to the type of relationship that he had with her and her sisters, stating that “when you choose to be a parent, that’s your responsibility to your child.” The void that he left in her life both before and after his death appears to be a reminder of “what I’ll have and never have because of that.”

The sense of loss and the void that her father had created in her life is connected to a sense of missing certain elements of her life and herself. PID2 stated on multiple occasions that she has a sense of “missing too much of yourself to realize things,” especially at the time of her father’s death. She believes that, when she was 17, “I was just unaware of a lot of things that I wasn’t going to have” because of the death of her father. In much the same way, she believes that there are pieces of her father that were missing when he died as well. Knowing that her father had not “ever reached the potential of who he was as a person” and knowing that “he had layers that he didn’t fulfill things in and he was missing” is a realization that PID2 did not have as an adolescent. The idea of a void and pieces missing was reflected in her artwork, especially her metaphor illustration (Figure 2-3A-C). In this piece, she cut large and varying holes in the

paper to represent those parts of herself and those parts of her father that she felt were missing.

Her verbalizations about missing pieces of herself were drawn from the artwork that she created, stating that she was “cutting holes in it to represent...what I’m missing.” As she reflected upon the holes and the size and shapes of them, she realized that the holes present in each of her layers seemed to be different. On the pink side (Figure 2-3B), “they [the holes] are all pointing in the same direction. These ones [on the red side of the artwork] (Figure 2-3A) kind of go inwards and outwards, so maybe they are fighting each other.” She likened the red side of the artwork to how she felt as an adolescent and recognized that the holes in her life were less organized and more conflictual. As an adult, she understands that, as an adolescent, there were large “holes that are so big” that “thoughts or people or whatever it is fall through” them.

PID2 recognizes that there are “lots of different parts of me” and that her attitude, philosophy of life, and personality change from “one big event to another big event in my life.” She is very much affected by those events in her life, particularly the death of her father, stating that “I am more one thing than another some days.” PID2 describes herself and her life as “not simple or one specific idea.”. The idea that there are “lots of different parts of me” was drawn from her artwork as she reflected on the multiple layers and pieces of her metaphor illustration (Figures 2-3A-C) and the various themes present in each of her four drawings. In her second illustration, that of the seasons (Figures 2-2A-E), PID2 integrates many different elements to each season and integrates each of the seasons into each other, almost to the point of where it looks like “a mosh of things at once.” In her metaphor illustration, PID2 stated that she specifically added more layers

with “different shapes” to the art piece in order to signify “the idea that you’re more than one [thing at a time], and you’re different between each layer in different ways.”

PID2 finds that, as time has passed since the death of her father, “you realize a lot and your own personal thoughts and how that made you feel.” When she was an adolescent, “that didn’t come to me” “because I had no idea what I was doing at first.” As she was creating the artwork, she reflected that “you get more thoughtful about why you are drawing” through the process of creating the artwork. For PID2, the artwork served the purpose of allowing her to become more thoughtful about why or how she was creating her line, shape, and form in the process of creating the art. Although her drawing was “more technical because I had no idea what I was doing at first,” she realized that “maybe inside that’s how I feel or see things.” Throughout the art-making process and throughout her life, PID2 finds that “you keep pushing it and you get a good understanding.”

Similarly, as she was better able to understand her own thought process as she was creating her artwork, she expressed that she was able to be more thoughtful about her feelings surrounding her father’s death now as compared to when she was an adolescent. As time passes, the experience of losing a father becomes less raw, and “you kinda get more thoughtful” about life events, making it easier “to relay the experience now comparing it to then.” When she was an adolescent, PID2 feels as though “she couldn’t decide” or “express something that is a lifetime of changes” as she was able to during the art-making session and interview. She was unsure of how to react to the death of her father when he died and the importance of the event because of the types of emotions and thoughts she had about her father before his death. As an adolescent, her emotional

response “would have been one big angry mess” because she does not “think I would have been able to have gotten it out in such a clear thought.”

PID2 has made many efforts to change herself and alter “who you are trying to be” as a means of “trying to do the opposite of that [her father’s example] with my life.” She understands that having had a difficult relationship with her father and then losing him has allowed her to take the “time to learn that I don’t want that with my life.” Although she explains that “I’m not trying to make up for what he was,” she acknowledges that it has “affected me and how I see things and how I understand things and how I want to do things in the future.” PID2 knows that she is who she “is right now because of it” and knows “who I am as a person and what I’ve gone through.” Since her father’s death, she has come “to realize that I’m not perfect” as she knows that she thinks and feels “in a way that is different from other people.”

At the time of her father’s death, PID2 understands that she “was a little more arrogant then” and “wanted to be very strong and independent.” She forced herself to move on from her father’s death and the circumstances surrounding her relationship with him because “when it happened I didn’t want to have to need anyone.” PID2 considered this experience to be “my personal business,” stating that “no one would really understand me.” Rather than talking to anyone other than her sister about the event, she tried “to make this work” and be “strong enough to figure it out” on her own. Since then, she has learned that “you have friends and family and people out there for a reason who are more than willing to want to help you.” PID2 also acknowledges that she can “relate to my mom so much more” “than even if I still had my dad, because I don’t and I appreciate her twice as much.” PID2 reflects that this process of becoming more aware of

her own feelings is represented in her artwork, particularly through the final drawing. The last drawing “just brings calm again because you’ve gone through all of these things” and that she is who she is “right now because of it.” For her, the series of drawings “represent that experience [of losing a father] and who you are.”

Knowing where she has come from and where she is going in her life was a point that PID2 clearly stated and reflected upon as she spoke about her artwork. The image of shoes in her second illustration (Figure 2-2A) was used to show “where they are going to and where they are coming from.” By using the artwork, PID2 projected her own feelings upon her metaphor illustration (Figure 2-3A-C), stating that “I layered them together in different colors with different holes because it’s supposed to symbolize different layers of who I am growing” up to be. Even as a young adult, PID2 recognizes that “you are not your full potential yet” as there are “holes because you can see the old while forming the new.” As she is learning to fill these holes and develop herself, PID2 finds herself “eager to change” and wondering “how I want to grow.” She understands that her ability to reflect on her father’s death and the significance of it and learn from the experience has grown since his death. No longer having to be “strong enough to figure it out,” she knows that “it’s ok not to know everything and to need people.” Being able “to learn from it” and “grow from it” allows her to “work forward” in her life.

Imaginative Variation

Tabitha was a small girl from a small town. She spent many of her days fending for herself and finding work and odd jobs in the community. Finding a warm bed and a good meal every evening was never a problem. Each day was nearly the same as the last,

but that never seemed to bother her very much. At the end of the day, Tabitha was relatively content with her life.

She went from day to day like this for some time, but began to feel a void in herself, almost like something was missing. Tabitha tried not to let this feeling get to her, but it sat there, gnawing at the back of her mind. As much as she tried to figure out what it was that was bothering her, she couldn't ever quite place her finger on it. Every time she thought that she got close, it slipped away. Maybe, she thought to herself one day, I just need to get away. Maybe if I take a break from it all, I'll be able to figure out what this feeling really is. That same day, Tabitha packed up a few belongings and whatever scraps of food she could find, put on her tall, sturdy boots, and departed on her journey.

Tabitha traveled for days, finding shelter where she could and trapping and foraging for food. Finding food was relatively easy; she was used to figuring out many life skills on her own. She did not know where she was going or what she was going to do once she had decided that her journey was over. Regardless, she continued walking. As she was meandering along the banks of a slowly winding stream, she began to ponder. Although she felt increasing better about herself and her life as the distance between herself and her old life increased, she could still feel the empty sensation. Suddenly, the stream along which she was walking ended.

At the stream's end was a calm pool of water. The water was deep and blue and the images of the sky above and the trees surrounding it were crisply reflected on its surface. Tabitha thought for a fleeting moment that it was almost too still as there was the water of the stream flowing into it. The water from the stream and the calm, cool breeze of the air had no effect on the surface of the water. It was serene. Captivated by its

intensity and calmness, Tabitha sat at the end of the pool and leaned forward to gaze into it.

Despite its calmness and stillness, Tabitha's reflection did not look like her. In the pool's reflection, her image was distorted and jumbled. There were pieces of her that were missing, other pieces that were pushed together, and yet other pieces that looked as though they were where they were supposed to be. Tabitha could not understand how the reflection of the scenery around her could look so crisp and real in the water and how she appeared to look so different. She sat for a very long time, looking at each piece of her in the clear blue water and wondering how each piece of her could fit back together again. Some pieces looked angry and violent; others looked sad and lonely. There were even pieces that appeared to look frustrated and confused. Some looked genuine and real. Others looked alien to her. As Tabitha sat and gazed at each of these pieces, she began to realize that they are all part of her. Each of the pieces of herself in the water reflected a part of her true self.

Sitting on the edge of the pool, she began to accept all of these different pieces of herself. As she did, her reflection in the water became clearer to her. She began to look more and more like herself. Even those pieces of herself that appeared to be missing in the image were understood as pieces of herself that she felt were missing in her life. She began to realize that all of the events in her life helped to shape her image as reflected in the pool of water. Having accepted that there will always be that feeling of emptiness in her life, she finally felt more at peace with herself.

Revised Meaning Units

Table 4

Revised Meaning Units, Participant 2

Revised Meaning Units: Participant 2 (PID2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Missing pieces and letting things slip through the holes</i> • <i>Recognizing and accepting the shapes and layers of oneself</i> • <i>Understanding that past events have an influence</i> • <i>Isolation and distance</i> • <i>The ability to grow and fill in the missing pieces</i> • <i>Acceptance of help</i> • <i>Initial flight and avoidance</i> • <i>Shaping one's own life</i> • <i>Eagerness to change and grow from layer to layer</i> • <i>Sense of jumbled pieces and disorganized images</i>

Structural Synthesis

The following essential structures have been identified for Participant #2: *Missing pieces and letting things slip through the holes, Recognizing and accepting the shapes and layers of oneself, Acceptance of help/Isolation, and The ability to grow and fill in the missing pieces.*

The first essential structure is that of missing pieces and letting things slip through the holes. PID2 used the artwork as a reference and a means of clarifying and illustrating her thoughts by referring to her metaphor illustration when she spoke about missing

pieces or finding holes in her life. These missing pieces are emulated in her artwork, with the holes cut from the paper that represents herself and her life. PID2 stated on several occasions during the interview that she is missing something. She knows that she was certainly missing more from her life when she was an adolescent at the time of her father's death, but still feels a sense of loss from the things that she will never be able to have because she no longer has a father and never really had a good relationship with him. She knows that sometimes the holes in her life are so big that other things slip through without her knowing. PID2 has, however, been able to close up some of those holes since her father's death so that they are more close-knit and able to work with one another. She states that the holes in her life now for more of a net to catch the things that would have fallen through the larger holes that she had as an adolescent.

The second essential structure is recognizing and accepting the shapes and layers of oneself. PID2 seemed to struggle with accepting the role that her father had in her life, stating that she did not get what she deserved from him. Throughout the interview, PID2 emphasized that there are many parts of her just as there were many different parts of each of her drawings, particularly her seasons and metaphor illustrations. She knows that her experience can not be simplified down to one answer or one response. She acknowledges that her experiences have made her different from other people. Although PID2 appears to have some difficulty accepting the parts of herself that are more directly influenced by her father, she understands that she is working towards a fuller picture of herself and working towards reaching her own potential.

The third essential structure is acceptance of help/isolation. Throughout PID2's development, her ability to accept and ask for help has changed dramatically. As an

adolescent struggling with issues surrounding a poor relationship with her father and her father's death, PID2 acknowledged that her ability to seek help and accept help from others was nearly non-existent. At the time of her father's death, PID2 states that she did not want to have to need anyone. By convincing herself that other people would not understand what she was going through anyway, she isolated herself. Her desire to be strong and independent as an adolescent directly influenced the number of people to whom she was able to process her feelings about her father's death. By thinking that she did not need anyone, she learned to be more dependent upon herself.

The fourth and final essential structure is that of the ability to grow and fill in the missing pieces. As the time since the death of her father increased, PID2 found that she was better able to process the circumstances surrounding the death. She understands where she has come from in her life and feels a great sense of accomplishment in knowing where she is going to go with her life. In the art-making session, PID2 reflected that the artwork represents her experiences and who she is as a person, as well as how she has been able to grow since her father's death. Through her metaphor, she understands that, although there are still holes and pieces missing in her life, she is better able to understand these missing pieces, work with them, and grow from them. As a young adult, PID2 finds that she is more willing to see what she is missing in her life and finds that she is more accepting of the necessity to grow in a certain direction. She is more accepting of help from others and acknowledges that there are times where she can not accomplish things entirely on her own. Knowing that she needs to work forward and focusing on her future has allowed her to become more than she felt her father ever was.

PID2 feels a great sense of pride in being able to learn skills that she loves and work towards a future about which she is genuinely excited.



Figure 2-1. "A Croquis." First free drawing from PID2



Figure 2-2A. Drawing of the cycle of the seasons from PID2; Image of entire piece.



Figure 2-2B. Drawing of the cycle of the seasons from PID2; Close-up image of “Winter”.



Figure 2-2C. Drawing of the cycle of the seasons from PID2; Close-up image of “Spring”.



Figure 2-2D. Drawing of the cycle of the seasons from PID2; Close-up image of “Summer.”



Figure 2-2E. Drawing of the cycle of the seasons from PID2; Close-up image of “Fall”.

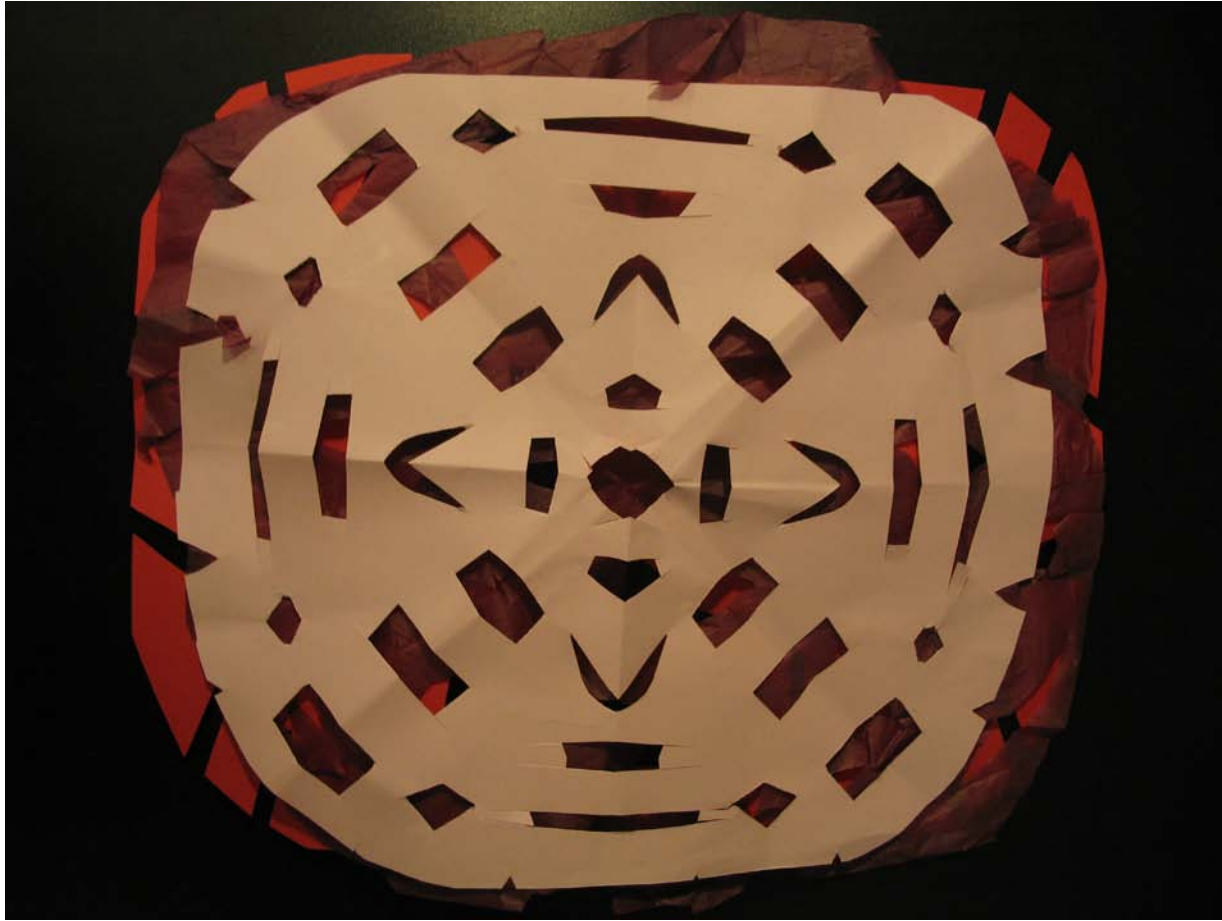


Figure 2-3A. Drawing of a metaphor describing the experience of having lost a parent in adolescence from PID2; Image shows the side of her that describes her response to the death at the time of the data collection.

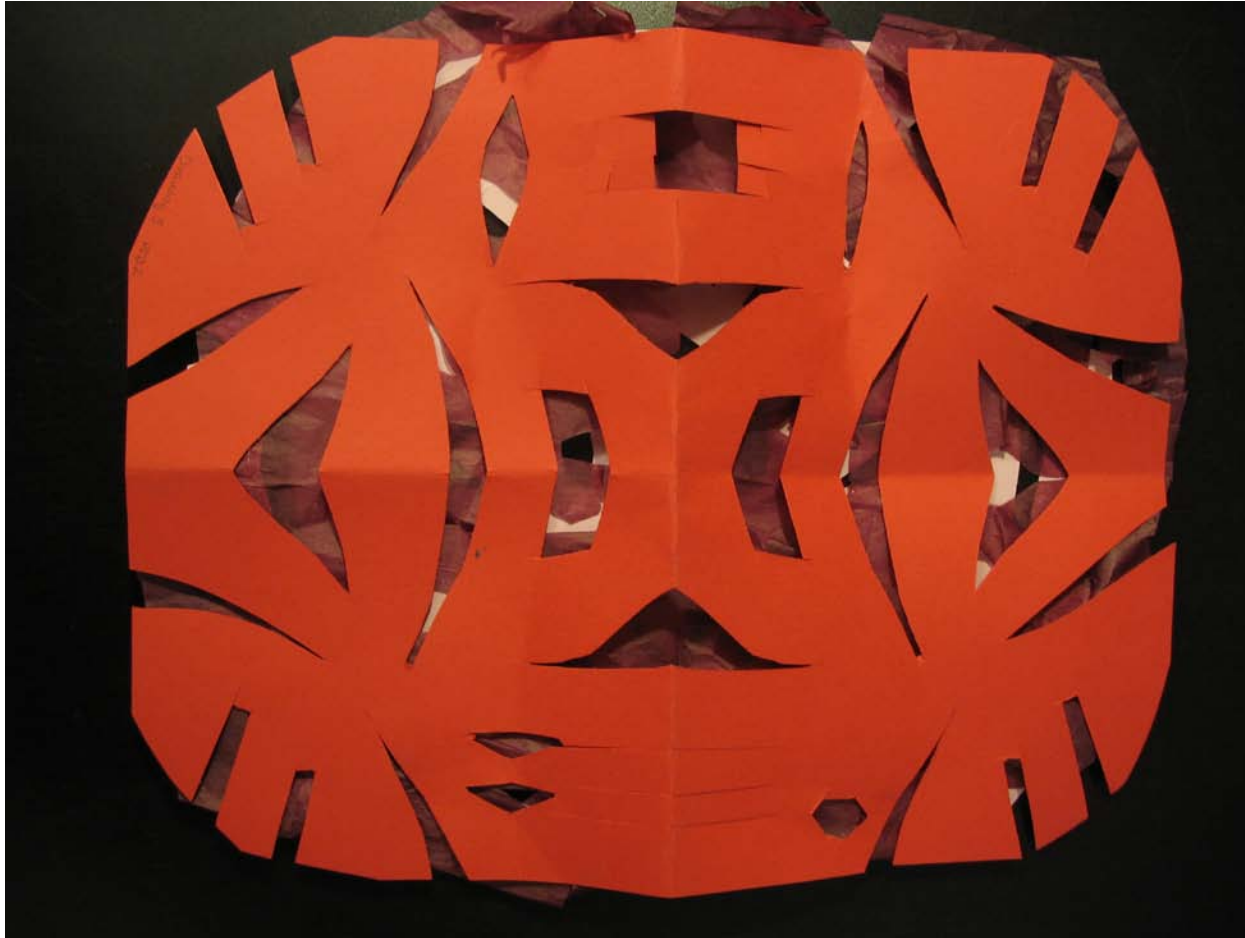


Figure 2-3B. Drawing of a metaphor describing the experience of having lost a parent in adolescence from PID2; Image shows the side of her that describes her response to the death at the time of the death.



Figure 2-3C. Drawing of a metaphor describing the experience of having lost a parent in adolescence from PID2; Image shows the entire pieces from a top view.



Figure 2-4. Second free drawing from PID2; The image reflects the type of fabric design she might create. It also reminds her of her mother because she likes to garden.

Participant 3

In this section, the meaning units, textural description, imaginative variation, revised themes, and structural synthesis are presented for Participant #3 (PID3).

Table 5

Meaning Units, Participant #3 (PID3)

Meaning Unit	Participant's statements
<p><i>I don't think that time heals...a part of myself is never coming back. These lines show that things are moving and things change around it (the event of the death)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So it just stays the same • I mean, it helps you live with it, but it doesn't heal it. • Something you have lost, you have lost. • You can not get it back. • You can create something, you can divert yourself, you can find other things which you love, but some things you loose, they are gone forever. • And also that it stays the same no matter what happens around it, so I drew these lines as to show that things are moving and things change around it [referring to the artwork]. • I mean, I can still feel what I felt at that time, at that very moment still feel it with the same intensity right now. • But something which I lost at that particular moment of my life, a part of myself, it's never coming back. • You lose something and you don't get it back • Time is a big factor in this picture [referring to metaphor drawing] • At that time there was no time. • I wouldn't say only for every person, but any person who loses such a close relative or close person in life, it just holds onto their mind and their hearts for some time

Meaning Unit	Participant's statements
<p><i>You believe that you are in control of everything, but that is not necessarily true...you don't know what is going to happen</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So I didn't have any option. • There was no other way. • Some things you can not change. • I wanted to give it not more than the time limit. • It was not something that was planned • You don't know what's going to happen, you just live in the moment • I wouldn't say that it brought a distraction, but it brought an aim or a focus on something to hold on.
<p><i>You feel so chaotic...you feel so many things at once...it just passes through your mind in a flash</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So many things you feel at once, it's very difficult to explain it to someone when you yourself can not understand what's happening or what is going on inside you. • Immediately, after such an event it's difficult to explain it to anyone. • It's not like individual thoughts, but it just passes through your mind in a flash [referring to the metaphor drawing] • At the time of death, it was difficult to talk to anyone because you are not sure what is happening. • It was like, not in a state of shock, but it was so chaotic. • At that time, I wouldn't have even been able to describe it in an objective way. • I don't understand it as it is right now • You are not prepared to do that, anyone would be afraid • I didn't have time to think about it • Then, any adolescent is not sure of themselves; they have their doubts and insecurities.
<p><i>I should support them instead of asking support from them. The dilemma of dealing with family grief</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I had some responsibility that I should be more resolved and calm right now • I had my family members around

Meaning Unit	Participant's statements
	<p>me and they were also upset, so I thought I can not afford to give into the grief and be very expressive of my sadness or anything.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The earlier I do (accept the death), the better for everyone. • But I remember that if I just give into grief, (I can't support my family)
<p><i>When you pass through and days go by, you start looking at it more objectively...[the metaphor] shows that life goes on</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As time goes, you think about your life and what the person would have wanted you to do and it becomes better. • That's why it shows that life flows and time flies by, because life goes on [referring to the metaphor drawing] • When you go through this kind of event, though this kind of test, you are more sure of yourself that you came out right, that you came out fine. • Everything seems to be in place now. • I told him that you'll get through, you just have to hold on. • As you start understanding it in a better way, you start accepting it in a better way. • Ah, it's never the same....I mean, life moves on. • I don't have any problem with that because that's what happens in life. • Looking at it retrospectively is very different. I can say that this might have been better if this would have happened. • In the third one [drawing], I just wanted to express what I think of this whole journey. • I just remember my family members and the way it all happened and how life has changed in the last five or six years.

Meaning Unit	Participant's statements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right now I am telling you about it objectively and much more calmly because I have gone through it and I am much more confident and I am more sure of myself. • I love everything about my life right now. • I learned some things about living, the major part of your life that is your mother or father. • This is the passage of time, I just tried to show this time clock.
<p><i>You hang onto that moment for some time...it's hard to get through that image</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In this picture [the metaphor drawing], I am saying how time flies by, but at that time, there was no time to fly by. • It's hard to get through that image [of my mother's death] and think about the future and how to deal with it. • But such a big event and the aftershocks of such an event are so big that they last for years. • I wanted to show some sun or moon [in the metaphor drawing], like it stays forever. • I don't think there's a limit to it. • It's very difficult to set time limits or anything. • That event, that scene itself has such a large bearing, such a large impact on my mind so it's very hard to see anything past that.
<p><i>So that's what you feel at that time; just so helpless...like I am in a cage</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In everyday life we forget about so many things which are inevitable and you can not do anything. • So you just feel helplessness at that time. • Like I am in a cage, you can see [referring to the metaphor drawing]. • I can not do anything. • So when I was seeing my mother

Meaning Unit	Participant's statements
	<p>die, I wanted to do something.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I mean, I'm a doctor and my father is also a doctor, so when my mother was ill, we entered the process as helping to do something but we couldn't do anything. • It was very difficult to believe that it was actually happening in front of your eyes.
<p><i>I like to object to anything, anything that is happening and I can not change it, I like to object to it</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In that case, I would have liked something to complain about. • If it would have been more, if I had more time to adapt, still I would say that I wanted more time. • I'm not saying that I'm not religious, but I like to change things around if I do not like them. • It is very difficult for me to accept something like that. • They don't object or question. They don't feel that intensity. • If it would have been a longer period, I think I would have done better at adapting to it, if it was one or two month to prepare for it. • But I have my doubts that even if we had more time, we might be saying today that, no, we still needed more time • I just need to accept it. • It would have been more like, 'why did this happen to me and my family and my mother? We always have been so good to everyone' • Some people are very flexible and can accept things easily and earlier
<p><i>As time goes, you sort things out and you start talking to people about it...filling in a few shapes gives them a different perspective</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So initially, that was a factor, but as time went on, we all started to talk more about it and what we are going to do in the future and what we are going to do in our lives. • I have talked to some important persons in my life. And I wrote a

Meaning Unit	Participant's statements
	<p>few poems. That's it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It (metaphor) is just a way of expressing and making someone understand what you are saying. • So I think I might have used it (metaphor). It definitely helps because the helplessness...you may not easily understand what you feel. • I talked to a few people and had very good conversations with them • I filled a few shapes [in the first drawing]; it gives them a different perspective. • It was about some civilization, and they're finding these things from...digging these things up.
<p><i>I like the complexity of it...but I don't know what it means through the layers</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shading sometimes creates a 3-D image when something is lying in front of something [referring to the first drawing] • I like to see the layers of it. Something is lying over it. [referring the first drawing] • Maybe I would have used more colors or something [in the first drawing]. • I wouldn't say difficult, but it was something I had to think about [in creating the metaphor drawing] • It has many colors in it but I don't know what it means through the layers. [referring to the artwork] • I was just using black [referring to the first drawing] • It's changing so frequently right now. • Maybe it makes no sense, but I like it. [referring to the first drawing]
<p><i>I can not say for others but myself</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't know if other people are like that or not. • But there are many people who can easily accept what is going on around them.

Meaning Unit	Participant's statements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So for those people it may not be helplessness because they can just accept it as God's will. • In the case of the city, it is not that personal, not that intense, not something this close. • Maybe someone who is that kind of person may not find themselves to be helpless because it is God's will and something like that may not feel helplessness like I did feel.
<p><i>I had very good support with my friends and my family members</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even if you don't talk, just having that person who stands by you. • You have that feeling that he or she probably feels more pain and more sadness than you. • I can just imagine how much pain he would be carrying inside and still he goes on and still he wakes up and does his job every day. • I was with my father so that's why I think of my father as more of a role model.

Textural Description

The experience of Participant #3 (PID3) was categorized into the following meaning units: 1) *I don't think that time heals...a part of myself is never coming back. These lines show that things are moving and things change around it (the event of the death,* 2) *You believe that you are in control of everything, but that is not necessarily true...you don't know what is going to happen,* 3) *You feel so chaotic...you feel so many things at once...it just passes through your mind in a flash,* 4) *I should support them instead of asking support from them" The dilemma of dealing with family grief,* 5) *When you pass through and days go by, you start looking at it more objectively...[the*

metaphor] shows that life goes on, 6) You hang onto that moment for some time...it's hard to get through that image, 7) So that's what you feel at that time; just so helpless...like I am in a cage, 8) I like to object to anything, anything that is happening and I can not change it, I like to object to it, 9) As time goes, you sort things out and you start talking to people about it...filling in a few shapes gives them a different perspective, 10) I like the complexity of it...but I don't know what it means through the layers, 11) I can not say for others but myself, and 12) I had very good support with my friends and my family members.

PID3 expressed many times during the interview that the loss of a parent is an event that time does not affect. When a parent dies, “they are gone forever.” Although he acknowledges that time has helped him to cope with his mother’s death, time “doesn’t heal it” because “you can not get it back.” The permanency of death is a phenomenon that does not change, despite how “things are moving and things change around it.” PID3 illustrated the permanency of his mother’s death through his metaphor drawing (Figure 3-3), stating that he “drew these lines as to show...how things change around it (the death of his mother).” His metaphor drawing illustrates that “time is a big factor” in losing “such a close person in life.” PID3 asserts that he can “still feel what I felt at that time, at that very moment” “with the same intensity.” For PID3, the death of his mother represents “a part of myself” that is “never coming back.”

As an adolescent, PID3 felt as though he believed “that you are in control of everything” and now recognizes that “that is not necessarily true.” Part of what made the death of his mother so difficult is the lack of control that he felt in the event. As the death of his mother was a thing “you can not change,” PID3 felt as though “you don’t know

what's going to happen, you just live in the moment." Connected to feeling a lack of control, PID3 also expressed that the death of his mother made him "feel so chaotic." PID3 expressed that this chaos is presented in the metaphor illustration (Figure 3-3) with the lines surrounding the cage, signifying that "it just passes through your mind in a flash." As he could not understand "what is going on inside you," PID3 believes that "it's difficult to explain it to anyone" "because you are not sure what is happening." Even as time as passed since his mother's death, PID3 explained that "I don't understand it as it is right now." PID3 also describes this feeling, in the context of his first drawing (Figure 3-1), as being complex with "layers," "but I don't know what it means through the layers."

As PID3 was unable to control or influence the death of his mother, he believes that one of the core feelings he had at the time of her death was helplessness. As he was unable to do anything, he likens the feeling to that of being "in a cage, "as represented in his metaphor drawing (Figure 3-3). The cage in this drawing signifies the intense helplessness that PID3 felt at the time of his mother's death. His inability to "do something" during his mother's short illness and her death is a feeling that reminds him of the "many things which are inevitable" in everyday life. PID3 appears to be ambivalent about the amount of time that he felt he would have needed before his mother died. Any amount of time given to him, he believes, would still have been "something to complain about." Retrospectively, PID3 believes that "if it would have been a longer period, I think I would have done better at adapting to it, if it was one or two months to prepare for it." However, shortly after her death, he has doubts "that even if we had more time, we might be saying today that we still needed more time." As PID3 likes "to object

to anything,” he believes that his questioning about and objecting to his mother’s death caused him to feel it more intensely than other people who “don’t object or question.”

PID3 clearly differentiated himself from other individuals who may have experienced the same phenomenon of the death of a parent. Although he acknowledges that the death of a parent is a phenomenon that other adolescents experience, he believes his experience to be singular. When asked if his metaphor of “being in a cage” could be applied to describe the experience of others, PID3 stated that “I can not say for others but myself.” As “there are many people who can easily accept what is going on around them,” PID3 believes that their experience of the death of a parent “is not that personal, not that intense.” PID3 acknowledges his own difficulty with relinquishing control, stating that a person who can surrender control “may not find themselves to be helpless because it is God’s will” and “may not feel the helplessness that I did feel.” Reinforcing the idea that his experience may be more unique than universal, PID3 can describe his experience, but doesn’t “know if other people are like that or not.”

Throughout his mother’s short illness and following her death, PID3 felt as though “I should support them [his family] instead of asking support from them.” Although his only sibling is older than he is, PID3 felt “some responsibility that I should be more resolved and calm right now [at the time of the death].” For PID3, giving into the grief was not necessarily an option because he believed that he would have been unable to support his family. As the other members of his family “were also upset,” “I thought I can not afford to give into the grief and be very expressive of my sadness.” As PID3 looks back on the event, he believes that “it’s hard to get through that image and think about the future” because time seemed to stand still. He recognizes the effects of his

mother's death on his life as "the aftershocks of such an event are so big that they last for years."

Although PID3's grief appeared to be unbound by time, he understands that as "days go by, you start looking at it more objectively." Through the use of his metaphor drawing (Figure 3-3), he was able to illustrate that "life flows and time flies by because life goes on." Even though he felt as though he was stuck in the moment surrounding his mother's death, PID3 better understands "this whole journey" and recognizes that "life goes on." PID3's third drawing is his representation of "the whole journey" of his life and his experiences surrounding his mother's death. Even though time can not heal the wounds of the death, as time passes from the event, "you start understanding it in a better way, you start accepting it in a better way." PID3 has gained much more perspective as an adult reflecting on the events surrounding his mother's death and knows that "I have gone through it and I am much more confident and I am more sure of myself" now. The passage of time also helps as it allowed PID3 to "sort things out and start talking to people about it." His ability to express his thoughts and feelings about the death of his mother has improved and become much more objective and rational as time has passed since her death. PID3 knows that it helps to have support in such a difficult time, even if it is "just having that person who stands by you." He credits his father for being a role model for him during this event. Just knowing that his father had so much pain that he was "carrying inside, and still he goes on" showed PID3 that it was possible to carry on after his mother's death.

Imaginative Variation

There was once a young man named Ravi who lived in a small village at the edge of the jungle. He had a small family, with his father as the head of the family and as one of the village elders. He spent his days playing with his friends and exploring the jungle's edge. Only the village elders were allowed to travel beyond the edge of the jungle and did so to gather the secrets of the jungle. They used these secrets to heal the wounded, to see into the future, and to interpret dreams. Only the village elders had the experience and the strength to utilize the jungle's powers; it was dangerous for any other to attempt it.

Ravi hoped one day to become a village elder. The magic and power of the jungle was enchanting. Even while with his friends, he daydreamed of traveling deeper into the jungle and learning about its mysteries. His friend would often have to shout and make wild gestures to gain his attention when he fell deep into one of his daydreams. Realizing that he would never gain permission from the elders to travel into the deepest parts of the forest alone, he decided that he must take the risk as he knew that his fantasies would not stop unless he sought the magic of the jungle.

In the early hours of the morning, before the sun had broken through the leaves of the tall mysterious trees surrounding the village, Ravi wrapped up a small supply of rations in an old cloth and crept to the edge of the village. He did not know what to expect, but this did not effect his excitement. With each step taken, the glow of the fires in the village faded into the brush of the forest until it was entirely obscured from view. Finally, he was truly in the depths of the jungle.

Ravi traveled forward, and each hour passed rather uneventfully. Dismayed and confused about his lack of discovery, Ravi began to wonder if he should turn back

towards the village. He was sure that he should have made some discovery or had some epiphany by now. No longer excited and curious, he hung his head low and began the journey back. However, as his eyes gazed towards the ground, he noticed something shimmering in small pool of water not more than a few feet from him.

It was a small stone, only it was unlike any stone he had ever seen. It was every color of the rainbow at the same time as it was a singular color. The colors shifted and swirled, becoming shiny and shimmering at one moment and dull the next. As Ravi lifted it out of the water, he noticed that it was both light and heavy. The stone appeared to be attached to a string, the ends of which Ravi tied together. He then placed the string around his neck so that the stone formed an amulet of sorts. Ravi held the stone in the palms of his hands, turning it over and inspecting it. He knew the stone held some form of magic because, as he gazed into it, he could almost discern images from amongst the swirling colors.

Suddenly, Ravi gaze was absorbed into the stone. He felt as though it was one of the deepest dreams he had ever been in. In some ways, he knew what was happening in the images before him, but felt utterly confused and chaotic at the same time. Images swirled around him, making him feel uncomfortable and upset. Not knowing where he was or what he was doing in that dream-like state, he felt completely helpless.

As he was trapped in this dream, Ravi began to see the image of a small bird trapped inside a cage that seemed to become increasingly smaller. He felt compassion and pity for the bird and tried desperately to cross the void of images and chaos to free it. Images and scenes from his life swirled and crashed around him, making it difficult to see the bird as he tried to reach it. As he approached the cage, his perspective changed. Ravi

was shocked to realize that he was the bird. He was trapped in the cage, unable to gain his freedom. Ravi felt isolated and helpless knowing that he could do nothing to free himself from the cage or from the chaos of the images around him.

His helplessness was then amplified as he watched the images around him shift to show all of the different events in his life where he felt the same feeling of helplessness. Ravi became even angrier and more confused as he watched these scenes because he was unable to do anything to make them disappear. He shouted and screamed and banged against the bars of the cage, trying desperately to do anything that would change the way he was feeling or change his situation. Even though he felt more and more tired, he could not surrender to whatever it was that was doing this to him.

Ravi blinked, and it was over. He looked around and noticed that the sun was beginning to set. Gathering his belongings, which he must have dropped when he was caught up in that dream, he rushed along the forest floor, twisting in and out of trees and jumping over fallen logs that littered the ground. He burst through the leaves and brush at the edge of his village, collapsing on the ground in sheer exhaustion. Ravi gathered himself together and attempted to walk calmly into his family's hut.

Assuming that he was out with his friends again, Ravi's family did not seem to notice his absence. His father, however, noticed something different about him. Although Ravi had hidden the amulet among his things, his father knew that there was something strange about his son. Ravi knew that he could never tell his father what he had seen or experienced as his father would surely know that he had broken one of the most important rules of the village. In that moment, Ravi knew that he must carry the

experience of the amulet with him forever. He knew that no one would truly be able to relate to his story and his experience.

As the days and weeks passed since Ravi's adventure into the depths of the forest, he began to look at himself and his experiences differently. Although he still carried the images of his dream with him, he was better able to see them more objectively. He knew that, with time, he may eventually be better able to understand what his dream may have meant and what it will mean for him in the future. Having had such a powerful and upsetting experience also made him realize how much he admired his father for being able to wield the power of the forest without becoming so affected by it. Ravi knew that the power of the amulet and of his dream would affect him forever, but learned through his experience and through his father's example that life seemed to go on regardless of the burdens that he must now carry.

Revised Meaning Units

Table 6

Revised Meaning Units, Participant 3

Revised Meaning Units: Participant 3 (PID3)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Feelings of chaos and helplessness</i> • <i>Swirling and crashing images</i> • <i>The irreversibility of death</i> • <i>The journey of life and the passage of time</i> • <i>The burden of experience</i> • <i>Objectivity with time/time flows forward</i> • <i>Lack of control and being caged</i>

- *Finding a different perspective*
- *Necessity of support*
- *Sense of responsibility*
- *Uniqueness of the experience*

Structural Synthesis

The following essential structures have been identified for Participant #3:

Feelings of chaos and helplessness/being caged, the irreversibility of death, uniqueness of the experience, necessity of support, and objectivity with time/finding a different perspective.

The first essential structure identified was feelings of chaos and helplessness, for which one of the central images was that of a cage. PID3 identified helplessness as one of the core feelings that he had during the time of his mother's illness and subsequent death and exemplified this helpless feeling through likening to being trapped in a cage. For PID3, it was difficult to process the death immediately after it occurred because it was difficult for him to know what he was feeling or what was happening. PID3 illustrated this feeling of chaos in the diagonal lines placed outside of the cage to demonstrate that the experience seems to pass by in a flash, but that you are trapped in the moment at the same time. In some ways, PID3 believes that he does not even understand parts of it as an adult looking back on the experience, although he contends that the use of the metaphor helps to illustrate his true feelings. Being unable to help his mother as an adolescent, PID3 found himself feeling helpless. He stated several times during the interview that he remembers wanting to do something to help his mother and was unable to accept that

such a terrible event was happening. PID3 found that questioning and objecting to his mother's illness and death caused him to feel the death with more intensity than an individual who is more accepting of life's events.

The second essential structure is the irreversibility of death. The idea of time and the passage of time is a theme that PID3 referred to many times during the interview and in his artwork. Both his metaphor drawing and his final drawing involve the passage of time, with his final drawing depicting the remnants of artifacts dug up from the past. In his metaphor drawing, PID3 includes the image of a sun and a moon to signify that the experience will stay in his mind forever. According to PID3, the saying that 'time heals' does not apply to his experience. Although time better enabled him to process the death of his mother objectively, he acknowledges that time will never reverse the event. In the interview, he mentions many times that his mother will never come back regardless of what happens. For PID3, the event of his mother's death will stay the same regardless of what life events happen around it because it is difficult for him to transcend beyond that image.

PID3's third essential structure is the uniqueness of his experience. Throughout the interview, PID3 described his experience by prefacing it with the understanding that other people may not feel the same way. For him, his experience is more unique than it is universal because his own interpretation of the events surrounding his mother's death may be far different from another person's interpretation as each person's outlook on life differs. As PID3 maintains that he is the type of individual that has difficulty accepting those event in his life over which he has no control, he understands that other people in the same situation may see and process it differently. In PID3's perspective, his

experience was more intense and personal than a more accepting individual's because he was unable to just accept the death of his mother as beyond his control.

The fourth essential structure is the necessity of support. PID3 recognizes that having a person who will be there for support is one of the most helpful elements during such a difficult time. For PID3, even just knowing that there is someone willing to support him, regardless if any words are exchanged, helped him to work through his thoughts and feelings about his mother's death. As PID3 reflected upon his personal use of metaphor and the creative arts directly following his mother's death, he believes that, although he did not use the "caged" metaphor at that time, he does believe that he used metaphor to relay his experience to others through the use of poetry. Although PID3 relied on the support of his friends and family at that time, he found himself putting his own emotions and thoughts aside in order to support his father and sister. PID3 felt the responsibility to his family to be calmer and more reserved so that he can provide better support for them. PID3 also relied upon the support of his father, who served as a role model for him during and after his mother's death. As PID3 witnessed his father's ability to continue on with his life after this event, PID3 knew that he would also be able to do the same.

The fifth and final essential structure is objectivity with time and finding a different perspective. PID3 stated several times during the interview that, even though the event itself is irreversible, he is better able to understand the event of his mother's death as time passes. The idea of the passage of time is a central theme in his metaphor drawing, which both illustrates the feeling of being trapped in the moment of the death as well as the objectivity gained since the time of the death. He knows that his life will

never be the same as it would have if his mother were still alive, but understands that life continues regardless. As more time lapses from the event, he acknowledged that he becomes more aware of what his mother what have wanted him to do with his life and that this awareness has allowed him to move forward. PID3 recognizes that he has learned a tremendous amount about his own resilience since his mother's death and is much more confident and comfortable as an adult because of it.

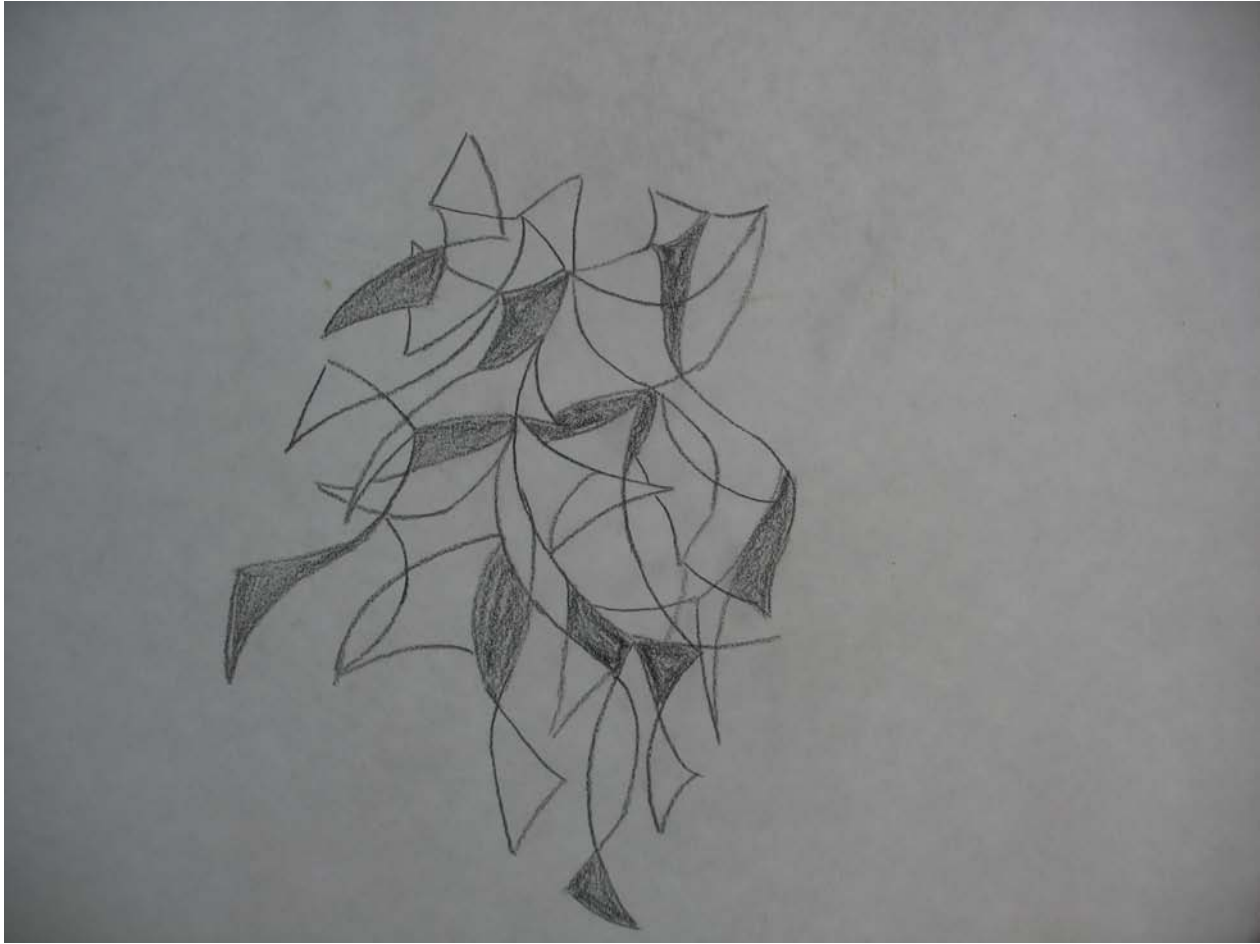


Figure 3-1. First free drawing from PIS3. “Lines and shapes that intersect.”



Figure 3-2. Drawing of the cycle of the seasons from pID3. “Winter, summer, and monsoon.” The drawing depicts the clothing that might be worn in each season.

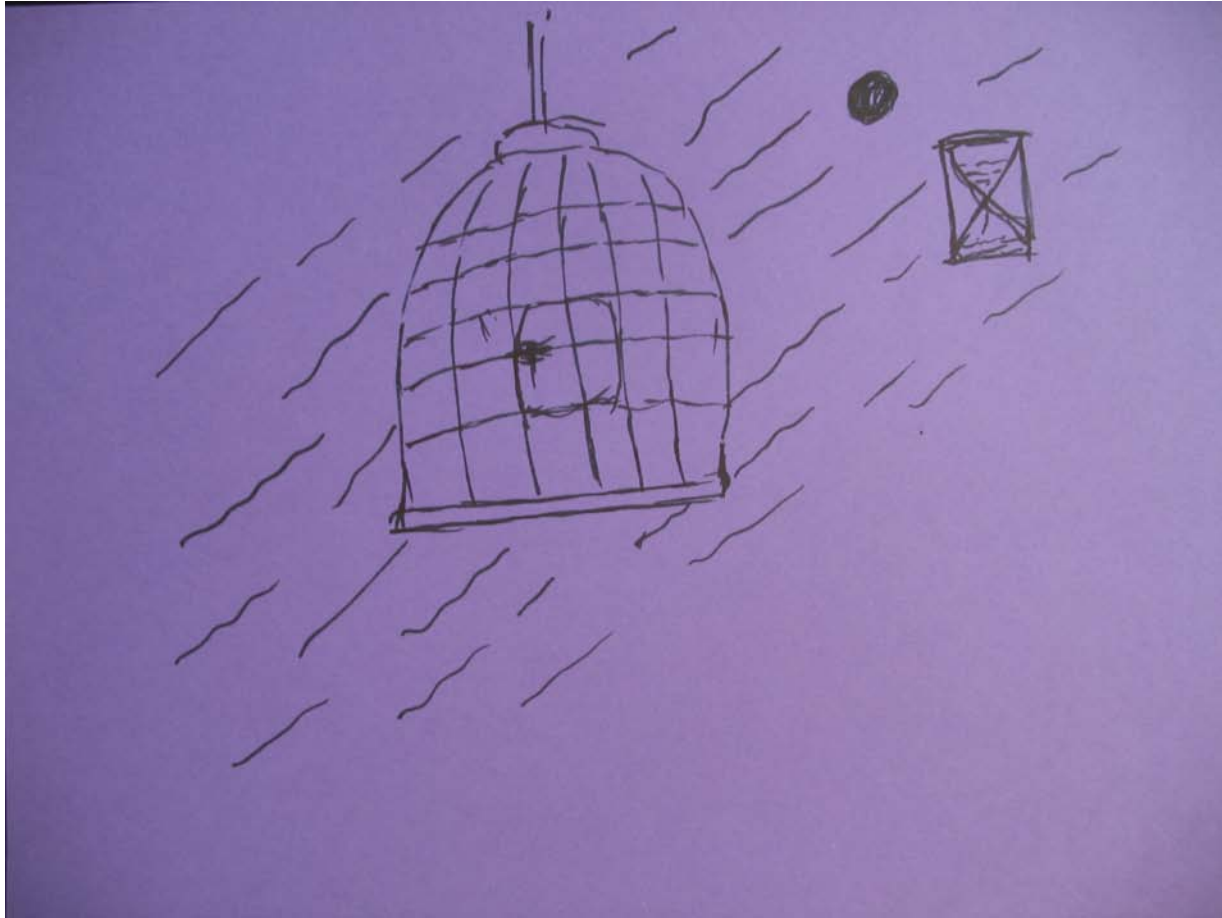


Figure 3-3. Drawing of a metaphor describing the experience of having lost a parent in adolescence from PID3. “Being in a cage.”



Figure 3-4. Second free drawing from PID3. “Artifacts dug up from the past”.

Composite Analysis

After the review of all of the data collected from all three participants, the researcher conducted a composite analysis, which identifies and explores similar themes from all three participants. In the composite analysis, the same phenomenological procedures were used in the composite analysis as have been utilized in the data processing of each individual participant. The horizontalized statements were selected due to their similarities. If like-minded statements appeared in each participant's data, they were categorized according to their themes. Statements from all three participants were grouped according to meaning units so that the horizontalized statements from each participant were adequately and evenly represented within the meaning unit. If like-minded statements existed between two of the participants and were not present in the data of a third participant, the meaning unit was not created. In this section, the meaning units, textural description, imaginative variation, revised themes, and structural synthesis are presented for Participants 1, 2, and 3 as a composite.

Table 7

Meaning Units, Participants 1, 2, and 3

Meaning Unit	Participant Statements
<i>Jumbled, messy, mixed, and chaotic feelings at the time of the death. Difficulty with understanding</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's like rapidly changing TV channels...like a blur [referencing the artwork] (PID1) • It's so hard to expose what is going on inside of me (PID1) • I don't think I would have realized that I was in denial (PID1) • That sense of jumbledness and not really knowing what to do (PID1) • You don't really know what you are feeling at that time (PID1)

Meaning Unit	Participant Statements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I don't think I would have been able to have gotten it out in such a clear thought (PID2) • I think it would have been a lot of different ideas coming out all mixed together (PID2) • It probably would have been one big angry mess (PID2) • It was just so raw and I was just so angry then compare to now (PID2) • I thought about what happened and who I am today, and I thought, "Well, it's just not that black and white." (PID2) • It's very difficult to explain it to someone when you yourself can not understand what's happening or what is going on inside you (PID3) • It's not like individual thoughts, but it just passes through your mind in a flash [referring to Figure 3-3] (PID3) • At the time of death, it was difficult to talk to anyone because you are not sure what is happening (PID3) • It was like, not in a state of shock, but it was so chaotic (PID3)
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Feeling a sense of missing something, being lost, and the presence of holes in one's life</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to feel a sense of being satiated [referencing the man with the food in Figure 1-3] (PID1) • Craving or wanting something and trying to get that anyway possible [referencing the man with the food in Figure 1-3] (PID1) • A lot of questions and not a lot of answers (PID1) • The idea of having one part of a person taken away can make you not feel like a woman [referencing the torso of the woman in Figure 1-3] (PID1) • Cutting holes in it to represent that this is me and maybe what I'm missing [referencing Figure 2-3]

Meaning Unit	Participant Statements
	<p>(PID2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I guess I had just realized each year I grew in a certain way I'd be missing things (PID2) • Maybe the holes are so big that you are just missing too much of yourself to realize things [referencing Figure 2-3] (PID2) • I think from when I was 17 years old I was just unaware of a lot of things that I wasn't going to have (PID2) • Something you have lost, you have lost (PID3) • Some things you lose, they are gone forever [referencing Figure 3-3] (PID3) • Something which I lost at that particular moment of my life, a part of myself, it's never coming back (PID3)
<p><i>Trying to move past the feelings and thoughts surrounding the death</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not a care in the world [referencing the jumping children in Figure 1-2] (PID1) • Now I want to be happy and have pleasant thoughts [referring to Figure 1-4] (PID1) • I never necessarily took the time to sort it out (PID1) • I just went with it and never really stopped to take it all in (PID1) • Not acknowledging that something really bad is going on in you life (PID1) • When I as younger, I didn't think about that as much. I was like, 'whatever, it is what it is and I'm just going to move on' (PID2) • I think I was like, 'I'll make a game plan and I'll just stick to that game plan' (PID2) • When I was younger, I was just like, 'I'm just going to make this work and I'm just going to do it.

Meaning Unit	Participant Statements
	<p>I'm strong enough to figure it out' (PID2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You keep pushing it and you get a better understanding [referring to the art process and developing artwork] (PID2) • You can find other ways to divert yourself (PID3) • I wouldn't say that it brought a distraction, but it brought an aim or focus on something to hold on (PID3) • It would have been very difficult if I didn't' have that test coming up, that important part of my life coming up, I may not have come out of it (the grief) so early (PID3) • You can create something, you can divert yourself, you can find other things which you love, but some things you lose, they are gone forever (PID3)
<p><i>Not wanting to express grief and feeling as though others would not understand</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I thought people outside of my family were not legitimately interested (PID1) • If I was really upset or crying all of the time, then they probably wouldn't have felt like they could come to me [reflecting upon the image of the girl crying alone in Figure 1-3] (PID1) • Like you might have cried for five minutes during a movie but you don't understand what I'm going through (PID1) • It's so hard to expose what is going on inside of me (PID1) • If I had any choice in any situation, I wouldn't talk to anyone (PID2) • No, I just thought that it was my personal business and no one would really understand me and things like that (PID2) • I wanted to be very strong and independent (PID2)

Meaning Unit	Participant Statements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think I would have had a harder time [with the art process] then because I wasn't as willing to express myself (PID2) • I had some responsibility that I should be more resolved and calm right now (PID3) • Immediately, after such an event it's difficult to explain it to anyone (PID3) • The earlier I do (accept the death) the better for everybody (PID3) • I had my family members around me and they were also upset, so I thought I can not afford to give into the grief and be very expressive of my sadness or anything (PID3)
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Being able to put other experiences into perspective and continuing to grow through the layers</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It enables you to put things into perspective and not be so melodramatic about stuff that can occur (PID1) • There's nothing you can do to prevent it, nothing you can do to stop it (PID1) • Things might be bad now, but they will get better and they will go back to some semblance of what you knew before (PID1) • Maybe if I look back on an experience I'll see things in different way and who I am in a different way (PID2) • There's holes because you can see the old while forming the new [in reference to the artwork] (PID2) • Just seeing through all of those layers and continue growing [referencing the artwork] (PID2) • As time goes, you think about your life and what the person would have wanted you to do and it becomes better (PID3) • That's why it shows that life flows and time flies by, because life goes on [referencing the artwork] (PID3)

Meaning Unit	Participant Statements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you go through this kind of event, through this kind of test, you are more sure of yourself that you came out right, that you came out fine (PID3)
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Recognizing the effects of the death on one's life currently</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I just felt like I became more solid in my beliefs [referencing the praying hands in Figure 1-3] (PID1) • I just realized that there's a greater purpose to some things you just don't understand (PID1) • I probably focus on my breasts way more than other people do [referencing the image of the woman's torso in Figure 1-3] (PID1) • Maybe things that you wouldn't do by yourself that I had to do because you don't have your dad in that certain way (PID2) • I think it just represents what I'm doing and who I am right now in my life [referring to Figure 2-1] (PID2) • I've taken the time to learn that I don't want that with my life (PID2) • I'm not making up for what he was; I'm just doing it for me (PID2) • As time goes, you think about your life and what the person would have wanted you to do and it becomes better (PID3) • I have gone through it and I am much more confident and I am more sure of myself (PID3) • My mother always wanted me to be a doctor, so it kind of just happened (PID3) • I learned something about living—the major part of your life that is your mother or father (PID3)
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Ability to express feelings and thoughts about the death becomes better with time</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The less raw something is, the more you can talk about it (PID1) • My ability to communicate those

Meaning Unit	Participant Statements
	<p>things will be much better five years from now (PID1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think your ability to express it becomes better (PID1) • I think it was easy to relay the experience now comparing it to then (PID2) • I don't think I would have been able to have gotten it out in such a clear thought [referring to Figure 2-3A] (PID2) • It was just so raw and I was just so angry then compared to now for a lot of reasons [referring to Figure 2-3B] (PID2) • At that time, I wouldn't have even cared to think more into it because I was just frustrated with him at the time [referring to creating the metaphor] (PID2) • Right now I am telling you about it objectively and much more calmly because I have gone through it (PID3) • As you start understanding it in a better way, you start accepting it in a better way (PID3) • As time goes, you sort things out and you start talking to people about it (PID3)
<p><i>Difficulty choosing images that express the complexity of experience through the artwork</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's just harder to express all of the different things that you remember about a parent or a loved one's death and trying to capture all of that (PID1) • It was really hard to narrow down and focus on one aspect because so many things came to mind (PID1) • Not really any of these really capture how I'd feel now [referencing the images in the artwork] (PID1) • It was really hard to try to find things that captured the various aspects of what I was thinking and

Meaning Unit	Participant Statements
	<p>feeling and also not in a trite way [referencing the creation of Figure 1-3] (PID1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can't think of the word that I'm looking for (PID2) • At first it didn't come to me, but once I figured out the first snowflake thingy, it came pretty easily [referring to Figure 2-2A] (PID2) • It's more technical because I had no idea what I was doing at first [referring to Figure 2-1] (PID2) • The last one, it just took me a moment to be like, what do I want to do? [referring to Figure 2-4] (PID2) • It's so many ideas; how do you express something that is a lifetime of changes? (PID2) • I don't understand it as it is right now (PID3) • I wouldn't say difficult, but it was something I had to think about [creating the metaphor] (PID3) • It has many colors in it but I don't know what it means through the layers [referring to Figure 3-1] (PID3) • This third one was a bit difficult [referring to Figure 3-3] (PID3) • The last one was actually most difficult because I, I guess not tired, but I was tired [referring to Figure 3-4] (PID3)

Textural Description

The experiences of Participants 1 (PID1), 2 (PID2), and 3 (PID3) were categorized into the following meaning units: 1) *Jumbled, messy, mixed, and chaotic feelings at the time of the death and difficulty with understanding*, 2) *Feeling a sense of*

missing something and the presence of holes in one's life, 3) Trying to move past the feelings and thoughts surrounding the death, 4) Not wanting to express grief and feeling as though others would not understand, 5) Being able to put other experiences into perspective and continuing to grow through the layers, 6) Recognizing the effects of the death on one's life currently, 7) Ability to express feelings and thoughts about the death becomes better with time, and 8) Difficulty choosing images that express the complexity of the experience through the artwork.

All three participants expressed varying degrees of difficulty with understanding what they were experiencing at the time that their respective parent died. For PID1, it was difficult “to expose what is going on inside of me.” As much as she knew that she did not understand what she was feeling, she also that it would be difficult to relay these feelings to others and expect them to understand how she was feeling. She describes this feeling as “a sense of jumbledness and not really knowing what to do.” This feeling was reflected in her metaphor illustration, which she describes as “like rapidly changing TV channels.”. For PID2, the feeling that her experience at the time of her father's death “would have been a lot of different ideas coming out all mixed together” is similar to the feeling expressed by PID1. PID2 states that “I don't think I would have been able to have gotten it out in such a clear thought” when referring to her ability to have communicated her feelings and thoughts at the time of her father's death. For her, creating a metaphor at the time of her father's death would have looked much different than the metaphor she created during the art-making session as it “would have been one big angry mess.” PID3 used a very similar reference to that used by PID1 to describe difficulty with understanding his own experience at the time of his mother's death. PID1 used the

metaphor of “rapidly changing TV channels” in Figure 1-3 to describe the feeling of “experiencing emotions so fast that you don’t really know what you are experiencing.” Likewise, PID3 illustrates that the experience of losing a parent is “not like individual thoughts, but it just passes through your mind in a flash.” For PID3, it was “chaotic” “because you are not sure what is happening.” PID3 illustrated the idea of thoughts passing by in a flash in his metaphor drawing (Figure 3-3) with the horizontal lines surrounding the image of the cage.

Each of the three participants also expressed some feeling or sense of missing something in various ways. For PID1, this sense of missing something presented through “trying to feel a sense of being satiated” by food as she illustrated with the image of the man eating food in Figure 1-3. The element of herself lost when her mother died was filled by “craving or wanting something and trying to get that anyway possible.” PID1 also expressed this feeling of missing something when speaking about her mother’s mastectomy and “the idea of having one part of a person taken away can make you not feel like a woman.” To illustrate this concept, she chose the image of a woman’s torso in Figure 1-3 to show the importance of having “part of a person taken away.” PID2 expressed the feeling of missing something clearly through her artwork by “cutting holes in it to represent that this is me and maybe what I’m missing.” She reflected on her use of the holes in her metaphor illustration to show how she can see the layers of her past while forming new layers of herself. As she thought more about her metaphor and how she created it, she realized that “each year I grew in a certain way I’d be missing things” that she would have otherwise had if her father had not died. At the time of his death, PID2 acknowledged that she might have been “missing too much of yourself to realize things.”

PID3 likewise reflected upon the idea of loss and missing elements from his life. In his experience, “some things you lose, they are gone forever.” For PID3, “something which I lost at that particular moment of my life, a part of myself, it’s never coming back.”

All three participants tried in a variety of ways to move past the feelings and thoughts they had surrounding the death of their respective parent. For PID1 and PID3, this took the form of other commitments and responsibilities that provided some sort of distraction or goal upon which they could focus their attention. For PID2, it was her resentment towards her father that she used to move past the event of his death. PID1 recalls that she “never necessarily took the time to sort it out.” Rather, as she was soon beginning college, she “just went with it and never really stopped to take it all in.” Rather, she tried to remain happy with “not a care in the world” and did not acknowledge “that something really bad is going on in your life.” The jumping children in Figure 1-2 and the scene in Figure 1-4 represent these pleasant feelings of avoidance for PID1, and she referred to these images when speaking about trying to remain happy after her mother’s death. For PID3, his focus on colleges likewise kept him motivated to resolve his own grief and continue pushing forward towards his own career goals. Although he states that “I wouldn’t say that it brought a distraction,” his focus on his career goals “brought an aim or focus on something to hold on” to. PID3 acknowledges that “if I didn’t have that test coming up” “I may not have come out of it so early.” PID2 used the focus of trying to remain “strong and independent” to work past her feelings about her father’s death. She remembers that “when I was younger, I didn’t think about that as much;” rather, “I’m just going to move on.” By making a “game plan” for herself, PID2 convinced herself that “I’m just going to make this work.” PID3 referred to her ability to

“keep pushing it” as a way of pushing past both the feelings surrounding her father’s death and her method of creating the artwork.

In various capacities, each participant expressed that, as adolescents, they were either not as accepting of help from others as they are now or felt responsible to their families and would not ask support from them, as well as not being willing to express their grief. For PID1, expressed that, as an adolescent, she “thought that people outside of my family were not legitimately interested” in her grief. Even if they would have been interested, PID1 believes that it was unlikely that they would truly be able to understand her because they did not “understand what I’m going through.” PID1 also felt a sense of responsibility to her siblings to provide support for them rather than asking support from them as “they probably wouldn’t have felt like they could come to me” if “I was really upset or crying all of the time.” PID1 spoke about hiding her grief when she reflected upon the image of the girl sitting alone with her face hidden in a tissue in Figure 1-3. PID3 also felt as though “I can not afford to give into the grief and be very expressive of my sadness or anything” because he felt as though he could not ask support from them as they “were also upset.” In his mind, he had “some responsibility that I should be more resolved and calm right now” as he could “not afford to give into the grief and be very expressive of my sadness or anything.” PID3 also found it “difficult to explain it to anyone” “immediately after such an event.” For PID2, the inability to ask for support was an urge “to be very strong and independent.” As she considered her feelings and thoughts about the death of her father “as my personal business,” she believed that “no one would really understand me.” When reflecting upon the art process, PID2 concluded that “I would have had a harder time [with the art process] then because I wasn’t as willing to

express myself.” However, looking back on her experience, she realizes that it is helpful to ask for support and express herself when she needs to do so.

Each of the three participants recognized that experiencing the death of a parent allowed them to be able to put other experiences in their lives into perspective and continue to grow. PID1 stated that experiencing the death of her mother “enables you to put things into perspective and not be so melodramatic about stuff that can happen.” Looking back on her experience, PID1 knows that “there’s nothing you can do to prevent” the bad things in your life and that as bad as the events in her life become, “they will get better and they will go back to some semblance of what you knew before.” PID2 used her artwork to illustrate her understanding of gaining perspective from the event of her father’s death. Referencing her metaphor illustration, PID2 reflected that there are “holes because you can see the old while forming the new.” As she begins “seeing through all of those layers and continue growing” in her life, PID2 knows that she will be able to learn new things and gain new perspectives about her past experiences. For PID3, the experience of his mother’s death has showed him that “life goes on” and “it becomes better.” As he understands it, “when you go through this kind of event, through this kind of test, you are more sure of yourself that you came out right, that you came out fine.” Through his metaphor drawing (Figure 3-3), PID3 understands that “life flows and time flies by because life goes on.”

Just as each participant recognized that they were able to gain some perspective from the experience, each participant was also able to understand the effects of the death of their respective parent on their life currently. This manifested differently for each participant and included such themes as defining life goals, caring for the body, and

guiding life choices. For PID1, the effect of the death of her mother came as a spiritual and bodily awakening. As she reflected upon the image of the praying hands in Figure 1-3, she concluded that her mother's death had a significant impact on her own beliefs. Looking for explanation and support at the time of her mother's death, she "became more solid in my beliefs" by realizing "that there's a greater purpose to some things you just don't understand." PID1 also became more aware of her own body as she saw the effects that breast cancer had on her mother's body. She is now hyper vigilant about her own health, stating "I probably focus on my breasts way more than other people do" as she reflected this concern in the image of the woman's torso in Figure 1-3. As PID2 reflected on her experience of losing a father, she realizes that "I've taken the time to learn that I don't want that with my life." Although she understands that "I'm not making up for what he was," she knows that she is adjusting her life in response to the lessons she has learned through her interactions with her father. As she reflected on her metaphor and the "holes" that exist in her life, she understands that her father "had layers that he didn't fulfill things in and he was missing." For PID3, the experience of losing his mother has allowed him to become "more confident." As he reflected upon his metaphor (Figure 3-3), PID3 recognizes that, as time passes (signified by the horizontal lines surrounding the cage in the drawing), "you think about your life and what the person would have wanted you to do." In his case, "my mother always wanted me to be a doctor, so it just kind of happened."

Each participant identified that their ability to express feelings and thoughts about the death of their respective parent becomes better with time. As PID1 reflected upon the years since her mother's death, she understands it as "the less raw something is, the more

you can talk about it.” When communicating during the interview about her experience, she stated that, while her ability to communicate about the event is certainly better now than it was at the time of her mother’s death, “my ability to communicate those things will be much better five years from now.” For PID1, “your ability to express it becomes better with time.” PID2 likewise expressed that “it was easy to relay the experience now comparing it to then” as “it was just so raw and I was just so angry then compared to now for a lot of reasons.” At the time of her father’s death, PID2 believes that, if she would have been asked to create a metaphor to describe her experience, she would not “have been able to have gotten it out in such a clear thought.” As PID3 reflected on his experience, he also commented that “right now I am telling you about it objectively and much more calmly because I have gone through it.” PID3’s experience suggests that it became easier to reflect upon and talk about the experience as more time was gained from the actual event. “As time goes, you sort things out and you start talking to people about it.”

Finally, all of the participants expressed varying degrees of concern or difficulty with expressing the experience of losing a parent through the art process. Although this difficulty did not prevent any of the participants from completing all four pieces of artwork, expressions of concern arose with each of the participants. For PID1, the concern arose over trying to “narrow down and focus on one aspect” of the feelings surrounding her mother’s death because “so many things came to mind.” She was also concerned with finding “things that captured the various aspects of what I was thinking and feeling” but “not in a trite way.” Much of PID1’s concern was with being able to accurately and fully describe her experience in the artwork without seeming to be

stereotypic in any way. For PID2, the experience of difficulty involved not knowing where to start “because I had no idea what I was doing at first.” After she “took a moment to” ask herself “what do I want to do?” she was able to “figure it out.” PID2 likewise had the concern of reflecting “so many ideas” within the artwork and wondered “how do you express something that is a lifetime of changes?” Just as PID1 and PID2 had difficulty describing their experience in the artwork, PID3 expressed that creating the artwork “was something I had to think about.” Creating each of the last three drawings “was a bit difficult,” especially the last drawing (Figure 3-4) “because I was tired.” Although he did not state that creating the first drawing (Figure 3-1) was difficult, he did express that “I don’t know what it means through the layers.”

Imaginative Variation

There were once three kittens who were best friends. They were not the strongest or the fastest kittens, and the neighborhood animals often made fun of them because they seemed to be a little bit different, but each of them did have a beautiful jewel that hung around each of their necks. They were very proud of the necklaces that they wore, but they did not flaunt them. They knew that the raccoons and squirrels and rabbits in the neighborhood did not have necklaces like they did, so the kittens did not draw extra attention to themselves by displaying themselves and their beautiful necklaces.

One day, they were playing next to a long hedge and two big furry arms erupted from the hedge and snatched the necklaces right off of the kittens’ necks! The kittens were stunned and confused. They did not know if they should be angry or scared or shocked or sad. In fact, they weren’t sure of what they were feeling at all or what they

should do about it. After all, they were just kittens. Bewildered and shaken, the kittens sat in silence for a while. Then, slowly and quietly, they began to head home.

As they walked home, the neighborhood animals sensed that something was wrong and that there was something different about the kittens. As the squirrels and the rabbits and the raccoons each asked what was wrong, the kittens found themselves not wanting to reply. As far as the kittens were concerned, there was nothing that could be done. Besides, the neighborhood animals had only ever made fun of them before. Why would they be genuinely concerned now? Each kitten thought to himself that only his fellow kittens could truly understand what had happened.

As each day came and went, they missed their necklaces dearly. Their necks felt cold and bare from where their necklaces had been. Before they had been stolen, each of the kittens had not realized how important their necklace was to them. With every day since their necklaces had been stolen, each of the kittens tried to move past the thoughts and feelings that they had about the event. The kittens distracted themselves with learning how to hunt instead of thinking about what had happened to them or where their necklaces could possibly be.

Although it was difficult for them to overcome their loss, the kittens felt better and better as the days passed. They did not miss their necklaces any less, but they realized that there are other things to focus on in their lives. Instead of becoming upset about their lost necklaces, they became faster and stronger so that they would be able to do something about it if someone ever stole from them in the future. The kittens wanted to make sure that they would be able to react better to any future problems than they did when they lost their necklaces. As the kittens changed their outlook on the whole event,

they began to understand how their lost necklaces helped to make them the faster and stronger kittens that they had become. They felt more confident about themselves and what they could do on their own. The most noticeable change is that, as they became more confident, they were better able to talk to others about what had happened to them.

Revised Meaning Units

Table 8

Revised Meaning Units, Participants 1, 2, and 3

Revised Meaning Units: Participants 1, 2, and 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sense of isolation</i> • <i>Sense of being different</i> • <i>Feeling a sense of missing something</i> • <i>Difficulty understanding and communicating the experience at the time of the event</i> • <i>Difficulty in expressing the experience through the artwork</i> • <i>Trying to move past the feelings and thoughts</i> • <i>Overcoming difficulties</i> • <i>Unity in experience</i> • <i>Not wanting support from outsiders</i> • <i>Being able to put other experiences into perspective</i> • <i>Sense of unfairness</i> • <i>Jumbled, mixed, and chaotic feelings</i> • <i>Recognizing the effects on one's current life</i>

- *Learning to express thoughts and feelings with time/the influence of time*
- *Recreating the cognitive and emotional experience*

Structural Synthesis

The following essential structures have been identified in the composite analysis of the three participants: *Feeling a sense of missing something; difficulty communicating the jumbled, mixed, and chaotic feelings at the time of the event; difficulty choosing images that represent the complexity of expressing the event through art processes; trying to move past the feelings and thoughts; the influence of time on the expression of thoughts and feelings; and recreating the cognitive and emotional experience of a parent's death through creating the artwork.*

The first essential structure that was identified is feeling a sense of missing something, which was presented in each participant's artwork. Each of the three participants identified that they felt a sense of missing something in their lives after their respective parent had died. All of them recognized the gap in their lives that was once filled by their parent and felt the sense that an element of themselves was also missing. Although each participant expressed this essential element in a different way through the artwork, they all shared the feeling of missing a piece of themselves or their lives. Additionally, each participant expressed that there was a certain amount of unfairness associated with each of their losses. Again, each participant reacted differently to this element through questioning or becoming angry, but all of the participants felt a certain unfairness about their situation in varying degrees.

The second essential element is difficult understanding and communicating their jumbled, mixed, and chaotic feelings at the time of the event. Although it was unclear to one participant if the confusion was more a result of adolescence or a result of the loss, each of the participants communicated difficulty with understanding what they were experiencing at the time of their respective parent's death. For each participant, it was difficult for them to identify what they were feeling at the time of the event, and the presentation of this difficulty was very similar. Each participant described the experience of losing a parent as jumbled, mixed-up, and chaotic when they described how their artwork exemplifies their experiences. The experience of losing a parent made it very difficult for the participants to communicate their feelings and thoughts at the time of the event because they themselves were unsure of what they were feeling or thinking. Being unable to fully understand their own thoughts and feelings may have influenced their unwillingness or inability to talk about their parent's death shortly after it happened.

The third essential structure is difficulty expressing the experience of losing a parent through the art processes. Each of the participants expressed varying degrees of difficulty in describing their experiences through creating art. All of the participants found that they had to reflect upon how they were going to create each of their art pieces and relay their experiences in them before they were able to begin each of the art pieces. For them, the idea of creating a singular piece of artwork to describe the experience of losing a parent in adolescence was difficult because there are so many experiences that tie into that one event. Also, because each of the participants was unsure what they were thinking and feeling at the time of their respective parent's death, they conveyed difficulty in expressing the experience through the artwork at the time of the data

collection. Regardless of this difficulty, each of the participants was able to complete all of the required drawings by contemplating and planning their metaphor drawing before engaging in the creation of the art piece.

The fourth essential structure is trying to move past the feelings and thoughts. Not only were the participants unable to describe their feelings at the time of their parent's death, they were also trying to move past the feelings and thoughts surrounding the event. Each participant found a different way of moving past the event and finding an external goal upon which to focus; however, they all acknowledge that their external goals provided a means through which they could move past their parent's death. Some of the participants also engaged in ways of avoiding their thoughts and feelings about the death. All of the participant's goals involved becoming more independent from their families of origin through creating goals and game-plans that allowed them to find a focus. For these participants, the death of their respective parent affected them, but did not change or affect their focus upon their external goals.

The fifth essential structure is the influence of time on expression of thoughts and feelings. All three participants acknowledged that the passage of time has allowed them to view their experiences differently and, therefore, express them differently. Each of the participants felt confused and chaotic at the time their parent's death as they expressed these feelings through the artwork. The passage of time since the death has allowed them to become more objectively communicative about the experience. They are better able to express their feelings and thoughts about the event currently than they were ever able to as adolescents even though they expressed some difficulty with expressing these feelings through creating artwork. As they became better at understanding their own thoughts and

feelings, they found that they were more willing and better able to talk to their friends and family about their parent's death. As presented in the artwork for all of the participants, the passage of time has been an important element in helping them to understand and communicate about their own experience.

The sixth and final essential structure is recreating the cognitive and emotional experience of a parent's death through creating the artwork about the death. All three participants expressed some difficulty with understanding their jumbled, mixed, and chaotic feelings at the time of their parent's death as well as similar difficulty with expressing their experience of losing a parent through the art process involved in this research. At the time of their respective parent's death, each participant reports feeling as though they could not communicate their experience at the time of their parent's deaths because they themselves were not sure of what they were actually feeling. All of the participants seemed to go through a similar process when asked to create artwork about their parent's death, feeling as though it was difficult for them to communicate their thoughts and feelings into art form. They had difficulty finding the appropriate images to describe their experience when creating the artwork. For each of the participants, it appears as though creating the artwork about their experience of losing a parent during their adolescence caused them to relive the experience of having jumbled, mixed, and chaotic feelings and thoughts, thus causing them to have difficulty with expressing these feelings through the artwork.

Validation Interviews

To ensure that the conclusions of this study are valid, each of the participants was contacted by telephone by the researcher approximately two months following the data

collection sessions to review the data once it had been analyzed. During the validation interviews, the results were read to the participants. Each participant was given the opportunity to remove, add, or change any data that he or she felt did not adequately reflect the original intended meaning. All of the participants in this study determined that the conclusions reached by this study reflected their original intended meaning and did not desire to change or add to the data.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Overview

The research question for this study was, What is the experience of individuals who have lost a parent in their adolescence as expressed through metaphoric art processes? In order to answer this question, this study focused upon 1) Exploring the meaning of drawings about the experience of having lost a parent in adolescence, 2) Exploring the cognitive experience of creating a metaphor to describe the experience of having lost a parent, 3) Exploring the emotional experience of creating the metaphoric art used to describe the experience of having lost a parent, and 4) Gaining an understanding of how the participants might use art and metaphor to describe their experience to others and if this process is useful at the time of the study or if it would have been useful at the time of the parent's death.

This study was designed to explore, through the use of metaphoric art processes, the experience of individuals who have lost a parent during their adolescence. The rationale for this study is based upon the scarcity of current research on adolescent bereavement (Rosen, 1991), particularly in the area of adolescents who have lost a parent (Kuntz, 1991). Auman (2007) calls for research in the area of services for bereaved adolescents as this population is underserved in the mental health community. Expression of bereavement through the use of artwork has been shown to be an effective means of recovering from psychological distress caused by bereavement (Finn, 2003; Zambelli, Clark, & Heegaard, 1989). This study explores these participants' lived experience via the collection of phenomenological data and phenomenological data reduction (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994).

This chapter will discuss the results of this study in the context of the information reported in the literature review. The results will be reviewed, and the major findings will be discussed. Following the discussion of the major findings, the clinical applications, limitations of the study, and implications for future research will be presented.

Description of the Major Findings, Themes, or Outcomes

The results of this study are based upon phenomenological data. The data was collected and analyzed according to the phenomenological approach, the goal of which is to determine and describe the participant's in-depth, lived experience through the identification of essential structures (Moustakas, 1994). In this section the six composite essential structures will be listed and then amplified through interpretation and integration with the literature. Although there was not a systematic analysis of the artwork, there were some observations and hypotheses that were made based upon connecting the artwork with what was stated in each participant's interview. These hypotheses and observations will be included within the discussion of the six composite essential structures. The composite essential structures will then be discussed within the context of clinical applications and implications for future research.

The composite results, representing all three participants, identified six essential structures of the experience: 1) Feeling a sense of missing something, 2) Difficulty communicating the jumbled, mixed, and chaotic feelings at the time of the event, 3) Difficulty choosing images that represent the complexity of expressing the event through art processes, 4) Trying to move past the feelings and thoughts, 5) The influence of time on the expression of thoughts and feelings, and 6) Recreating the cognitive and emotional experience of a parent's death through creating the artwork.

Feeling a Sense of Missing Something

Valente, Sanders, and Street (1988) find that adolescents struggle to restructure the meaning of life as they experience the changes in cognitions and emotions following the death of a loved one. All three participants in the current study experienced a sense of missing something in their lives after their respective parents had died. They recognized the gap in their lives that was previously filled by their parent and thus felt a piece of themselves missing as well. This feeling of missing something was conveyed in the art experience by all three participants in various ways. For example, PID2 demonstrated the pieces of herself that were missing in her life by cutting holes in her metaphor illustration to show the holes in her life (see Figure 2-3B). Similarly, PID3 may have omitted the figures from his seasons drawing as a representation of the piece of himself he may have felt was missing from his life (see Figure 3-2).

In the same way, PID1 represented the piece of herself that she felt was missing by choosing images, specifically the image of the man eating, for her artwork that showed her inability to feel satiated and fill the loss after her mother had died (see Figure 1-3). Additionally, the image of the woman's torso represents the loss of femininity that PID1 may have vicariously experienced when she witnessed her mother undergo treatment for breast cancer. PID1 reported several times that she felt as though she was missing images that would more fully describe her whole experience of losing her mother in her adolescence, possibly indicating that she was missing those pieces of herself that were filled by her mother. This sense of missing pieces of herself could also be seen in her associations to the artwork. PID1 commented that she chose images that, in some form or another, are not whole. She denies the view access to the faces of most of the

figures in her drawings, as well as various parts of the body of the female figure in her metaphor drawing. The various parts of the bodies of these figures that are covered and thus missing from the drawing could be interpreted to reflect the various parts of herself that are meant to make a whole that PID1 feels are missing from her life. Similar statements can be made about the seasons drawing created by PID3, who omitted the figures from his drawing as a possible reflection of the pieces of himself that are also missing.

This overwhelming sense of loss is similar to that reported by Meshot and Leitner (1993) as an experience of adolescents who have lost a parent. Bowlby (1980) describes one of the phases of mourning, the second phase, as a stage of yearning and searching for the lost figure. Additionally, Bowlby, as well as Gutierrez (1999), asserts that anger can be part of this stage of mourning. The element of anger is present in the data of PID2 in this study as she described the red side of her metaphor illustration as representative of herself when her father died because, for her, the color red and the holes that seem to conflict with each other represent anger (see Figure 2-3B). For PID2, the anger she experienced was a result of feeling a sense of missing something in her life and the creation of the hole in her life that was left by her father's death.

Regardless that most individuals that experience a loss are generally able to accept the reality that the person has died, find new meaning and purpose, and develop new relationships (Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson, 2006), all participants in this study reported feeling a sense of missing a piece of themselves both currently and at the time of their parent's death and conveyed this through the use of the artwork. For all of the participants in the current study, the sense of loss and the need to search for the piece of

themselves that is missing in their lives was an essential element in their experience of losing a parent in adolescence.

Difficulty Communicating the Jumbled, Mixed, and Chaotic Feelings

All of the participants reported some degree of difficulty understanding or communicating their jumbled, mixed, and chaotic feelings at the time of their respective parent's death. Zambelli, Clark, Barile, and de Jong (1988) likewise find that children and adolescents have difficulty articulating their feelings about grief. Additionally, Auman (2007) contends that adolescents seem to exhibit few outward identifiers of bereavement. It is possible, based upon the results of this study, that adolescents find it difficult to describe and communicate their own feelings as they are unsure of what they are truly thinking and feeling at the time of the loss. It was for this reason that the participants may have had difficulty depicting their experience within the artwork, a point that will be addressed in the next section.

Harris (1990) found that adolescents rarely share their immediate reactions with family or friends, mostly in fear that they would be seen as overwhelming or that the emotional expression was unacceptable. In the case of the current study, the participants seemed to feel overwhelmed by the choice in art materials and may have found it difficult to communicate their thoughts and feelings because of the volume of options they had. Additionally, the participants tended not to share their emotional expressions with others at the time of their parent's death, which may be due to their own difficulty in knowing what they were genuinely feeling or thinking at the time of the death.

Additionally, there are cognitive developmental aspects of adolescents that may factor into their difficulty in communicating their feelings to others. It is possible that

there may be some regression to more concrete operational schemas with the stress involved in losing a parent. This may cause a diminished capacity to put words to a more abstract emotional reaction, such as the response to the death of a parent. As adolescents appear to have difficulty expressing their experiences at the time of the death (Harris, 1990), it may be possible to use art therapy as an intervention at this time as art therapy relies upon the use of the image rather than communication through the use of words.

Bowlby (1980) asserts that disorganization is a key component to the task of adjustment to life after the death of a loved one. Similarly, the participants in the current study seemed to experience this sense of disorganization and confusion when they engaged with the art materials. PID1 and PID2 seemed to find it difficult to organize all of the materials that were given to them, and PID3 chose not to use any materials other than colored pencils and markers. For these participants, it seemed to be important to maintain some control over the media by either organizing the images and media on the table surface or by choosing media that had a higher inherent ability to be controlled. By choosing media that were more structured and less messy, such as collage images, colored pencils, and markers, the participants were able to exercise more control over the media and the feelings and thoughts they portrayed in the artwork.

The inability to describe and relay their feelings and thoughts seemed to affect the ability to relate to others for PID1 and PID2 in this study. Dowdney (2000), Harris (1990), Kuntz (1991), and Rosen (1991) find that social withdrawal and isolation is one symptom of bereavement in adolescence, with adolescents tending not to verbalize their feelings about their loss to their friends or families. Within the artwork of PID3, there are no human forms, which may also demonstrate a sense of social withdrawal or avoidance

of human interaction. PID3 specifically stated that he could have put people into the drawing, but chose not to. McIntyre (1990) and Balk (1983) likewise state that adolescents can often have difficulty finding the support they need to express the helplessness, fear, anger, confusion, and loneliness that can be part of their grief process. In the study conducted by Balk, 88% of adolescents were confused or in shock when interviewed four months after a sibling's death.

As cited by McIntyre (1990) and Balk (1983), participants in the current study report an overwhelming sense of confusion following the death of their parent. This confusion presented itself within the context of the artwork as each participant demonstrated difficulty with choosing art materials that would best exemplify their experience and with the way in which they chose to use the materials. For example, all three of the participants appeared to be confused about where to begin when asked to engage in the art-making process and asked clarifying questions as a means of creating a structure. Additionally, PID1 and PID2 used the materials in such a way that they spread the materials out over the surface of the table, which appeared to create confusion as items such as scissors and glue disappeared under piles of tissue paper and magazine images. The box containing the magazine images was used by both of these participants as a means of organizing the materials. PID3 chose to use only markers and colored pencils.

Stroebe, Schut, and Stroebe (2007) report that psychological reactions to bereavement are most intense in early bereavement and that the fundamental manifestations of grief are universal. In the current study, all three participants had strikingly similar experiences in terms of their difficulty expressing their feelings at the

time of their parent's death. For these participants, their feelings were so intense, jumbled, and chaotic that they were unsure of what they were feeling when their respective parent died. All three participants in this study felt the universal intensity of emotion at the time of their parent's death, regardless of their differences in culture or ethnicity. Although Stroebe, Schut, and Stroebe's research is non-conclusive about the influence of culture or religion on the psychological expression of grief, all three participants in this study reported feelings of chaos and mixed feelings at the time of their parent's death.

Part of the difficulty with communicating their thoughts and feelings at the time of their parent's death may have been their belief that they must provide support to their family members. According to Black (2005), adolescents from the ages of 15-17 years can feel overwhelmed by the surviving family members' emotional dependence and grief, complicating their ability to express themselves. Schmiede, Toon Khoo, Sandler, Ayers, and Wolchik (2006) found that adolescents are more vulnerable to bereavement difficulties (i.e. the inhibition of emotional expression, externalizing problems, internalizing problems, and self-esteem) when they are over-involved with family stressors and caretaking roles following the death of a parent. In the current study, however, the participants who perceived their roles as being family supporters did not appear to have any difficulties other than the inhibition of emotional expression. Two of the participants in this study, PID1 and PID3, report feeling responsible for supporting their family at the time of their mothers' deaths. Harris (1990) states that the death of a parent can hinder the surviving parent's ability to provide emotional support to the adolescent, thus causing the adolescent to feel a false sense of independence and an

increase in maturity. As is consistent in the data of the current study, adolescents tend to be very isolated in their grief and use very little, if any, support (Harris). On the other hand, adolescents can also gain a greater awareness of their own capabilities and autonomy from taking on the responsibility for the welfare of other family members (Tyson-Rawson, 1996).

Difficulty Choosing Images that Represent the Complexity of Expressing the Event

All three participants in the current study experienced initial difficulty expressing the experience of losing a parent through the art processes. Although they struggled with this process, they were ultimately successful in communicating their experiences through the use of the artwork. Naumburg (1966) explains that fundamental thoughts and feelings are more easily expressed in images than in words. However, participants in the current study had difficulty expressing their experience as they were concerned about choosing images that truly captured their experience. Regardless, these participants were able to show the confusion and difficulty with understanding their own experience at the time of their parent's death through their difficulty with expressing their experience in the artwork. In this way, the artwork served as a communicative outlet, which is an advantage to art therapy cited by Naumburg (1966), Rubin (1978), and Saunders and Saunders (2000).

All three participants in this study were able to use the artwork as a basis upon which to reflect upon their experience. Naumburg (1966) finds that, as patients picture their experiences through art, they are better able to articulate verbally about these experiences. Even though the participants in this study had difficulty choosing images that they felt conveyed their experience, they all used the artwork to clarify their own

thoughts and feelings throughout the interview. For these participants, the artwork served as a means of communication through which they could express the difficulty they had in understanding their own experience of their parent's death. The literature supports the use of art therapy as a means of expressing thoughts and emotions (Eaton, Doherty, & Widrick, 2007; Riley, 2001; Saunders & Saunders, 2000). The participants in the current study were able to unfold and discover variances in the meanings of their thoughts and feelings within the context of their artwork, a result of the process of art therapy that was also found by Eaton, Doherty, and Widrick (2007) and McIntyre (1990).

Each of the participants began the series of drawings with an idea or a concept with which they were highly comfortable and familiar. In some ways, this reflects the defended feelings that these participants may have been feeling in being asked to create artwork. Rather than go outside their comfort level, they all chose to create a first image that they were used to drawing. Their first drawings all reflect the difficulty they had in engaging in the artwork, which is reflected in the familiarity of the images they chose. For example, PID1 chose an image that she liked and created a frame around it as her first drawing as it is a reflection of her desire to travel. PID2 created a croquis as her first drawing. As she is interested in fashion design, she stated that a croquis is an image that she creates often. However, in this image, the figure is naked. This may reflect a similar feeling of nakedness that PID2 may have experienced when asked to create artwork in front of another person. This drawing suggests that PID2 is making a statement about feeling naked in front of another person in being asked to create the artwork and feeling defensive by creating an image with which she is highly comfortable rather than extending herself outside her comfort level. PID3 likewise created a first image that

appears to be highly defended. His associations to this image were that it is a drawing that he creates often when he is bored in classes. For him, this drawing is a comfortable and familiar image, as well as being an image to which he had few associations.

Although all three participants had difficulty expressing their experience through the use of artwork, it is possible that their difficulty is a reflection of a process of being thoughtful. Having difficulty in creating the artwork or knowing where to start with the process may simply be a natural part of the process. For some individuals, it may be difficult to immediately engage in an art making process, especially if these individuals have had limited art experiences. The difficulty these participants had in creating their artwork may be a reflection of their thoughtfulness about the images, as well as a reflection of their own resistance to creating artwork. Therefore, it is possible that the experience of having difficulty in creating the artwork is not a symptom of bereavement, but just part of the art therapy process.

Trying to Move Past Feelings/Thoughts

The fourth essential structure found in the current study is trying to move past the feelings and thoughts concerning the death of the parent at the time of the death. All three participants in this study indicated that they were able to find an external focus upon which they could place their attention at the time of their respective parent's death. For each of these participants, the external focus became their life goals and career choices. Tyson-Rawson (1996) suggests that the death of a parent in adolescence can become a powerful motive for resolving the developmental tasks of adolescence. When the death of a parent occurs, the adolescent may feel an internal pressure to understand the meaning of the death and external pressures to find stability, both of which heighten their need to

accomplish developmental tasks (Tyson-Rawson). The participants in the current study appeared to make noticeable efforts to move towards a new identity through the separation from the family of origin by forming plans and career goals for themselves and following through on these plans. This focus may have been a way of avoiding the painful thoughts and attempting to continue forward from the abnormal experience of losing a parent to the normal experience of college and career goals.

For some of the participants, particularly PID1, the attempts to move past the feelings and thoughts surrounding the event of the death may be a combination of denial of the event and efforts to keep moving forward in life. Harris (1980), Rosen (1991), and Worden (1991) state that people protect themselves from the reality of the loss by denying the meaning of the loss or practicing selective forgetting. The bereaved can also deny the feelings and the pain associated with the loss by avoiding the painful thoughts. Again, this is particularly salient to the experience of PID1 who was surprised at the kinds of emotions and thoughts that were brought forward in creating artwork and talking about her mother's death. In recounting her experience, PID1 openly acknowledged her denial of the feelings and thoughts she had about her mother's death.

In some ways, PID1's denial of her feelings about the death of her mother is reflected in her artwork. For example, she acknowledged that there were few faces showing in her metaphor illustration, but expressed that she was unsure as to the reason for this. It is possible that she covered the faces of the figures in this drawing to demonstrate a feeling of dissociation from her own emotions and a wiping out of her identity. In this image, the figures are anonymous, which may reflect her own feelings of isolation and presents a barrier to others. By blocking the faces of these images, the view

is denied access to the emotions and is distanced from the figures, which may reflect her own avoidance of the painful thoughts surrounding her mother's death.

The efforts of the participants to move past the painful emotions and thoughts concerning their parent's death can also be seen in the artwork. PID1 specifically acknowledged that her final drawing, which she associates with happiness and peace, served the purpose of ending her art-making experience with happier thoughts (Figure 1-4). PID1 stated that this final drawing would have been similar to a drawing that she would have created at the time of her mother's death as a representation of her experience because she was not willing to accept that anything upsetting was happening in her life. PID2 and PID3 likewise created images that are associated with pleasant or neutral thoughts as their final drawings, which may suggest that these drawings also served the purpose of moving past the painful thoughts and emotions that were generated from creating the metaphor drawing and returned the participants back to a feeling of homeostasis.

The sense of avoidance and denial of feelings can especially be seen in the artwork of PID3. As compared to PID1 and PID2, PID3's essential structures did not include many references to the artwork as part of the essential structure. Although he was brought back to the artwork several times during the interview, he engaged much less actively with the artwork in both creating it and talking about it. He also chose a limited number of art media as compared to the first two participants. This art media was also very easily manipulated, which limited and controlled the amount of expression he relayed in the artwork. Combining all of these factors might suggest that PID3 felt the desire to avoid or disconnect with the feelings he had surrounding the death of his

mother. As he engaged in a more controlled manner with the artwork and spoke less in direct relation to it, his essential structures seem to reflect the lack of direct artistic references generated in his interview.

One of the tasks of bereavement is adjusting to a new environment (Clayton, 1982; Bowlby, 1980; Worden, 1991). By attempting to move past their parent's death, each of the participants in this study made efforts to adjust to their lives without their respective parent. Adjustment is made through discarding old patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting so that new patterns can be made (Bowlby), eventually returning the individual to the previous level of functioning (Clayton). All three participants in this study formed the skills and filled the unaccustomed roles that were necessary to move forward with their lives, which constitutes the final stage of bereavement as described by Bowlby. Efforts to form new skills and develop personal standards and goals are an inherent component of adolescent development (Levy-Warren, 1992; Newman & Newman, 2006). It is unclear if the participants in this study were reacting to the death of their parent in their effort to develop their own personal goals and move forward with their lives or if these efforts were made as part of normal adolescent development. The accounts of PID1 and PID3 in this study suggests that the plans for their personal and career goals were already in place when their respective parent died and that the death of the parent motivated them to follow through with these goals rather than forcing them to form these goals. PID2's description of her experience suggests that the death of her father made efforts to adjust to her life without her father by forming her own goals that may not have already been in place. For PID2, the efforts made to forge her own path and

move past her father's death could also reflect a desire to avoid or deny her feelings about the loss.

Harris (1990) and Tyson-Rawson (1996) suggest that adaptive mourning may not be possible for adolescents who have lost a parent until there has been a successful negotiation of separation from parental figures. In the case of all three participants in the current study, separation and formation of external goals seems to have become a primary focus following the death of their respective parent, which may have prevented them from unscrambling their jumbled and chaotic feelings and expressing these thoughts and feelings to others. Although their bereavement process did not seem to interfere with normal adolescent developmental tasks, a result of bereavement suggested by Balk and Vesta (1998), it appears as though their motivation to form and follow through with their goals may have prevented the participants in this study from processing their own thoughts and feelings about the death of their parent. Harris (1990) suggests that the intense denial and avoidance of thoughts and feelings in older adolescent bereavement prevents attention to and resolution of grief.

The Influence of Time on the Expression of Thoughts and Feelings

All three participants in this study expressed that the passage of time had a significant influence on their abilities to think about and talk about the death of their parent. Uncomplicated bereavement eventually dissipates over time, and bereaved individuals are generally able to accept the reality that the person has died and find new meaning in their lives as soon as six months after the loss (Zhang, El-Jawahri, & Prigerson, 2006). As time passes, most individuals experience a decrease in bereavement-related distress and an increase in acceptance of the death (Zhang, El-Jawahri, &

Prigerson). Participants in the current study found that they were more able and willing to communicate their thoughts and feelings as time passed and they were better able to understand these thoughts and feelings. For the participants in the current study, time was an influencing factor in their ability to process their loss, a finding that is supported by Faschingbauer, Zisook, and DeVaul (1977).

Black (2005) finds that adolescents from the ages of 15-17 years often resolve their grief in a shorter period of time than adults. However, Meshot and Leitner (1993) report that adolescents who have lost a parent react with more intense shock, disbelief, and a greater sense of loss than older adults who have lost a parent. As the participants in the current study became focused upon external goals after the death of their respective parent, all of the participants stated that they were motivated to continue moving forward in their lives even shortly after their parent had died. As PID1 and PID3 indicated specifically, there was no time to process the loss at the time of the death due to other life events, such as college, that needed to be addressed. Likewise, Harris (1990) supports the finding that adolescents who have lost a parent describe having little opportunity or time for their grief. Many adolescents who have experienced a loss report feeling as though they mature more quickly, giving them a more serious and realistic view of life (Tyson-Rawson, 1996). In the same way, it is possible that the participants in the current study felt the need to mature quickly in order to cope with the bereavement process.

For the participants in this study, the artwork served as a means of conveying the importance or influence of time. PID3 was concerned about the amount of time available for the art making process, indicating several times that he would have included more detail or figures in his drawings if he had more time. Throughout his art-making process,

he asked that he be reminded of the time that was available for the art-making so that he did not take too long or go over the time limit (the 40 minute time period that was allotted to the art-making task). In reality, PID3 used far less time to create his four drawings, completing all four in 16 minutes. On the other hand, PID2 seemed to be less concerned with time limits until the final drawing, which she completed in a very short period of time as she realized that she had used far more than 40 minutes to create her four pieces of art. The artwork also served to show the influence of time as the participants referred to it to show what their artwork would have looked like if they had been asked to create it at the time of their parent's death. For example, PID1 indicated that her final drawing would have been more representative of her experience at the time of her mother's death as she believes that she was in denial of how she was really feeling. Likewise, PID2 demonstrated that the red side of her metaphor illustration would have been more representative of her experience at the time of her father's death.

Recreating the Cognitive and Emotional Experience Through Artwork

The final element that was present in the experience of all three participants in this study was the recreation of their experience through creating the artwork. Each of the participants had difficulty choosing images that expressed their thoughts and feelings, suggesting that creating the artwork caused them to relive the experience of having jumbled, chaotic, confused, and mixed thoughts and feelings they had at the time of their respective parent's death. Art therapy theory as presented by Naumburg (1966) suggests that creating artwork allows the expression of inner experiences. For the participants in the current study, the artwork served as a means of reconstituting their inner experience as it was at the time of their parent's death.

A possible explanation for the reconstitution of the participants' emotional experience at the time of the death is that the experience was never fully processed when they were adolescents. These participants may have never worked through the grief process due to external concerns and lack of emotional processes. Creating artwork provides an opportunity to re-experience conflict and then to resolve and integrate the experience to reach a resolution (Levick, 1983). Wadeson (1980) extends that creating artwork can serve as a means of echoing past life experiences and memories. McIntyre (1990) states that art therapy for bereaved children helps them to express the emotions and experiences involved in the grief process, and the use of metaphor as a avenue of expression in bereavement is documented by Spall, Read, and Chantry (1991) and Barker (2000).

As the participants in the current study created artwork about their bereavement experience, they relived the experience of chaotic feelings through the artwork. As the typical adolescent response to grief is to escape, adolescents frequently suppress or repress emotional processes (Harris, 1990; Rosen, 1991) and may not appropriately express or process their bereavement through other avenues such as the use of friends or family (Gray, 1989; Harris). Through the use of the artwork and metaphor, participants in the current study were able to reconstitute these experiences which may have never been fully processed after the death of their respective parent. An art therapy approach enables bereaved children and adolescents to transcend emotional limitations associated with understanding and conveying feelings about death as they are better capable of communicating through art productions (Zambelli, Clark, Barile, & de Jong, 2000).

Meshot and Leitner (1993) find that adolescents who have lost a parent still experience strong emotional reactions even after some coping has occurred.

Clinical Applications

Bereavement

The use of art therapy in the process of grief resolution may be advantageous as it allows adolescents to articulate their feelings and experiences by depicting these experiences in the artwork, which provides a point of reference when speaking about difficult subjects. All of the participants in this study were able to use the artwork as a means of clarification when reflecting upon their experiences. These participants were able to use the artwork for this purpose even though they expressed that they had difficulty with understanding their emotions and thoughts at the time of their parent's death and had difficulty with choosing images that accurately reflected their experiences in the art-making process. Adolescents tend to avoid or deny their feelings (Harris, 1990; Rosen, 1991) rather than express these feelings, possibly preventing the resolution and attention to grief. As the current study demonstrates, it may be possible that the inattention to such grief in adolescence may result in a lack of resolution about the grief process.

The essential structures found in this research study suggest that adolescents attempt to move past the thoughts and feelings surrounding the death of a parent, which may be a result of the difficulty they had as adolescents with communicating their thoughts and feelings to others. As a result, it may be possible that adolescent grief is not given appropriate attention, resulting in a lack of resolution of bereavement. In being unable to process their loss in their adolescence, this study suggests that there is still

much difficulty with expressing thoughts and feelings about the event even years after it has occurred. By giving adolescents who have lost a parent the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings within the context of a safe, therapeutic environment at the time of a parent's death, adolescents may be able to work through the grieving process and gain clarity in their perceptions of the death.

The essential structure of recreating the experience through creating the artwork found in this study suggests that it is possible to produce the same feelings and thoughts through creating artwork as the participants had at the time of their parent's death. Through creating a metaphor for the experience through the use of artwork and recreating the experience of losing a parent in adolescence, it may be possible to work through the grief process. This study shows that it may be possible to recreate and revisit the experience of losing a parent through the art making experience within a supportive therapeutic relationship even after several years have passed.

The Therapeutic Relationship

The influence of time as one of the essential structures in this research, the creation of a metaphor, and the influence of the therapeutic relationship are all key variables that contribute to the recreation of the experience of losing a parent. Clinicians should understand that it may be necessary to build a strong therapeutic relationship with bereaved adolescents as they do not have a tendency to reach out to others for help. As was made clear by the participants in this study, the grieving process may be avoided in lieu of external demands or adolescents may perceive others as being uninterested in their thoughts and feelings about their experience. Additionally, this study suggests through the artistic expression that adolescents may avoid or deny their feelings about the death.

Although this study did not include a systematic analysis of the artwork, some of the themes present in the artwork in connection to the verbalizations made about the art in the interviews suggest that clinicians may be able to use the artwork to understand what bereaved adolescents are experiencing even if they are unable to articulate their thoughts.

Furthermore, as the participants indicated in this study, the amount of time that has passed since the death is a central component in their ability to communicate about their thoughts and feelings. Therefore, clinicians should be aware that adolescents may require more time in order to be able to process their thoughts and feelings. Additionally, the artwork produced by adolescents immediately following the death may convey raw and chaotic emotions. These adolescents may not be immediately capable of processing their raw emotions; therefore, patience is required on the part of the clinician. For grieving adolescents, the provision of a safe space for expression rather than the processing of events may be a consideration for treatment.

The Art Media

The current research suggests that adolescents are overwhelmed and confused at the time of a parent's death to the extent that they have difficulty with communicating these feelings to others. The volume of choices of media in the current study should be limited when working with bereaved adolescents as the number of choices can become overwhelming. The participants in the current study appeared to have difficulty with organizing and maintaining the amount of supplies that were provided to them, which would suggest that an overwhelmed adolescent grieving the loss of a parent would be beset by a large number of choices. Participants in this research also tended to use more structured media, such as collage materials, colored pencils, markers, and oil pastels.

None of the participants used the chalk pastels, which are looser than the other materials provided. Clinicians working with bereaved adolescents should understand that the type of media should be structured and the number of choices given should be limited so as to facilitate expression without inducing an overwhelmed feeling.

The Art Therapy Approach

In the context of assessment, the role that each drawing in the series implemented in this study served a distinct purpose. The first drawing served as a means of familiarizing the participants with the art materials and with the task of creating artwork while allowing them to control the amount of information that they present in the initial art piece. By giving the participants control over the topic of the first drawing, the participants were given the opportunity to draw what they are comfortable with and to establish a baseline against which the other drawings can be compared. The second drawing, the drawing of the cycle of the seasons, allowed the participants to create a piece of artwork in response to a directive. In this case, the seasons drawing can be easily and universally understood. Additionally, it served as a metaphor for a life cycle. This metaphor may not have been immediately clear to the participants; however, it allowed them more distance and less confrontation as a means of lowering the risk involved in the study. The drawing of a metaphor for the death, on the other hand, is a more confrontational drawing as it is more personal and gives direct information about the individual's feelings and thoughts about the death. The final drawing, then, serves as a means of stabilization following the confrontational metaphor drawing. It is a recommendation of this author to use this series of art pieces as a method of bereavement

assessment as it allows a progression to more subjective and personal information in a way that is sensitive to emotional distress and minimizes the stress involved.

Creating a metaphor drawing within the context of a series of drawings appears to be an advantageous method of allowing participants to experiment and think about their artwork before being asked to create the metaphor. By prefacing the metaphor drawing with a free drawing and a seasons drawing and following it with another free drawing, the participants were able to reflect on their drawings as a series, thus revealing more information than what may have been gained by the metaphor drawing alone. Also, multiple pieces of art allowed the participants the opportunity to experiment with the art materials and become comfortable with them before engaging in the metaphor drawing. Multiple art pieces also allowed for the development of the therapeutic relationship before the participants were asked to create the metaphor. It would behoove clinicians to use multiple pieces of artwork in a similar fashion, particularly if the clinician and client are addressing emotionally difficult material.

In addition to using the series of drawings utilized in this study as a means of assessing an individual, the use of these drawings in treatment would also give the clinician valuable information and a means of addressing difficult material with the client. When using these drawings in treatment with a client, it may also be helpful to address the relational aspect of the loss. As was suggested through the participant's verbalizations about their artwork in this study, the relationship with the parent previous to the parent's death may have an impact on the emotional processing that takes place after the death. Therefore, clients may also benefit from expressing and processing their relationship with the deceased parent. In art therapy, assessing and expressing familial

relationships and dynamics can often be done with the creation of a kinetic family drawing (Kerr, Hoshino, Sutherland, Parashak, & McCarley, 2008; Malchiodi, 1990). However, in order to create distance and ease discomfort, it may be less threatening to allow the client to express family relationships through the use of an animal kinetic family drawing, in which the client is asked to draw a family of animals (Jones, 1985). As mentioned previously in the literature, the adolescent's relationship with remaining family members has an impact upon their ability to cope with the bereavement process (Tyson-Rawson, 1996). As the clinician moves from assessment of the client to treatment, using an animal kinetic family drawing at multiple points could allow the adolescent to show how the dynamic in the family shifts in adjustment to the death throughout the treatment. Allowing the adolescent to compare the drawings later in treatment could give them insight on how they have been able to adapt since the death and how to move forward from the death.

Art therapy can contribute to recovery from grief as it allows adolescents to have the space and time in order to express their own grief while placing the image of the grief in the artwork as a way of making it concrete. Participants in the current study expressed having no time to engage in the bereavement process as an adolescent and feeling obligated to be a source of support to other family members rather than asking for support for themselves, which is addressed in the essential structure of trying to move past the loss. They also expressed their own difficulty with communicating their feelings to others and difficulty in understanding their own feelings about their parent's death. The nature of art making and the therapeutic relationship in art therapy appears to contribute to the reification and recreation of the participants' experiences of losing a

parent after a significant passage of time from the death. The question remains, if the creation of artwork and the discussion of the images revives and enhances emotional and cognitive experiences, as to the responses to art therapy during the actual grieving period of the adolescent. It is hypothesized that creating artwork in art therapy may assist adolescents at the time of a parent's death as a way of objectifying, solidifying, and reflecting upon their experience.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study include the sample size, the amount of time that has passed since the death of the parent, the time limit given for the completion of the artwork, the variety of materials provided to the participants, and the nature of phenomenological research. These limitations will be expanded upon in the following paragraphs.

As this study only had three participants and is phenomenological in nature, the results are non-generalizable and may not accurately represent the experiences of all adolescents who have lost a parent. Through exploring the process of creating artwork about the experience of losing a parent in adolescence with a greater variety of individuals, more information can be gained about the applicability of these findings to the experience of all adolescents. Although participants in this study represent three distinct ethnic groups, the conclusions made in this study do not represent the experience of adolescents from all cultures and backgrounds. Furthermore, the results of this study can not be applied to populations with mental health diagnoses as this study was conducted with normal, healthy adults.

Similarly, the conclusions made in this study may not represent the experience of adolescents immediately after they have lost a parent as the participants in this study were reflecting back upon the experience after at least four years had passed since their parent's death. As time is an important variable in their ability to reflect upon the experience, the same study conducted with adolescents immediately following the death of a parent may not yield the same essential structures as the current study. Therefore, the structures that were found to be essential to the experience of the participants in this study may not be relevant to adolescents who are actively engaged in bereavement.

The time limit that was given for the completion of the artwork, as well as the variety of materials given, are limitations that were found in this study. In the methodology, the participants are given 40 minutes to complete the art-making process. However, it may be necessary to consider expanding the time limit or giving no time requirement as time appeared to be an issue in this study. The implications of this factor are discussed in the next section as it relates to suggestions for future research. Additionally, the amount of materials given to the participants for the art-making process is a further limitation. Two of the participants in this study appeared to have difficulty managing the variety and volume of materials given to them to use. This may have increased their difficulty with finding and choosing images that communicated the feelings and thoughts that they desired to express through the artwork.

As a final limitation, the qualitative nature of this study indicates that it is subject to the interpretations of the researcher. Although efforts were taken to limit the preconceived opinions of the researcher, it is possible that some influence of the

researcher is present in the results of this study due to the implicit nature of phenomenological research.

Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

The suggestions for future research will include the implications of a time limit on the art making process, the types and amount of materials offered, the use of a series versus singular drawings, the evaluation and use of other drawings, the inclusion of quantitative measures and longitudinal studies, the use of clinical samples, and the comparison of various demographic groups.

Within the methodology of this study, 40 minutes was allotted for the completion of the art work for each participant. Although this amount of time was sufficient for PID1, the other two participants seemed either to be concerned about the time limit or exceeded the time limit of 40 minutes. If this study were to be replicated, more time should be allotted for the completion of artwork so that time concerns do not impinge upon the art work elicited. It is possible that concerns about the time limit or about using too much time to complete the artwork impinged upon the amount of detail or the inclusion of other information that may have been present if no time limit was given.

Further research should investigate the amount and types of materials that can be used to facilitate the expression of thoughts and feelings in adolescent bereavement. The current study suggests that allowing individuals, even years after the death of a parent, to use a wide variety of materials can be overwhelming, especially if there is no means by which to contain the art materials given. Participants in this research also tended to use more structured media. It may be warranted for future research to explore the interaction between the type of material given and the type of information elicited. Using a much

less easily controlled medium may elicit an experience that is closer to the chaotic, mixed up, and confused feelings that appear to be present at the time of a parent's death.

Creating a series of art pieces appears to allow a multitude of information to surface as the participants reflected on each of the art pieces and the series as a whole. Further research, however, may be able to investigate the use of a singular metaphor drawing as a means of communicating the experience of losing a parent in adolescence to determine if the same types of information can be elicited. Art therapy research indicates that evaluative and assessment drawings can communicate valuable information in both a singular drawing (Hays & Lyons, 1981; Yedidia & Itzhaky, 2004) and a multiple drawing series (Cohen, Mills, & Kijak, 1994; Neale, 1994). To this author's knowledge, the literature does not address the comparison of singular versus multiple drawing series in relation to the amount and kinds of information that can be gained and the advantages to the client and clinician. Future research may evaluate the differences and similarities of information gained through the comparison of a singular versus a multiple drawing series.

Utilizing a singular or multiple drawing series as a means of assessing change in bereavement resolution in adolescents who have lost a parent can be evaluated through a longitudinal study. Through studying the changes in the artistic expression over time, it may be possible to determine if the same concerns as reflected in the artwork of the participants in this study are the same thoughts and feelings they had at the time of their parent's death. It is clear that the current study focused upon the past experience of adolescents who have lost a parent; however, looking at the artwork as it changes or does not change from the time of the death and for several months or years following the death

will give clinicians information on the evolution of bereavement expression through artwork.

Although it was not examined for meaning in the current study, the presentation of the seasons drawing in comparison to the overall associations to bereavement may necessitate further evaluation. In the current study, all of the participants began their seasons drawing in the month of winter. In art therapy literature, inclement weather is associated with and reflective of negative environments. The presentation of the weather in the drawing and the type of weather that the child or adolescent chooses to draw is seen as a reflection of the child's relationship to his or her external world (Manning, as cited in Malchiodi, 1997). Further research into the use and meaning of weather and season drawings may yield valuable information about the perceived environment of the adolescent following the death of a parent. It may be possible that adolescents who have lost a parent perceive their environments to be more hostile and negative than adolescents who have not lost a parent. Participants in the current study reported feeling chaotic, isolated, and angry following the death of their respective parent. These feelings may have been reflected in the season that they chose to represent first in their seasons drawing. Further evaluation is necessary to determine this, however.

Additionally, the essential structures that were elicited from the current study can be examined against quantitative bereavement scales in the context of a mixed methods research study to determine if the essential structures elicited from each participant are reflected in bereavement scales that measure recovery from bereavement. Many bereavement response scales investigate such items as existential loss and emotional needs, blame and anger, preoccupation with thoughts of the deceased (Guarnaccia &

Hayslip, 1998), yearning, stigma, isolation (Demi & Schroder, 1987), responsibility, loss of support, and shame (Barrett & Schoot, 1989).

In order to study the results of this research in more depth and breadth, it may be necessary to replicate this study with a larger and more diverse sample of non-clinical individuals who are reflecting back upon the experience of losing a parent in their adolescence. Also, this study should be replicated with individuals who have demonstrated complications (i.e. inability to resolve the grief process or to return to a previous level of functioning) with the bereavement process to determine if the same results can be found with this population. Eventually, it may be necessary to investigate the experience of adolescents who have recently lost a parent through the use of the methods described in this study to determine if their experience is similar to the experience reported by individuals who are reflecting back upon the process after several years have passed since the death. This would help determine if an art therapy intervention for bereaved adolescents can facilitate the resolution of the grief process and the prevention of complicated bereavement symptoms.

Additionally, this study should be investigated more thoroughly through the comparison of different groups of people who have lost a parent as an adolescent. Further research should investigate groups of women as compared to groups of men to compare similarities and differences in their expression of the grief process through the use of metaphoric artwork. Similarly, individuals from various ethnic groups should be combined to determine if the experience of adolescent bereavement as reported in this study is cross-cultural or culturally-defined. There also may be differences in the resolution of grief and the expression of grief through artwork between individuals who

have lost a parent due to an on-going illness and individuals who have lost a parent suddenly or traumatically.

It may also be necessary to investigate the experience of adolescents who have lost a parent and compare those who perceive their relationship with the deceased to have been good or nurturing versus those who perceive their relationship to have been bad or distant. As previously suggested, this may be evaluated through the use of an animal kinetic family drawing to assess the perceived relationships of family members in a less threatening way (Jones, 1985). Additionally, the relationship between the gender of the child and the gender of the deceased parent should be investigated for the reflection of the relationship in the response and thoughts related directly to that particular parent. In the current study, all of the participants had different gender relationships with the lost parent. Although all of the participants communicated some similar responses to the loss of the parent, they all expressed differences in the ways that they responded to the death. Finally, as the current study focused upon a specific age-group, further studies should investigate the use of the method defined in this study with multiple adolescent age ranges in order to determine if younger adolescents have similar experiences and can use the art work in similar ways.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was designed to explore the experience of individuals who have lost a parent as an adolescent through the use of metaphoric art processes. The research utilized a phenomenological method of inquiry including a series of four pieces of artwork and verbal associations to these art pieces via a verbal interview. This method was utilized in order to obtain in-depth information on the lived experiences of the participants. The research question was: What is the experience of individuals who have lost a parent in adolescence as expressed through metaphoric art processes? The objectives of this study were to 1) Explore the meaning of drawings about the experience of having lost a parent in adolescence, 2) To explore the cognitive experience of creating a metaphor to describe the experience of having lost a parent, 3) To explore the emotional experience of creating the metaphoric art used to describe the experience of having lost a parent, and 4) To gain an understanding of how the participants might use art and metaphor to describe their experience to others and if this process is useful at the time of the study or if it would have been useful at the time of the parent's death.

According to this research, the experience of these individuals is that they had difficulty communicating their feelings and thoughts about their parent's death at the time of the death, as well as had difficulty with choosing art images that portrayed these feelings and thoughts. These individuals experienced a sense of missing something in their lives, which was an element that was brought forth by their artwork. Time had a tremendous influence on their ability to process the death and was an area of focus in the art-making session, as well as was efforts that were made to move past the death.

Through creating the metaphoric art pieces, these participants appeared to recreate their experience as it was at the time of their parent's death.

This study was conducted at Drexel University Center City Campus. Three individuals ranging from 21-25 participated in this study and identified themselves as one of the following three ethnicities: Caucasian, Indian, and African-American. All three of these participants reported losing either a mother or a father around the age of 17.

For recruitment, all participants responded to a flyer for the study that was posted on either Drexel Main Campus or Drexel Center City Campus. The participants were responsible for determining if they met the criteria for the study. After responding to the flyer, the participants were scheduled to meet the researcher in order to complete informed consent and data collection.

The informed consent process lasted approximately 10 minutes, after which the demographic questionnaire was completed, which took about five minutes. Following the demographic questionnaire, the participants completed four works of art. The art-making session lasted for approximately 40-50 minutes, afterwards the participants took a ten minute break. During this break, the researcher engaged in epoche until the participant's return. This was followed by a 35-40 minute open-ended phenomenological interview. In total, the informed consent and data collection processes took approximately 1.5-2 hours. Six to seven weeks after the data collection session, the participants were contacted via telephone to participate in the validation interviews. These interviews lasted approximately 10-15 minutes and served the purpose of allowing the participants to add to or alter the data if the presented data did not accurately reflect their experiences. No

modifications were made as each of the participants found the data to be accurate reflection of their experience.

After the data was collected, it was analyzed using the phenomenological method outlined by Moustakas (1994) and Creswell (2007). The process of phenomenological data analysis begins with the process of epoche, followed by phenomenological reduction. Following the reduction of the data, an imaginative variation of the experience is created, followed by a revision of the original meaning units or themes. Finally, a structural synthesis of the data identifies the essential structures of the experience (Moustakas). This process was repeated for each participant and then for all three participants in the composite analysis.

The result of the phenomenological data analysis is the identification of the essence of the experiences represented by the essential structures. Six essential structures of the experience of artistically expressing the loss of a parent as an adolescent were identified within the data of all three participants. These themes are 1) Feeling a sense of missing something, 2) Difficulty communicating the jumbled, mixed, and chaotic feelings at the time of the event, 3) Difficulty choosing images that represent the complexity of expressing the event through art processes, 4) Trying to move past the feelings and thoughts, 5) The influence of time on the expression of thoughts and feelings, and 6) Recreating the cognitive and emotional experience of a parent's death through creating the artwork. The participant's artwork became a way of illustrating their experiences and a point-of-reference when they communicated their experience in the phenomenological interview. Throughout the interview, the artwork served as a means of expanding upon various concepts and clarifying these concepts for the participants.

Moreover, the artwork served as a means of recreating the emotional and cognitive response that was experienced at the time of the death of each participant's parent.

As a whole, the findings in this study correspond to the literature review as they reflect the cognitive and emotional experience of adolescents who have lost a parent and the use of artwork as a means of clarifying and connecting to past experiences. It was expected that the loss of a parent would represent an emotional and difficult experience for an adolescent and may interfere with normal adolescent tasks of separation and individuation from the family of origin. The actual results revealed that parental death in adolescence seems to facilitate separation through the urge to continue moving forward with external goals. Additionally, it was expected that the artwork would serve as a means of communication about the experience of losing a parent to death. The artwork served not only this purpose in the actual results, but also demonstrated that the artwork can serve as a means of reconnecting and re-experiencing the cognitive and emotional experience of losing a parent.

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Appendix B: Script for Initial Telephone Contact

Volunteer answer must be “yes” to the following prompts:

Researcher: “Have you read and understood the requirements for the study as outlined in the flyer?”

Researcher: “From reading the flyer have you determined that you qualify for this study?”

Researcher: “The criteria for being included in this study will be confirmed through a self selection process. This means that you are responsible for determining if you meet the criteria of this study. I will, however, be asking you for demographic information and asking questions about your parent’s death after the informed consent has been obtained. I will not ask you about your mental health status. If you do have a mental health diagnosis, I ask that you do not participate in this study. Are you interested in participating in this study?”

Researcher: “Now we will schedule a convenient time to meet in order to obtain informed consent and collect data. When is convenient for you to meet with me at the Drexel University Center City campus?” Researcher and prospective participant schedule a convenient time.

Researcher: “Then thank you for your time and your consideration in volunteering for this research. I look forward to meeting with you on (fill in scheduled time and date).”

If at any point the volunteer answers “no” to any of the specified questions, he or she will be informed that he or she does not meet the qualifications for this research and will be thanked for his or her time.

Appendix C: Informed Consent

Subject's Initials _____
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**Drexel University
Consent to Take Part
In a Research Study**

1. **SUBJECT NAME:** _____
2. **TITLE OF RESEARCH:** The Experience of Adolescents Who Have Lost a Parent as Expressed Through the Metaphoric Art Processes
3. **INVESTIGATOR'S NAME:** Nancy Gerber, Ph.D., Principal Investigator
Jessica Klotz, Co-Investigator
4. **RESEARCH ENTITY:** Drexel University
5. **CONSENTING FOR THE RESEARCH STUDY:** This is a long and an important document. If you sign it, you will be authorizing Drexel University and its researchers to perform research studies on you. You should take your time and carefully read it. You can also take a copy of this consent form to discuss it with your family member, attorney or any one else you would like before you sign it. Do not sign it unless you are comfortable in participating in this study.
6. **PURPOSE OF RESEARCH:** You are being asked to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to find out about the experience of creating an artistic expression about adolescent parental loss. By creating artwork about the loss, you will provide information on how people who have lost a parent experience the loss and express it through using art. This research focuses upon the use of a metaphor in artwork as a way of expressing the experience of parental loss. This research is in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters Degree in the Creative Arts in Therapy Program at Drexel University.

Approximately ten participants will be expected to take part in this research. You have been asked to take part in this study because you have lost a parent as an adolescent (between the ages of 15-18 years old), you are between the ages of 18-27 years old, and you have been enrolled as an undergraduate or graduate student at Drexel University for at least three consecutive terms. You also fulfill the requirements of having lost a parent to death when you were between the ages of 15-18 years old.

You cannot participate in this study if you do not meet the inclusion criteria and are a faculty or staff member at Drexel University, you are a student in the Hahnemann Creative Arts in Therapy Program, or you are currently diagnosed with a mental health problem.

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7. **PROCEDURES AND DURATION:** You understand that the following things will be done :

- **Demographic Questionnaire:** (10 minutes): You will complete a demographic questionnaire, which should last approximately 10 minutes and will take place immediately after the consent form is signed. You will be asked some questions about yourself which include demographic information. In order to protect participants, those with a current mental health diagnosis will be excluded from the study. However, questions about your mental health status will not be asked. If you wish to continue, you will proceed with the art making and interview.
- **Art Making Session:** (40 Minutes): You will participant in an art making session. In this session, you will be asked to create four expressive art pieces. You do not need to be an artist to complete these art pieces. You will be asked to create a metaphor for your experience of having lost a parent during adolescence. One of the artworks that you will be asked to create is a visual representation of this metaphor. This process will take approximately 40 minutes. All artwork will be digitally reproduced for the purposes of the Master's thesis. You have the option of having the original artwork destroyed at the conclusion of the research or having it returned to you. No identifying information will connect you with your artwork.
- **Intermission** (10 minutes):
You will be given a ten minute break from the research session in between the art-making and the interview. You may leave the room if you like and use the time as you please.
- **Interview:** (35 minutes):
You will also be asked to participate in an interview. In this interview, the researcher will ask you questions about your experience of creating the art pieces that relate to the loss of a parent. The questions will be about the following areas of interest
 - Exploring the meaning of the artistic metaphor you have created to describe your experience of having lost a parent
 - How you might use art and metaphor to describe your experience to others
 - If the process of using art and metaphor is useful or if it would have been useful at the time of your parent's death

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If at any point you feel discomfort regarding one of the questions asked in the interview, you can pass on answering that question and move to the next question posed by the researcher. This process will take approximately 35 minutes and will be audio recorded. All recordings will be transcribed verbatim. The original recording will remain in a secured locked file at Hahnemann Creative Arts in Therapy Offices and then erased at the conclusion of this research.

There will be a brief, five-minute debriefing session at the conclusion of the interview.

- **Validation interview:** Approximately one month after the collection of data, the researcher will contact you to confirm the findings of the study. You will be given the opportunity to give input on changes that should be made to the findings at this time. This is also the time in which you will receive your artwork, if desired, and your full stipend for participation in the research.

8. **RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS/CONSTRAINTS:** The risks for this study are considered to be minimal. You may feel some discomfort or anxiety in the art-making session and interview session as you will be discussing the loss of your parent. The art materials selected for use in the research were chosen for their ability to be easily controlled and their lack of toxicity. If you feel uncomfortable with any question, you may pass on answering that question and may move onto another question.

If you happen to become upset and think you need counseling services, they are available to you at the Drexel University's Student Counseling Centers. The Student Counseling Center at Main Campus can be reached by email at counseling@drexel.edu or by telephone at (215) 895-1415. Drexel University's Student Counseling Center at the Center City campus can be reached by telephone at (215) 762-7625. There is also a Peer Counseling Helpline available to students, which operates Monday-Friday, 8pm-midnight. This helpline can be reached at (215) 895-1523.

9. **UNFORESEEN RISKS:** Participation in this study may involve unforeseen risks. If unforeseen risks should occur, the Office of Regulatory Research Compliance will be notified.
10. **BENEFITS:** There may be no direct benefits from participating in this study.
11. **ALTERNATIVE PROCEDURES:** The alternative is not to participate in this study.

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12. **REASONS FOR REMOVAL FROM STUDY:** You may be required to stop the study before the end for any of the following reasons:
- a) If all or part of the study is discontinued for any reason by the investigator, or university authorities
 - b) If you are a student, and participation in the study is adversely affecting your academic performance.
 - c) If you fail to adhere to requirements for participation established by the researcher.
13. **VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:** Participation in this study is voluntary, and you can refuse to be in the study or stop at any time. There will be no negative consequences if you decide not to participate or to stop. Any fee you may be paid will be determined by the amount of time you spend in the study and, if you do not complete the study, the reason for leaving the study early.
14. **STIPEND/REIMBURSEMENT:** If you decide to discontinue participation in the study at any point before completion of the study, you will be paid a pro-rated amount based upon the amount of time spent in the study. Upon the study's completion, you will be paid a stipend of \$30.00.
15. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR COST** The researcher will be responsible for providing the cost in this study.
16. **CONFIDENTIALITY:** In any publication or presentation of research results, your identity will be kept confidential, but there is a possibility that records which identify you may be inspected by authorized individuals such as representatives of the institutional review boards (IRBs), or employees conducting peer review activities. You consent to such inspections and to the copying of excerpts of your records, if required by any of these representatives.

Audio recordings will be transcribed verbatim by the researcher, after which the audio recordings will be stored in a locked, secure cabinet in the Hahnemann Creative Arts in Therapy offices at Drexel University until the conclusion of the study at which time the tapes will be erased, cut, and discarded. Each drawing, audio tape, demographic data sheet, and the transcribed interview will be marked by an identification number and not your name. The drawings will be reproduced through digital photographs for research purposes and published in the researcher's master's thesis, but that there will be no identifying information linking those drawings to you. Therefore, your identity will be entirely anonymous.

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You will be given the opportunity to have your artwork returned to you at the conclusion of the study or, if you decline to have artwork returned to you, the artwork will be duplicated and then destroyed.

17. **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** If you wish further information regarding your rights as a research subject or if you have problems with a research-related injury, for medical problems please contact the Institution's Office of Regulatory Research Compliance at 215-255-7857.

18. **CONSENT:**

- I have been informed of the reasons for this study.
- I have had the study explained to me.
- I have had all of my questions answered.
- I have carefully read this consent form, have initialed each page, and have received a signed copy.
- I give consent voluntarily.

DO NOT SIGN THIS INFORMED
CONSENT AFTER THIS DATE 1/6/10

Subject or Legally Authorized Representative Date

Investigator or Individual Obtaining this Consent Date

List of Individuals Authorized to Obtain Consent

Name	Title	Day Phone #	24 Hr Phone #
Nancy Gerber, Ph.D.,	Principle Investigator	(215) 762-6928	(215) 762-6928
Jessica Klotz	Co-investigator	(267) 495-7240	(267) 495-7240

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Appendix D: Script for Informed Consent

Researcher: “Let’s begin. Here are two copies of the informed consent form. We will read through each part of the consent form together. I will read aloud if you will follow along with me. If you have any questions about the purpose or procedure for this research, please let me know, and I will do my best to answer your questions.”

The researcher and volunteer read through all parts of the proposal together, in order, from beginning to end.

Researcher: “Now that I have explained the purpose and procedures to this study, are you interested in participating in the research?”

Volunteer’s answer must be “yes.” In the event that the volunteer answers “no,” the volunteer will be thanked for his or her time and paid a stipend of \$5.00. At this point, the volunteer’s involvement will end. If the volunteer answers “yes,” the process will continue.

Researcher: “Could you please summarize, in your own words, what will be done to you in this research study, as well as the risks/benefits and measures to ensure your confidentiality, so that I am sure that you understand?”

Researcher: “Please initial in the space provided at the top of each page on both copies to indicate that you have read and understand what has been written on each page.”

“Please sign in the space provided at the end of both consent forms. One copy of the

consent form is for you to keep; the other copy will be kept in a secure and locked file in the Hahnemann Creative Arts in Therapy offices.”

Researcher: “Now that both consent forms are signed, we will continue with the data collection.”

Researcher: “You qualify for participation in this research study. We will now proceed in order to complete the data collection process. This process will take about one hour and forty minutes, which includes a ten minute break.

The researcher will now proceed with data collection processes.

Appendix E: Demographic Questionnaire

Participant Identification # _____

Demographic Questionnaire

1. How old are you? _____
2. How long have you been enrolled in/attending classes? _____
3. Male or Female?
4. What do you consider your ethnicity to be? _____
5. How old were you when you lost your parent? _____
6. Which parent did you lose? _____
7. "Do you feel comfortable discussing the events surrounding the death of your parent, answering questions, and creating artwork about these events?" _____
8. Is there a phone number at which I can reach you?

The volunteer answers must fall within the parameters of the inclusion criteria of this study. If the participant does not feel comfortable discussing the circumstances surrounding the death of the parent (question 8), he or she will be discontinued from the study.

Appendix F: Open-Ended Responsive Interview Guide

Must state that the participant can opt not to answer any of the following questions if he or she feels uncomfortable doing so.

Broad-based question:

What is the meaning of each of the drawings?

Broad-based question:

What were your thoughts as you created the drawings?

Specific Probative Questions:

Can you tell a story about the drawings?

What are the people thinking?

If you could identify with anything in the picture, what would it be? Why?

Can you tell a story that involves all of the drawings?

What are your thoughts about the series of drawings?

Broad-based question:

What were your emotions as you created the drawings?

Specific Probative Questions:

What emotions do the drawings convey?

What were your emotions as you created the drawings?

Did you connect emotionally with any of the drawings you created?

Can you tell me about this connection?

Is there any particular drawing that means the most to you? Why?

Broad-based question:

Could you please describe the meaning of the metaphor that you created?

Specific Probative Questions:

How would you describe the meaning of creating this metaphor for you personally?

How does the metaphor describe your particular circumstances?

Do you think your metaphor could be applied to other adolescent's experience of having lost a parent?

What were your thoughts as you created your metaphor?

Broad-based question:

How might you use your metaphor to describe your experience?

Specific Probative Questions:

Have you ever used the metaphor that you created today to describe your experience of having lost a parent? If so, when and how?

How do you think using a metaphor to describe this experience would be useful in helping others understand it?

Would using a metaphor, such as the one you created today, have been useful in describing your experience to others at the time of the death?

Can you describe any difficulty that you may have had in describing what happened or what you were feeling at the time of the death?

Has your ability to describe the death changed since you were an adolescent?