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UNDERSTANDING THE “REFUGEE” OF HURRICANE KATRINA:
AN EXPLORATION OF TITLES, TIME AND POST-TRAUMATIC
GROWTH

A dissertation presented to the faculty of

ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY SANTA BARBARA

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY
in
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

By

Kandice Timmons, MA

April 2015

UNDERSTANDING THE “REFUGEE” OF HURRICANE KATRINA:
AN EXPLORATION OF TITLES, TIME AND POST-TRAUMATIC
GROWTH

This dissertation by Kandice Timmons, MA, has been approved by the committee members signed below who recommend that it be accepted by the faculty of Antioch University Santa Barbara in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

This qualitative phenomenological study sought to understand the “refugee” experience of displacement from an individual perspective and the impact of trauma during a natural disaster through the lens of post-traumatic growth. It views survivors of Hurricane Katrina, who were displaced and returned home, and aims to investigate what changes, if any, have occurred since their return. The literature aids in understanding the complexities of the trauma endured in the aftermath, and seeks to better understand their refugee identity, the experience of displacement, the effects of trauma, and the changes that occurred in recovery. The data was collected through the Brief COPE Inventory, interview questions and the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory; from the data analysis four themes emerged: ability to cope, understanding identity, the ambiguous loss of home and perception of growth. During the participants’ displacement and return home there was reported dual ambiguous loss was felt deeply by the participants and many coped with self-distracting behaviors. All participants experienced some growth since Hurricane Katrina occurred. Those with adverse experiences reported the most growth, most participants observed moderate growth, there was little growth for one participant, and two participants reported no change as a result of Hurricane Katrina. The experiences of displacement, loss, return and growth were witnessed in their identity and connection to home. The return home for most made sense because the participants were not ready to give up on the unique collective culture of New Orleans. The electronic version of the dissertation is accessible at Ohiolink ETD center <http://www.ohiolink.edu/etd>.

Acknowledgements

I would first like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the participants of this research project. In sharing your narratives, you have allowed for a greater understanding of this phenomenon and the experience of change.

I would like to express special appreciation and thanks to my committee chair, Dr. Treviño, for undertaking this journey with me. I would like to thank you for encouraging my research and providing me with direction and your tireless assistance. You helped to keep the work exciting and the worker focused. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Reyes and Dr. Lehman, for your guidance and participation with this project. Your knowledge and experience was appreciated in my growing understanding of trauma.

I would like to extend my appreciation to Dr. Weiser, Dr. O'Brien and Dr. Grillo. Thank you Dr. O'Brien for your support in developing the foundation of my project. Dr. Weiser, thank you for your assistance and input to my understanding of grief and your support of the use of inventories. Thank you Dr. Grillo for motivating me to complete this project.

I would like to express gratitude to the creators of the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory, Dr. Tedeschi and Dr. Calhoun, and the creator of the Brief COPE Inventory, Dr. Carver, for your permission to use these inventories to gain a greater understanding of trauma. I would like to express appreciation to Dr. Stroebe and Dr. Schut for their consent in the use of the Dual Process Model and its dynamic understanding of loss.

Finally I would like to give thanks to my support system. I would like to thank Venice Bruno, for being my sounding board, as we went through this process together. I want to thank Ashley Russell for your constant belief and encouragement. A special thanks to my family, who have always been a great support and encouragement throughout this process. To witness the pride my mother, father and grandfather have for me makes the journey worth it.

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Introduction

Hurricane Katrina, the experience

This excerpt is my personal narrative at age seventeen after returning to my home after being displaced and seeing it for the first time after the water resided, which completely submerged our house. This was taken directly from a journal entry I wrote in 2005.

East View Drive. New Orleans, La: there lies a place very special to me. It was the place where I lived for seventeen years. It was my home. It wasn't the best house in the world, but it was mine. Then on August 28, we were told to leave our home because of Katrina. We thought it was the normal routine of leaving for the hurricane, which was packing a few things, and coming back in few days. But on August 29, we were proven wrong. Now it's all gone, all that is left are memories, some good and some bad.

I remember walking down the hall to my room and right before entering, the floor would always, always squeak. At time it drove me crazy. Now it's a fond memory. Sometimes I expect to hear it as I walk to my room, but I know that won't hear it ever again. One thing that I will never forget or miss are the bugs. The termites come out during the spring, when the street lights came on, and they would swarm on every corner. The mosquitoes would buzz around my ear, and the roaches would run from the lights. And no matter what you did, they always come back. This was certainly true for the crickets, which woke me up at night. They were always chirping outside my window, it was like an alarm clock going off at the wrong time.

I got so used to all the things going wrong, I kind of miss it. This makes me miss the good memories even more. I have so many good memories, of my family gatherings, holidays, or just spending time with the family. If I had to pick one of my favorite memories, I would know which one. It would be the time my whole family crowded into our living room to watch a home movie from about ten years ago. We were in the back yard having a bar-b-que. My dad was grilling and eating the food, my sister and I were playing in our kiddie pool, and then pregnant mom was taping it. The room filled with laughter as we watched ourselves, and how we acted then and now. I began to cry because I was laughing so hard at myself. It was hilarious the way I would dance and try to control my sister, who was bigger and older than me. Thought of never experiencing those moments again is putting a hole in your heart that you don't know how to refill.

The actual house is still somewhat there. It still stands in that spot on East View Drive, but everything we owned is covered in mold. So it's just like having nothing because there is no way to salvage it. But I try to remember the sayings: "home is where the heart is" and "that home is where you live and a house is just a building." So from that I guess I would say that I have a new home in my memories but my heart is and will always be in New Orleans.

In 2005, Hurricane Katrina formed as a tropical depression near the coast of the Bahamas on August 23rd. Three days later; it crossed over Florida, entered the Gulf of Mexico,

and became a Category 1 hurricane (NOAA, 2005). While in the gulf, the hurricane's intensity went from a Category 1 hurricane to a Category 5, with winds up to 175 miles per hour, (NOAA, 2005). The path of the storm was constantly changing and meteorologists were uncertain where it would land.

All of these harsh weather factors, led to the collapse of the levees on August 31st. The levee system was vital to the survival of the city because the levees protected this below sea level city from the waters of Lake Pontchartrain. In New Orleans, the levees failed at multiple locations. "Homes were knocked off their foundations and cars and houses rushed away in torrents of water that flooded through streets. Much of the city was underwater," (Gambone, 2009). This resulted in eighty percent of the city being submerged in the floodwaters of Katrina. Some areas experienced as much as 20 feet of water after the breach of the levees. This was one of the largest migrations of people in the United States since the Dust Bowl in the 1930s (United States Government, Retrieved June 2013).

Definitions

Throughout this research, terms will be used to describe the weather and the impacts of the disaster. In order to gain a better understanding of the experience of Hurricane Katrina, definitions of the terms will be discussed.

Hurricane. A hurricane is defined as a tropical cyclone in which the maximum sustained surface wind is 74 miles per hour or more (NOAA, Retrieved February 22, 2014). The term hurricane is used to describe tropical cyclones situated only in the Northern Hemisphere east of the International Dateline to the Greenwich Meridian. Pacific tropical cyclones are termed typhoons (NOAA, Retrieved February 22, 2014). Hurricane force is measured using

the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. Hurricanes receive a rating from 1 to 5 based on the hurricane's current intensity. The scale is useful in predicting potential property damage and flooding expected along the coast from a hurricane landfall. Ratings are based primarily on wind speed, as storm surge values are subjective based on the slope of the continental shelf and the shape of the coastline (NOAA, Retrieved February 22, 2014).

Category 1: Winds of 74-95 mph and storm surge of 4-5 feet above normal

Category 2: Winds of 96-110 mph and storm surge of 6-8 feet above normal

Category 3: Winds of 111-130 mph and storm surge of 9-12 feet above normal

Category 4: Winds of 131-155 mph and storm surge of 13-18 feet above normal

Category 5: Winds of greater than 155 mph and storm surge of greater than 18 feet above normal

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). After experiencing the trauma of an extreme stressor, such as a hurricane, some survivors may also experience the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (Vincent, 1997). In the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5), PTSD is defined by the appearance of symptoms including: persistent re-experiencing of the event through intrusive thoughts or dreams of the traumatic event; avoidance of stimuli associated with the event, and/or numbing of responsiveness or reduced involvement; and persistent symptoms of increased arousal (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). For these symptoms to be linked to PTSD, the event causing the stress must involve the "threat of serious injury, unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate," (Vincent, 1997, pp. 3-4). The experience of surviving Hurricane Katrina would leave those impacted vulnerable to the symptoms and possible diagnosis of PTSD (Regan, 2007).

Displaced persons. Survivors of Hurricane Katrina, displaced by the storm, were often labeled as refugees and evacuees. Each of these labels carries a negative connotation implying that the survivors are unwelcome in their new locations (Regan, 2007), while in actuality,

those impacted should be referred to as internally displaced persons. “Internally displaced persons are defined as, persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border,” (Cohen, 2004, pp. 465-466).

Refugee. In 1951, at the United Nations Convention relating to the status of the refugee, Article 1 of the Convention defines refugee as, “A person who is outside their country of nationality or habitual residence; has a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion; and is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country, or to return there, for fear of persecution,” (“The 1951 Refugee Convention,” n.d.).

Ambiguous Loss. Ambiguous Loss is an intangible, conceptual or psychological loss (Boss, 1999). There are two types of Ambiguous Loss circumstances that Boss describes. Type One occurs when there is physical loss and psychological presence. Boss (2006) provided examples of the first type of Ambiguous Loss as seen in the context of war, natural disasters or genocide, where people are physically absent but maintain a psychological presence due to their unknown status. Type Two is where there is physical presence and psychological loss. Boss (2006) identified the second type of Ambiguous Loss as an emotional or cognitive loss of a being who is still physically present. The author provides Alzheimer’s disease as a primary example of this type of ambiguous loss.

Posttraumatic Growth. Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996) defined posttraumatic growth as the positive changes that occur as a result of struggling with traumatic life circumstances.

The authors described five possible ways that the growth may appear, the creation of more open, intimate relationships; the recognition of new possibilities; a greater appreciation of life; an increased sense of personal strength; and spiritual or religious development.

Resilience. “Resilience is the capacity to be relatively unscathed by events,” (Many, 2012, p.12). It is the effective blending of biopsychosocial elements that allow individuals to deal with highly stressful events and still maintain a healthy mental state and general functioning in the aftermath (Agabi & Wilson, 2005).

The Storm and Impact on the City

Hurricane Katrina was one of the biggest natural disasters in the United States’ history and its impact on the residents of the Gulf Coast will not be easily forgotten. It was the sixth strongest Atlantic hurricane ever recorded and the third strongest that reached the United States (Levitt & Whitaker, 2009). Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced from their homes. Some were able to leave before the storm reached land, while others were unable or unwilling to do so. An estimated 1.5 million people evacuated the greater New Orleans area before the storm’s arrival, and still there were hundreds of thousands in the city when the storm hit (CNN News, 2005). One-fourth of New Orleans’s total population were without cars and therefore unable to evacuate (Masquelier, 2006). There was an estimated twenty to thirty thousand people that were stranded inside of the Superdome, and thousands more stranded in their homes on rooftops, in attics and homes trapped by the floods. The Coast Guard responded quickly to help these struggling survivors, but it was six days before the military arrived with aid (CNN News, 2005).

Levitt and Whitaker (2009) stated that over a million people along the Gulf Coast were displaced by Katrina and relocated all over the country. The issue of displacement left

many without homes and those impacted were given titles by outsiders looking in on their experience. The terms refugees and evacuees were used in the description of those affected. The media showed images of the aftermath of the storm, with people looting and searching for basic needs. These individuals were referred as “refugees” in the midst of the trauma. The Merriam Webster dictionary identifies the root word of refugee as *refugium*, a Latin word meaning hideaway. These descriptions of the refugee highlight the physical experience of forced displacement and seeking safety.

In the media (i.e. newspapers, journalists and reporters), there were many references to Katrina survivors who were wearing donated clothes, sleeping on the floors of overpopulated shelters, and struggling to connect with family members displaced across the country. Most were left with few possessions, little money, no home to return to, and nowhere to go (Masquelier, 2006). The media has presented Hurricane Katrina and the story of those displaced but what were the experiences of the individuals involved? This study will explore the experiences of those impacted by Hurricane Katrina and what it meant for them to have the title of refugee or evacuee placed upon them during displacement.

In addition to the physical impacts of displacement, there is a psychological effect felt in refugee trauma. For the survivors of Hurricane Katrina, seeking refuge was two-sided: first seeking safety from the dangers of the outside environment and then seeking psychological solemn in the wake of chaos. There was considerable speculation about why there was a delay in the response to this disaster, as the world watched these citizens enduring suffering in the midst of this disaster. The displaced people and impacts of Hurricane Katrina made national news coverage. These individuals were described as both refugees and evacuees. Americans, including many of the people who were able to evacuate from their New Orleans homes, sat

glued to an endless cycle of images and devastation (Gambone, 2009). This natural disaster left a major imprint on the lives of those who were displaced.

Psychological Impact of Disasters

Daily life brings predictability, and over time communities develop collective wisdom that is passed along through generations. This creates a sense of security and continuity.

When disaster occurs, the sense of safety is threatened and it violates the personal and collective expectations of continuity (Reyes, 2006). This attack on predictability and safety terrifies people and leads them to reorganize in numerous ways. Concurrently, as the physical effects of the storm are experienced through displacement and disarray, the psychological impact of the storms are present as well. The exploration of the dream interpretations of storms taps into your psychological turmoil that exists in the midst of this experience. The dream analysis of storms signifies an overwhelming struggle, shock, and loss in your waking life (Vigo, 2010). It taps into unexpressed fears or emotions of anger, rage, and turmoil. Vigo (2010) states that storms in our dreams epitomize that rapid changes are ahead for you, which can be interpreted in terms of rising spirituality, that alters how you see yourself and the world. Foretelling rapid change of storms, dreams can also give insights into the resiliency that exists within self. The phrase weather the storms points to your ability to and strength to endure whatever changes are approaching.

In weathering the storm, individuals learn how to handle these extreme events. Greenberg (2012) explored the recent trauma that occurred as a result of Hurricane Sandy and explained how to process trauma following extreme events such as natural disasters. The author uncovered the overwhelming impact of trauma and how, in these moments, survivors may be frozen in terror, feel overwhelmed by panic, or dissociate from their feelings in order to focus

on surviving. The overwhelming feelings that are produced by trauma can be fragmented into images and sensations, which can persist in nightmares or intrusive thoughts.

The effects of a natural disaster trauma can have a different impact from those of interpersonal trauma. In interpersonal trauma, the violation of safety and security occurs by another being that adds a dimension of perceived malice. In hurricanes, there isn't that other person that causes direct violation or harm but there is still the experience of violation that occurs with natural disaster. "If part of your experience of a disaster is people, business, or government not protecting you, or even taking advantage of your vulnerable position, even hurricanes can become interpersonal traumas," (Greenberg, 2012). The violation of self and safety as a result of natural disasters can shatter assumptions about the world and the everyday schemas that people engage in. Natural disasters are reminders of the vulnerability that exists to the unpredictable forces of nature. The unexpected and abrupt change is beyond human control, leaving individuals feeling vulnerable and unprotected by the institutional or physical structures that once left them secure.

The power of storms psychologically and physically displaces individuals from their sense of safety and normalcy. The physical displacement of individuals, whether temporary or permanent, changes their surroundings and comfort but also impacts how others view them. The label of refugee used to describe the forced migration that people of New Orleans experienced following Hurricane Katrina is representative of the trauma and loss endured during the storm, of being forced out and having their homes taken away by the storm. The Ambiguous Loss occurs when there is psychological presence but a physical loss of home (Boss, 1999). The hurricane's impact destroyed homes without warning, leaving displaced persons with no closure, many left to wonder about the state of their homes.

The ambiguity of the possible return and what they would be returning to creates anxiety and confusion. Ambiguous Loss destroys the belief that the world is fair and with that comes a lesson to cope with uncertainty (Boss, 1999). There is considerable unpredictability that exists within the movement of the refugee. There is a mourning and a yearning that occurs. The mourning is the process of beginning to accept the loss and yearning is a psychological attempt to attach to the loss. In understanding the psychology of disaster, it is important to recognize that in ambiguous loss, there is an attempt to balance the known and unknown.

The irresolvable loss of yearning for something you once knew is difficult to overcome. Trauma is a life changing injury that leaves a physical wound. Through growth and resilience, individuals learn to heal in spite of the changes. Being an evacuee indicates a return to the same, being a refugee indicates a loss, an injury. This research focuses on the perspectives of the participants lived experiences as a “refugee” to gain an understanding of their wounding from this trauma but also their healing. It is a process of looking back to orient oneself to look forward.

Rationale for Study

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study is to gain the individual perspectives of the “refugee” experience by looking back and exploring the lived experiences of those impacted psychologically by Hurricane Katrina. This study aims to examine the lived experiences of Hurricane Katrina survivors as “refugees” for the purpose of illuminating how personal identity related to or refuted these titles and to explore how this traumatic experience promoted or hindered growth in the individuals. It looks at what role the dimension of time has had in this process of growth.

A gap exists in the literature between the group perspective of trauma and growth and the individual perception in relation to this specific natural disaster and personal growth. This study aims to expand on the knowledge of individual perception of change and growth during and following the trauma of natural disasters. For the experience of Hurricane Katrina, this includes the exploration of the individual's experience of the titles that they received after the disaster. This study will focus on the collection of qualitative data in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the many contextual factors that influence these experiences of trauma and the measure of personal growth. Posttraumatic growth (PTG) is a construct, which looks at the agency of change within trauma and what factor time plays for the individual. This study will add new knowledge to this area of posttraumatic growth, by exploring the process of PTG from an individual adult perspective with the inclusion of directly addressing the trauma experience of a natural disaster by returning home. This information will also provide data to social scientists, health care providers, mental health professionals, educators, and policy makers to better understand the needs of those who have experienced trauma and their process of healing. Finally, this study will provide information for future researchers who wish to study this area.

Research Questions

This study will examine the following question:

What are the lived experiences of those individuals labeled as “refugees” during Hurricane Katrina and how has their displacement and the lapse of time shaped their current personal identity and growth?

Outline of Dissertation

This dissertation will be divided into five chapters, a reference section and an appendix section with additional material used throughout the dissertation. The first chapter will provide an introduction about the experience of Hurricane Katrina, from my personal statement and facts that generalize public experiences, the rationale for the study, the rationale for using qualitative research methods, the statement of the problem, and the research questions. Chapter Two will provide a comprehensive review of the literature from which this study extends. The third chapter will describe the research methods including the selection of key participants, how the data will be collected and analyzed, and the inclusion of validity strategies to increase the validity and reliability of the study and address any potential ethical concerns. Chapter Four will present and highlight the results of the individual interviews. In this chapter, each key participant will be described in detail along with the emerging themes that will be formed from their collective data. Themes will be presented accompanied with quotes. The differences in perspectives will also be highlighted to gain a greater understanding of the individual perspectives of the participants. The last chapter will interpret the results of the study, the implications for further development of future research, the strengths and limitations of the study, and provide a conclusion based on interpretations. The references section will list all resources used in all the chapters of this dissertation. There will also be an appendix section that includes interview questions, informed consent, a demographics questionnaire, the Brief COPE inventory, the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory, a letter of introduction, and community outreach letter.

Literature Review

The exploration of understanding the refugee experience of Hurricane Katrina is viewed through the perceptions of the participants. They are identifying their narrative descriptions to create meaning of this phenomenon. The investigation of the refugee experience is conducted through the perspective of people who were displaced during Hurricane Katrina using narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry unfolded as a discipline from the broader field of quantitative research in the early 20th century (Riessman, 1993). Narrative inquiry uses life experience through stories, journals, letters, conversations, interviews, family stories, photos and other artifacts, as the units of analysis to investigate and understand the way people create meaning in their lives as narratives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In exploring their descriptions, the research seeks to better understand their refugee identity, the experience of displacement, the effects of trauma, and the changes that occurred in recovery. These four areas of focus are used to develop context in understanding this phenomenon.

I. Refugee Identity

“I think of the label of Katrina girl as a person of color who had this unwanted attachment to the idea that I was a refugee, this poor black girl who needed help and pity. I hated it. I don’t think the labels did anything but to marginalize the experience of great loss that we all were undergoing to make others feel comfortable. It separated us refugees from those who weren’t impacted and made the suffering more okay, because that’s the role of a refugee to suffer, to experience loss and if you had that title then why should another person, try to understand you outside of that role”

Hurricane Katrina and the Media Titles

The impact of Hurricane Katrina forced thousands to leave their homes. They were described as refugees in the media. “News media played footage of stranded, desperate people pleading

for food, water, and help. They showed babies whose mothers could not feed them and deceased elderly in wheelchairs and on sidewalks, presumably taken by the heat or lack of food, water, or medicine”, (Gambone, 2009, p. 2). Those Americans impacted by the storm experienced extreme loss, including many of the estimated 1.5 million people who had already evacuated New Orleans, as they sat glued to an endless cycle of images and devastation, (Gambone, 2009).

Masquelier (2006) believed that the refugee status was a reprimand to those who did nothing to prevent this tragedy. “New Orleans residents stranded in the city had become refugees not because of the threat of rising water, but because of the abandonment by their government at a moment of great vulnerability,” (Masquelier, 2006, p. 738). The disaster severely undermined the notion of a self-sufficient citizen and that this was a nation that took care of “its own.” The American ideal of individualism left thousands alone to deal with the horrible conditions that followed in the aftermath. As images of people stranded in misery and desperation flashed across the media, the world witnessed those who were left behind and neglected (Masquelier, 2006).

Masquelier (2006) emphasized that those affected by Hurricane Katrina, left their homes and not their country. The psychological experience of abandonment and loss was investigated. Although, these individuals experienced a traumatic natural disaster, their lack of aid during their forced migration felt similar to that of a refugee seeking safety in a new place. Masquelier’s notion of abandonment and the experience of being a refugee speak to the power of the storm that left individuals without a feeling of belonging. This study aims to capture the experience of psychological loss and how individuals overcame the trauma to develop change or growth.

The term refugee functioned to exclude the displaced persons of Hurricane Katrina from the rest of the United States; which they felt fully entitled to be part of, but there appeared to be no substitute adequate term that conveyed the horrible experience that so many faced during the hurricane and the aftermath of rebuilding that followed. “They might have lost their homes, their family pictures, and their forms of identification, but they were still citizens, not refugees,” (Masquelier, 2006, p. 738). It is also understandable how some people impacted by the storms could have had the feelings of having a refugee status, with many homeless, aimless and with a handful of their possessions.

The media has a dramatic and widespread influence on how people think and feel, especially after a major mass disaster (Echertling & Wylie 2000). The use of the term refugee sensationalized stories about the displaced persons and the media thrives off of bad news of others (Kuriansky, 2006). The media’s use of “refugee” received complaints that it wasn’t representative of the population. Civil rights activist Al Sharpton stated that these individuals were not refugees because they are citizens of the United States (Pesca, 2005). It appeared that the term refugee for those impacted was unacceptable; they were law-abiding taxpayers and not refugees (Masquelier, 2006).

The terms evacuee and refugee started to be defined by the media. Zorn (2005) defined evacuees as an internally displaced person or a person evacuated from a dangerous area. The definition of refugee varied within different resources. The term can be interpreted as one who seeks refuge, which, in this case, could apply to those impacted by the hurricane. Fuhlhage (2006) stated that a refugee is one who seeks refuge after being dispossessed of their home and or their belongings, which can also be applicable. A refugee can also be interpreted as someone crossing a national boundary because of persecution, which would not apply to

the Hurricane Katrina survivors. Fuhlhage (2006) describes the definition of the term refugee as agreed upon by the United Nations as someone outside of their country of natural residence with a fear of persecution because of some aspect of group membership and is unable or unwilling to receive protection from their country or to return because of fear. This agreed upon definition states that fear of persecution plays a role in having a refugee status.

Hurricane Katrina and Refugee Perceptions

The argument is about more than just the definition of the term, it is about the connotation behind it. Al Sharpton believed that this title strips the survivors of their dignity, “They are not refugees wandering somewhere looking for charity, they are victims of neglect and a situation they should have never been put in in the first place,” (Pesca, 2005). According to Masquelier (2006), some experts claimed that those displaced would have been better off applying for refugee status. As refugees, they would have been provided with social services they had been generally denied as displaced citizens. It seems hard to understand why people in affected areas would reject the refugee status if it would entitle them to needed aid. The sense of “refugeeness” alludes to the idea of “otherness”; it refers to foreigners, not citizens (Masquelier, 2006). Zorn (2005) describes that refugee implies foreign people and that it carries a sense of permanent relocation and that this would not be fitting to the residents of the Gulf Coast. These individuals were not nationless or stateless, even if their tattered and worn appearance epitomized “refugeeness”. They were entitled to the same privileges and could claim the same rights as any other U.S. citizen (Masquelier, 2006).

While some disagreed with the title of refugee, others debated that it was a particularly suitable term because it hinted at the horrible conditions that many impacted by Katrina had eventually escaped (Masquelier, 2006). Pesca (2005) points out that those who were present

during the hurricane and its aftermath were indeed in need of charity and help. According to Pesca, the people who had the wherewithal or the means to leave town beforehand were evacuees and those who were present were something else, while Zorn (2005) believed that, the term evacuee was not truly reflective of the overwhelming experience of those displaced by Katrina.

In presenting information about the storm to the public, the media's goal should be to cause no further harm to the survivors or victims. If the term refugee does psychological harm or damage to some people; then another fitting term that does no harm, should be used instead (Fuhlhage, 2006). The term "environmental refugee" was introduced by Masquelier (2006) and applied to the situation of Hurricane Katrina. Environmental refugees were defined as those who are forced to abandon their homes because of the threat or impact of an environmental disaster (Masquelier, 2006). Masquelier believed that the term environmental refugee could also be misleading because it excludes factors such as political, economic, and the social forces that play a role in the displacement of troubled populations.

There was debate over the terms, refugee or evacuee. However, the important common factor between the two is that these individuals are people who struggled through major loss and had individual unforgettable experiences that the media portrayed under a collective label. "Many just know that they were hurt, and many don't like being called refugees when their nerves are already rubbed raw by the disaster, as well as by the notion that they have been abandoned" (Fuhlhage, 2006). The representations that emerged from the media's gaze rarely met the expectations of these groups (Masquelier, 2006). While there was exposure of this tragedy in the media, the individuals who went through it had a very different and unique insight into Hurricane Katrina. With each person's emotional and mental states being different,

there is a potential range of affective definitions for their words. Those impacted suffered through a natural disaster that forced them from their homes and they are not as likely to listen to logical definitions (Fuhlhage, 2006). Their different stories would determine if the media coverage was representative of their personal lives and their experience of displacement following Hurricane Katrina.

While the outside world focused on media coverage and the debate of the terms, most of those displaced by Hurricane Katrina struggled with the experience of loss and ejection from their homes that resembled that of a refugee. The normal coping resources of most individuals are exhausted during profound levels of stress that can occur during loss. In adjusting to such stress, strong personal characteristics, such as resilience can be a benefit along with the forgiving role of time (Reyes, 2006). The refugee has been evacuated and uprooted, they are now homeless and some are forcibly displaced from their homeland and their city. It is recognized that an individual's capacity to remain themselves during periods of change is fundamental to their sense of identity, which is experienced emotionally (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989). The re-creation of the sense of home is essential for resettlement because home is rich in significance and purpose (Simich, 2008).

Home is more than a place of everyday life. It the foundation for a locus of emotional support, a source of identity, a physical connection to one's past and a sign of continuity for the future (Warner, 1994). The experience of home is not just centered on a place, but also on the people who are there and their relationships that are created. Social supports are intimately linked with mutually loving relationships with family and friends and social institutions and government systems may also serve as formal supports (Simich, 2008). The refugee experiences confusion and loss of support and self in their displacement. When there is a lack of

sense of home and support from those who have shared experiences, the process of the refugee coping from displacement can be a lonely experience (Simich, 2008). Leaving your home behind is painful. Sometimes the pain is veiled by the task of survival at hand and other times the pain is most acutely felt (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989).

II. Displacement

“I just saw myself as someone who was forced to leave my home with no idea of when I would be able to return. I would say that I evacuated but never really identified with the title evacuee. I definitely did not acknowledge myself as a refugee because to me, back then my understanding was that they were someone who was forced to leave their country because of war and that wasn’t me. But the media kept throwing around these terms and showing people of color, suffering and dying as the country did nothing. Yes, those people were in need of refuge and safety but they weren’t forced out of their country. My personal descriptor was being lost, the outsider with no sense of security, no comfort of the familiar and always the Katrina girl. I hated the Katrina girl because she wasn’t my life and wasn’t a part of my 17 years of living. It was just this label that everyone was giving me to separate me or feel sorry for me and I didn’t need that or want it. I wanted to be acknowledged for the person I was and not for the experience that I had.”

Personal Experiences of Trauma

The refugee experience involves dual processes of change, an outer process and an accompanying inner process (Kristal-Andersson, 2000). The outer process of change is physical and it requires a change in environment, climate and culture. This is displacement. The outcome of Hurricane Katrina eventually forced evacuations of the city and the uprooted many individuals either temporarily or permanently. In 2007, Bridget Dugan, a former New Orleans resident told her story of being displaced. She started her story looking back at how she became desensitized to the word hurricane, living in New Orleans her entire life. All of the previous hurricane warnings would end with a few days free from her responsibilities. Her past experiences with hurricanes influenced her decision to stay in the city in a high-rise hotel, instead of evacuating. She packed a few essentials and left all of her other belongings behind. The day the hurricane landed, she watched the rain and the debris fly by.

A few days after the hurricane hit, her hotel had no power, no running water and a shortage of food, drinking water, and a rising sense of panic. The levees were starting to break and the water starting rising. Bridget decided to attempt to get out before the water got too high to drive. As she left the hotel, she waded in sewage water about waist high and finally made it to her car and out of the city. She went to northern Louisiana and eventually Texas, where she now resides. Although she stayed during the hurricane, she was able to leave before the tremendous flooding began. Bridget experienced a loss of her possessions, culture, and identity as a resident of a unique city during the hurricane.

What determines this individual's title? Does this story make Bridget a survivor, evacuee, or refugee? If she had the opportunity to address these questions, how might she perceive it given her experience? It would extend Bridget's personal story by gaining further knowledge of her insight of being a displaced person and whether the title could have an influence on her sense of identity. After watching their lives, and everything they had earned being washed away overnight, language had the power to become a means of self-affirmation. It could be seen as the only device that remained to regain control over the definition of their self-identity (Fuhlhage, 2006). This study will investigate the other stories similar to Bridget's to explore whether the title of refugee may have influenced their lives.

By examining individual experiences, the study will examine the perspectives of the experience of the "refugee" by those who were actually displaced and not the observers of the hurricane. By looking at the individual's experience, it will explore the issue of identity in a completely new light. It won't generalize about those affected by Hurricane Katrina. "Not all from New Orleans lost their homes. Not all victims of the storm were from New Orleans. Not

all who lived through Katrina like being called victims, instead seeing themselves as survivors”, (Fuhlhage, 2006, p. 115). Their different experiences could also be a factor that influences their opinion of the titles of refugee and evacuee. This study aims to better understand personal definitions of the titles of refugee and evacuee and the personal feelings about their acceptance or rejection of that given role. The study looks beyond the dictionary definitions and into the stories of the people and how it shaped their personal identity.

Loss, Identity and Grief

To the residents of New Orleans, home was a sense of their identity. It is a unique city with abundant culture. It meant something to be a New Orleanian. There is pride in the culture, friendliness in speaking and an abundance of sharing a good time. When Hurricane Katrina engulfed the city, people were forced to leave their homes and a part of themselves. Upon the return of those who were able, they witnessed their homes in varying states. There was a definite change in New Orleans and a change in them. Something had been taken away in this trauma and it was more than just the material belongings that were left behind.

In the refugee situation that is described, there is a dual process of change that occurs. The outer changes are easily identified in the material loss, but the accompanying inner changes exist both in our conscious and unconscious processes. “Accompanying inner changes are defined as the conscious and unconscious effects of these outer processes on the inner world and how they influence the person’s life,” (Kristal-Andersson, 2000, p. 84).

Within the experience of a disaster, there is a sense of unexpected loss and a combination of emotions that follow. Natural disasters shatter our basic assumptions about the world. In an instant, everything changes and the institutional or physical structures that were believed to

provide protection, no longer seem to do so (Greenberg, 2012). Part of the experience of a disaster is the government not providing aid and protection. With a sense of injustice, hurricanes can become interpersonal traumas. Krook (1969) describes the four elements of tragedy that she uses to explain how individuals begin to process these emotions of tragedy and loss. The first is the act of horror or shame. Hurricane Katrina was the horror that occurred to residents that was outside of their control. This act involves an element of betrayal or rejection of the fundamental nature of humanity. The response time for disaster relief followed days after the storm and flooding, leaving individuals stranded, isolated and in dire need of aid, which arrived six days later (CNN News, 2005). That betrayal was seen in the lack of response for aid. The second element is the suffering that results from the act. Suffering, as defined by Abrams (1989) is strictly a psychological phenomenon, and while tragedy may impact us physically, the author does not describe physiological distress as suffering but as pain. These individuals experience a feeling of injustice during this waiting process and grief in the loss of home and for some parts of the self.

The first two elements of tragedy explain the experience and psychological result of the act and the last two elements reflect the process of gaining awareness and acceptance in order to move forward in the process of coping. The third element is knowledge of the event, which comes with an understanding of the nature of the world and humanity's place in it. The nature of the world creates natural disasters, which are outside of people's control, but the response of others to the needs of suffering defines how their humanity is viewed. The final element is the affirmation of the values from the knowledge gained. By accepting the suffering as both necessary and a result of the act, the gained knowledge is affirmed and the individual can begin to cope with the act and what was lost.

In coping with crisis, there is the idea that progress can be made beyond the restoration of the psychological self and that spiritual equilibrium that can also be achieved as a result of engaging in suffering. Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) identified that struggling through a life crisis may be the route to wisdom and the highest form of living. In religion, the role is often intertwined with the idea of suffering. This is seen in Christianity with Jesus Christ, who suffers for the sins of mankind and the idea that forgiveness of past sins leads to spiritual growth. The Buddhists are guided by the Four Noble Truths, which revolve around understanding and ending the process of suffering. All of these processes whether religious or not, help to better understand the experience of suffering.

In the experience of loss, there is a suffering and mourning that takes places for what is no longer present. In moments of grief, individuals seek to make sense of their experience, so that they can heal and move past the trauma. Following loss, people who are suffering experience grief. Grief is a reaction to the experience of loss and it is processed differently for each individual with varying time and circumstances. It is a universal experience that has been captured through history and understood through different theories of coping. Through the exploration of psychological models, the concept of grief shares the principle that the experience of loss involves an initial period of shock, disbelief, or denial, often followed by distressing physical and emotional symptoms. The aspects of shock and disbelief can be seen in the experience of Hurricane Katrina, where the idea of evacuation did not equate with deviation for many.

The origins of grief work goes back to the work of Freud and his concept of “trauerarbeit” (grief work) in which the work of mourning is a process of obsessive recollection

during which the survivor resuscitates the presence of the lost in the space of the psyche, replacing an actual absence with an imaginary presence. In *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), Freud explores the similarities between these two responses to the experience of loss. Grief relates to a loss of an attachment and the process of mourning is detachment from the loved one. This painful experience is a reaction to loss. Freud (1917) defined mourning as a state of melancholia signifying that when mourning goes wrong, melancholia worsens. Melancholia is seen as a deep presentation of depression involving a complete loss of pleasure in all or almost everything. The end of mourning the loss is accepted; the ego is able to accommodate the loss enabling the bereaved to search for new attachments (Humphrey & Zimpfer, 1996).

Lindemann (1944) incorporated Freud's concept of acceptance in healing into his theory. Lindemann described "grief work" which he termed, as needed for the healing to occur following loss. He identified three steps that constitute grief work: the emancipation from the ties of the loss, readjustment to the environment in which the loss is missing and the creation of new relationships. The attachment to the deceased must be given up. However, this removal of attachment does not mean that the loss is replaced or forgotten. The attachment is changed to allow for new attachments and readjustments to the environment of living with loss. In the readjusting, new relationships and attachments are formed (Freeman, 2005).

Following Lindemann's work and the creation of steps for healing, Kubler-Ross (1969) identified a cycle of grief model, where grief can be understood through five different stages. The model was originally developed to explain the experience of those dying from terminal illness. It is now also widely used to explain the process of grief more broadly (Baxter & Diehl, 1998). The five stages are: denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. In denial, there is a refusal to accept the reality of loss. This experience may be

unconscious or conscious. Denial serves as a defensive mechanism to buffer immediate shock as individuals adjust to the traumatic event. Anger is a reaction to the emotional upset and can be directed towards many sources. Bargaining is an attempt to understand the current circumstance by trying to regain control. Depression is an indication of some acceptance and is categorized by sadness, fear and uncertainty. The final stage is acceptance, which symbolizes emotional detachment and the individual coming to terms with their loss in order to move forward (Freeman, 2005). Experiencing loss is an individual process and people spend different lengths of time working through each step with different levels of intensity (Axelrod, 2006). The stages do not necessarily occur in any specific order, but are often interpreted in that way. Instead, it is helpful to view stages as guides in the grieving process, to give context to the experience of loss (Axelrod, 2006).

There has been a contemporary shift in the models of understanding the process of grief. This shift is a movement away from the phase model into more diverse expressions of understanding of the process of loss and coping. An issue identified with the phase model is that they are often linear, which doesn't relate to the diversity of human experience. The grief work hypothesis that claims there must be a focus on the loss or the individual will experience maladaptive symptoms and will never recover from the experience of loss (Stroebe and Schut, 1999). The contemporary models challenge grief work with the idea that there are more diverse expressions of loss that can be viewed through many cultural lens. The work of Stroebe and Schut (1999) moved into a dual process model to explain the complexities of grief that can exist within different periods of processing loss.

The dual process model recognizes that grief isn't linear. It is a dynamic process of oscillation whereby the grieving person at times confronts and other times avoids different tasks

of grieving. Stroebe and Schut (1999) identify that the focus shifts from addressing loss oriented stressors to restoration oriented stressors. The need to have respite from both stressors is an integral part of adaptive coping. The contemporary model understands the importance of grief work but does not attribute it to the sole process of understanding loss. In the dual process model, loss orientation involves grief work, including preoccupation with the loss, yearning and ruminating for what is no longer present. This model is depicted in Figure 1 (For permission for use, see Appendix H, pp. 134-136). The range of emotional reactions involves pleasurable reminiscing to painful longing and anywhere in between. In the restoration orientation, the focus is making lifestyle adjustments that occur with the experience of the loss. It looks to the secondary consequences of loss, handling what needs to be dealt with in order to move forward and processing the development of a new identity because the loss has changed how roles are perceived.

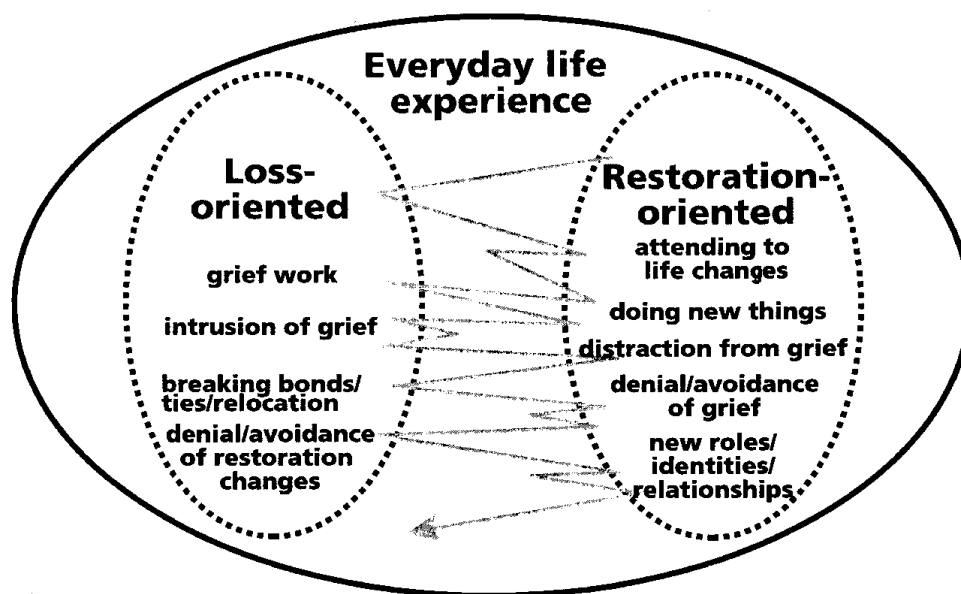


Figure 1: The Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement (Stroebe & Schut, 1999, p. 213). Reprinted with permission.

The ebb and flow that occurs between these two orientations allows for the individual to attend to what is needed in the moment, whether it be confronting or avoiding the loss.

Confrontation with the reality of loss is the essence of grieving adaptively (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). It needs to be done, but not at the expense of attending to other needs that are associated with the experience of loss. Loss is an individual process and attending to the needs requires incorporation of personal capabilities and the tolerance of loss. This is the most central claim of the dual process model that distinguishes it from other models.

The process of grief follows the experience of loss. During the process of grief, individuals seek to make sense of their experience. That process is different for every person. Grief work looks at the pain of the loss and aids in the process of moving forward into the identity beyond the loss. The process of healing and moving forward for some is attained through religion and others address their issues from a more psychotherapeutic perspective. This research seeks to investigate the process of coping in the exploration of loss, the handling of grief and the formation of new identity that may be derived in posttraumatic growth. In order to move forward, the impacts of the trauma must be addressed.

III. Trauma

“Watching the news, left me with this hopeless feeling of loss and uncertainty. It was constantly depressing but at the same time, we couldn’t take our eyes off the screen. Every update of the storm passing, the levees breaking, the conditions getting worse, the people being stranded, the waiting unknowingly to see if there would be something to return to or if loved ones would survive. It was insane to watch your life disappear to be simultaneously obsessed with worry and flooded with constant sadness.”

Hurricane Katrina and Psychological Impacts

Traumas, initially, are processed as fragmented sensations, and overwhelming feelings. Survivors may be frozen in fear, feel overwhelmed by panic, or dissociate from their feelings in order to focus on surviving (Greenberg, 2012). The experience of the “refugee” is one of physical and psychological loss. When the world that is known to you vanishes in

days, emotional distress is widespread as individuals deal with the unexpected traumatic affect. There have been studies exploring the traumatic experience of natural disasters and how it has affected the psychological functioning of those who were exposed to storms. Norris, Friedman, Watson, Byrne, et al. (2002) and Rubbings & Bickman, (1991) looked into this phenomenon and the psychological results, which included increased anxiety, somatization disorders, depression episodes, substance abuse and post-traumatic stress symptoms. This has been documented from disaster survivors across many nations and disaster types.

What can be traumatic to some may have little to no impact on others. In part, this is due to an individual's sensitivity to adverse events, but there are many other factors that play a part in one's traumatic experience. When trauma is unexpected, shock plays a huge role in the impact. Shock gives the person no time to psychologically prepare and with the unexpected there is a real or perceived lack of control. If an individual feels that they are not in control, feelings of powerlessness may surface and may be more difficult to handle (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). When there are sudden, unexpected, uncontrollable, and out of the ordinary circumstances, individuals feel that they are not to blame for the event. Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) describe blame as alleviating when not directed towards self, but they also describe that blaming others makes individuals feel powerless or helpless to the outcome. These factors challenge psychological and physical well-being. The study seeks to investigate the relationship of the refugee title to feelings of helplessness and the impact of trauma effects of Hurricane Katrina.

These challenges that are presented from trauma may have a temporary or persistent effect on the individual. While through traumatic experience there is suffering, there is also

the potential for growth to occur. Both can be a part of an individual process of trauma. Ignoring the role of suffering in discovering growth from trauma, it would be naive to suggest that highly negative events do not produce negative consequences, (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). Although the effects of a trauma event may not be seen as detrimental to all who experience it, the ability to grow and move past trauma is experienced in the presence of suffering.

These negative consequences may or may not impact everyone who experiences trauma, but negative trauma does have effects on the body and the mind. The negative bodily impacts are a result of adrenaline. When a state of arousal or emergency is activated, the body produces adrenaline, which disrupts normal functioning, by producing a heightened state of arousal. In this heightened state, the heart beats more rapidly; digestion speeds up and hormones are sent into the blood stream. These actions occur to prepare bodies to deal with the emergency and all other functions are put on hold (Hart, 1995). Bodies can experience adrenaline production and a hyper-arousal state in the same body areas when experiencing a familiar trigger situation (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

This is called the fight or flight response and this release is an evolutionary adaptation that allows us to better cope with the emergency situation, (Hart, 1995). In short durations of experiencing this fight or flight response, it serves as a protective factor for the body. When this state of arousal becomes chronic, it leads to fatigue, gastrointestinal difficulties and urinary problems, headaches, loss of appetite, trouble breathing freely and a variety of aches and pains (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

The experience of trauma can also have negative psychological factors. The psychological factors are comprised of effects on both thoughts and emotions. The thought process may be disrupted by a state of shock, in which a numbing may occur. In periods of trauma,

there is also the possibility of thought intrusion (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). Both thought intrusion and numbing make it difficult to achieve an understanding of the experience. The emotions that occur with trauma are variable depending on the circumstances of the individual. Depression and anxiety are common when processing the experience of trauma (Norris et al., 2013). Depression is more likely when the person experiences a significant loss. On the other hand, fear and anxiety are more prevalent responses in situations with a major threat to self or valued things involved (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

In the aftermath of trauma, anger, irritability and guilt are related to experiencing a difficult situation outside of your control. Jacobs, Vernberg and Lee (2008) studied adolescents and discovered that they struggled with guilt or shame over what they did or didn't do during the time of the disaster. The feeling of guilt or shame takes the form of isolating behaviors and feelings of depression. The experience of survivors' guilt questions the role of the person and whether or not they did enough in the midst of trauma. The guilt is present because through this tragedy they are still okay, while others might not have had the same fortunate results (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). In times where there is remembrance or observance of a related event to the original trauma, self-blame or guilt can also re-emerge (Jacobs, 2011).

These changes in thought and emotions consequently lead to changes in behavior. When an individual is experiencing the negative psychological suffering of trauma, they are likely to engage in behaviors that provide an escape from their current stress. These behaviors are often self-destructive. Jacobs et al. (2008) reported that traumatized individuals are at greater risk for self-harming behaviors, such as cutting, burning or even suicidal behaviors. Some engage in alcohol, tobacco and drug use or abuse, and some individuals' relapse (Norris

et al., 2013); while others began to isolate by withdrawing from others or exhibiting an increasingly aggressive behavior (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). The negative changes in behavior also contributed to a decline in overall health. Rhodes, Chan and Saxon et al. (2010) describe how the lack of self-care in their study revealed a portion of their samples to have fair to poor health.

The experiences of some of the negative consequences of trauma, does not automatically constitute the development of a psychiatric disorder. According to Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995), there is an increased risk of developing a psychiatric disorder that is associated with undergoing trauma, but most exposed to high levels of stress will not develop a disorder. The psychological impairments that are associated with trauma are often anxiety and depression. In extreme incidents of trauma and susceptibility, trauma may present Dissociative Identity Disorder or Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). There are several individual factors that contribute to why a person may be more susceptible to psychiatric disorders in relation to trauma. There also factors that reduce risk, including people who have the skills to successfully cope and have strong, loving relationships. These people have less of a chance of developing a psychiatric disorder.

There might not be a psychiatric diagnosis in relation to trauma but some negative effects are felt. The definition of trauma implies a negative stress experience. How long the impacts of trauma last and time are factors that bring comfort in past traumatic experiences. The role of time in processing psychological trauma, like everything else, is dependent upon the person. For some individuals, time is not necessary because there are no wounds to heal. They may be capable of coping successfully. For others, time is needed when defenses are present to avoid trauma, which will eventually re-emerge when they are able to manage it. For some,

time can be a healer. Within about 2 years of a major trauma, most dealing with difficulties have returned to a level of psychological functioning prior to the traumatic episode. For others, time is not healing, if the psychological distress precipitated the trauma (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

Traumatic Effects on Memory

The role of time in trauma is important to explore, with regard to the lapse in time since the landfall and devastation impacts of Hurricane Katrina. The literature presents a variety of perspectives in bringing forth a memory that stemmed from a negative emotion or experience of trauma. How people remember and forget traumatic experiences is a highly controversial issue in psychology (Geraerts and Jelicic, 2008). Flashbulb memories are often used to describe an impactful phenomenon. Brown and Kulik (1977) describe flashbulb memories occurring for circumstances in which one first learned of a very surprising and consequential or emotionally arousing event. The event is remembered with clarity of the description and emotions that were present for the individual recalling the experience. The two principal determinants for flashbulb memories appeared to be a high level of surprise and a significant resulting effect, which may or may not be emotional arousal (Brown and Kulik, 1977). If these variables did not reach sufficiently high levels, then the flashbulb memory would not happen. When the high level of the determinants are achieved, it appears to most directly affect the frequency of rehearsal, both covert and overt, which makes the person recalling the event describe their narrative with more detail.

In reference to Katrina and the flashbulb memory of this experience, I remember this event very clearly. Two days before the storm, we left with my grandparents and cousin. My

dad drove with my brother, my grandmother with my cousin and her son and my grandfather with his dog. I don't remember what time it was, but it was dark. The sun hadn't risen yet, but the highway was packed. Hours upon hours of inching along and about 15 hours later we made it to Hot Springs, Arkansas, where my mom was. The next few days, our eyes were glued to the televisions in our rooms, as we watched the storm hit and the city become damaged but survive. We watched the water rising on the levees and heard about them breaking. We saw the footage of all of those houses submerged underwater and the worries about those who were left behind. I remember watching the news and thinking that I saw my house with nothing but the rooftop exposed. I felt so crushed, so lost and afraid. The days that followed were like a never-ending shock, the conditions in the Superdome, people stranded on rooftops and highways, and the government stood by. All we could do was watch as our homes drowned and hope that those we love were okay. There was so much unknown and so much sadness and solemnity felt by my family in those days.

Hurricane Katrina presented many memories of high levels of surprise and consequential emotional arousal: the journey to evacuate, watching the storm hit, the levees break and returning home to a place that would never be quite the same. For those who underwent the experience, there may be flashbulb memories present that provide a unique understanding of the emotional arousal of this trauma. In 2009, Hirst et al. made a unique distinction between flashbulb memories and event memories in understanding the memory of a traumatic event. Flashbulb memories refer to the memories of the circumstance and event memories refer to the memories of the facts of an event. Those who were not affected by the ambiguous loss of home; still had an understanding of the facts of Hurricane Katrina.

Memories have the ability to sustain over time in the events of trauma or to be suppressed and fade away. It is very dependent on the context of the memory, the effect the experience had personally and the rehearsal of memories. Walker et al. (2009) identified five different rehearsal types that can occur with autobiographical memories and the purposes they serve for the individual. The five types are involuntary, maintain memory details, re-experiencing the emotion, social communication and understanding the event. Involuntary memories have the event memory just “pop” into consciousness. This can occur with traumatic experiences and exposure to a trigger that awakens the memory and the experience of trauma. Involuntary memories are often seen within the context of post-traumatic stress disorder and intrusive thoughts. The second type of rehearsal is maintaining memory details. In this rehearsal, the memory is actively recalled to keep the details of the event accurate. Personal purpose of maintaining accuracy may be in regard to holding on to the memory to savor the positive or to hold the negative for future retribution. Larsen and Bernstein (2000) identified that self-relevant information appears to be well recalled over time, and that memory maintenance rehearsal contributes to process long-lasting memories (as cited in Walker et al., 2009, p. 762).

The final three memory rehearsals contribute to the phenomenological experience of this research study. Memory rehearsal in the context of re-experiencing the emotion has the power to reproduce similar emotional responses. The reality of such emotions is reflected in neural activity that occurs in remembering specific events (Walker et al., 2009). In recalling a memory, the body and mind are taken back to a place where the experience of description invokes the power in the perception of the event. Rehearsal for the purposes of social communication is to share the event memory with others, which has various effects on psychological

functioning. Pasupathi (2003) identified social rehearsal as a tool to organize the autobiographical memory system and regulate emotions (as cited in Walker et al., 2009, p. 763). Sharing memories can bring forth clarity and understanding to an event that wasn't available due to the emotional intensity at the time. Rehearsal for understanding seeks to discover the meaning or recognize the implications that followed the event. Walker et al., (2009) suggested that people think about life events that puzzle them or represent life failures. The recalling of events to understand emerges to be reparative in the sense of seeking answers and recovery to move forward beyond the event. This research will explore the phenomenological experience of Hurricane Katrina through accessing memories using social communication, where emotions can be safely re-experienced and understood in the context of current growth and functioning.

IV. Recovery

“Presently I know that a part of my trauma will always linger and in discussion of it there is an area that taps into some of those intense feelings I experienced back then but with an awareness of how I have grown and changed since then. I think in acknowledging loss, there is always a piece that still holds on to the past and a part of that pain. But I think Hurricane Katrina taught me that change is inevitable whether major or minor and that life is about acknowledging changes and the effects on the self and having ways to process and grow from each experience.”

Hurricane Katrina and Post-Traumatic Growth

During Hurricane Katrina and in the days that followed, a horrified nation – and much of the world – watched in shock and disbelief as Americans were stranded without sufficient food, water, health care, or access to transportation. We wondered how such a thing could happen in so civilized and wealthy a nation. We believed help must surely come in the next few moments. This could not go on. Though we watched the television coverage and listened to radio and internet reports, the media could not fully

capture the depth of difficulty the people faced; and the difficulty must be understood in order to recognize the awesome capacity of these people to grow and benefit through an event most of us could not imagine (Gambone, 2009, p. 36).

In the months following the hurricane, most of those displaced by Katrina were involuntarily relocated all over the country, some by choice and others without knowing the final destinations. In the years following the storm, the key participants returned home to regroup and rebuild. In exploring posttraumatic growth (PTG), it generally begins with intense distress and grows over time with varying types and amounts of PTG experienced (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

Hurricane Katrina was an emotional, stressful, and traumatic experience for those who were impacted at the time. This study looks into the personal past of individuals but it also seeks to acknowledge their progress and changes since the traumatic event occurred. According to Lamberg (2006), even after a disaster as extreme and full of traumatic characteristics as Katrina, the majority of survivors are not psychologically impaired immediately following the storm. In fact, many people emerging from disasters report positive emotions, expectations, and perceptions of personal growth along with their distress (Gambone, 2009). This will be explored by assessing the participants' PTG. Posttraumatic growth is a relatively new construct, which looks at the ability to experience an adverse event and take away a positive consequence in spite of trauma.

The term posttraumatic growth captures the essence of this phenomenon because it emphasizes transformative positive changes that occur most distinctively in the aftermath of trauma, and it is experienced as an outcome rather than a coping mechanism (Tedeschi and

Kilmer, 2005). PTG is primarily described as the emotional and cognitive outcomes of a cognitive process, more an internal than an external change, and a few have identified detailed behavioral changes as well as cognitive processes that take place (Gambone, 2009). The internal changes occur and provide the foundations for behavioral changes to follow. PTG is a multidimensional construct; trauma survivors have reported growth in many areas of their personal and social experience (Tebes, Irish, Vasquez, & Perkins, 2004). The type of growth varied depending on different factors such as the type of trauma and the severity of exposure.

Tedeschi, Park & Calhoun (1998) hypothesize that disasters will result in less growth than other kinds of trauma because more of the population is impacted, leaving social support resources weakened (as cited in Karanci & Acarturk, 2005). In contrast, McMillen, Smith, and Fisher (1997) find that rates of PTG are extremely high in natural disaster survivors. In their study, 90% of tornado survivors perceived some benefit six weeks later, and 95% reported growth three years later. Overall, growth levels detected after disasters appear to be comparable to or higher than PTG after other traumatic events, ranging from 44% to 95% (Gambone, 2009). The study aims to identify the social support experienced and how it impacted growth.

In the midst of adverse events of trauma, suffering exists; but in looking behind that suffering it is possible to see the growth and positive changes that can come from moving away from the trauma. Not everyone who underwent Hurricane Katrina experienced unfortunate psychological stressors from trauma. Some did experience trauma but also reported growth occurring as a result. Damaged schemas, which can trigger post-traumatic stress symptoms, can also trigger growth symptoms. When the coping skills are overwhelmed, the

primary schema can be damaged or destroyed, and this can motivate a process for new meaning making and lower stressors. An intrusive thought about the event, which is a symptom of PTSD, is most often related to PTG (Cryder, Kilmer, Tedeschi, & Calhoun, 2006).

Growth is a cognitive process that comes from the struggle or inability to cope with a difficult event, rather than the event itself. Therefore, the initial distress was necessary for an outcome of PTG as suggested by Tedeschi and colleagues (as cited in Gambone, 2009). Tedeschi & Calhoun (1996) discovered that nearly all participants with mixed traumas identify with some negative effect of their trauma, while 60% also perceived positive effects. This combination leads to the conclusion that both positive and negative effects of traumatic events are likely to coexist in the same person. Most people who have experienced PTG are motivated towards growth by first experiencing distress, and people can experience distress in some areas while reporting growth in other areas (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996).

The five main areas of growth identified by Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) were used with survivors of various traumas to assess positive change. These five areas of growth were: personal strength, relating to others, new possibilities, spiritual change, and appreciation of life. Personal strength focuses on an individual's sense of confidence and capacity and ability to accept whatever happens. Relating to others viewed increased levels of closeness with and an elevated appreciation of others as well. New possibilities expanded the hobbies, opportunities, and finding a new life path or goals. Spiritual change consists of strengthened faith and improved understanding. Appreciation of life included a change in priorities about what is important in life and appreciation for life each day.

Growth was identified with increases in empathy, altruism, giving, and compassion for others, which are varyingly understood as relational, personal, or spiritual changes. Material

benefits that resulted in growth were also identified in areas such as job improvement, financial gain, and material possessions are identified in a few studies (McMillen & Fisher, 1998). From the original five Gambone (2009), constructed five areas of growth for coding the results of their study. Those areas of growth used for coding were existential growth, personal growth, relationship growth, new opportunities and behavioral growth. The existential growth expanded on the original spiritual change including more philosophy of life. Personal growth included recognition of new aspects of self, and relationship growth included improvement in connectedness with others. New opportunities and behavioral growth viewed changes that may have not been present prior to the storm and changes attributed to the storm.

Kilmer, et al. (2009) reviewed the experience of PTG with children by conducting face-to-face interviews. The children ranged in age from seven years old to ten years old. This study also explored five domains of growth: relating to others, personal strength, appreciation of life, spiritual change and new possibilities. The children showed the capacity to reflect on their trauma of Hurricane Katrina and assess how they themselves have changed, as well as their situations. The results of the study showed that throughout the different age groups, the same basic domain of growth were identified in the trauma of a natural disaster.

Posttraumatic growth looks at recovery and how those exposed to trauma find positive changes in themselves, others, and their environment. In order to experience growth, one must be able to handle, process and cope with trauma. One aspect in handling trauma that Bonanno (2008) presents is resilience. The relationship between PTG and resilience appears to be related but according to Bonanno, they are two different processes (2008). He defines resilience as maintaining the equilibrium; the individual experiences some disturbance but overall main-

tains their original level of functioning. Recovery is defined, as a process when normal functioning temporarily dissipates as the individual may experience some psychological symptoms for a period of time, then there is a gradual return to pre-experience functioning.

Many different definitions of resilience reflect a positive adjustment despite adversity. Tedeschi and Kilmer (2005) discussed the topic of resilience and identified three main variables that aid in the positive adaptation under risky situations. The first variable is individual characteristics such as temperament, self-efficacy, and internal locus of control. The second variable is a warm family environment, with a stable home and a good relationship with caregivers, and the third are broader context variables including extra-familial support. Tedeschi and Kilmer (2005) believed those who displayed resilience have adjusted successfully in spite of adversity, while those who experience PTG are altered by their struggles with adversity. The struggling that occurs in the aftermath of the trauma produces PTG.

While resilience involves a fast return to previous levels of functioning or no change in functioning, following the traumatic event, PTG consists of improvement to pre-trauma levels of emotional and other functionality (Bonanno, 2008). If resilience is a case of “bouncing back,” wrote Walsh (2002), PTG is a case of “bouncing forward,” (as cited in Gambone, 2009). Resilience is a common attribute that exists in individuals, and there are multiple ways of accessing resilience. This is seen in the management of our different coping patterns and traits of our personality (Bonanno, 2008).

The process of “bouncing forward” is dependent on the resources available and the severity of the experience of trauma. Posttraumatic growth was seen to be a strong predictor of

symptoms of improvement for those who experience severe disasters. The three areas of disasters that were explored were tornados, mass killings, and plane crashes (McMillen, et al., 1997). Researchers defined “severity” of disaster exposure as a combination of variables including: the proximity to the event; the physical threat to self or others and material loss. Perceived harm to self or others, which included more proximity to the event, predicts more personal PTG, (McMillen, et al. 1997). The perceived benefit of PTG would aid in the recovery process, even with severe trauma experiences.

McMillen et al. (1997) discovered that people with the perceived benefit of PTG at six weeks after the trauma are less likely to have PTSD three years later. McMillen, Smith and Fisher (1997) have proposed two explanations for PTG prediction of well-being over time. First, it may be that PTG motivates active, problem-focused coping and behavioral changes, which can result in better outcomes and the improvement of the environment and self-perceptions. Second, it may be that some aspects of PTG are able to unfold right away, while others require more time to process and create distress resolution before they can take place. “An event that causes more initial distress allows an individual more opportunity to work through and find meaning in the event.... Such processing can take time” (Park, et al., 1996, p.99).

The exploration of variables related to PTG with a focus exclusively on natural disasters concentrates on similar variables to those mentioned in the McMillen et al. (1997) study. Karanci and Acarturk (2005) discuss PTG as a factor of the Maramara earthquake in Turkey in 1999. PTG was strongly correlated with property loss or damage, perceived life threat, and location during the earthquake, and those closer to the center of the quake reported more PTG

four years following the earthquake (Karanci & Acarturk, 2005). Looking at these factors together served as a significant predictor, when viewing location alone; it was not a predictor of PTG when controlling distress levels and demographic variables (Karanci & Acarturk, 2005).

Although those affected by large-scale natural disasters received aid from national and international groups, individual social support from known allies tends to decrease. As mentioned earlier, the idea proposed by Tedeschi, Park and Calhoun (1998) is that large-scale disasters reduce social support and possibly can affect PTG (as cited in Karanci & Acarturk, 2005). The researchers emphasized the importance of social support because it can affect the rumination and the coping behaviors of the person. It was shown that group membership was a growth, that may serve as buffer against stress, provide a sharing of trauma history and bring about sharing collective coping strategies (Karanci & Acarturk, 2005).

Posttraumatic growth looks into three different processes in the formulation of experiences. Neimeyer (2004) identified the processes of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction, and the narratives of those impacted may provide these processes. In viewing the way that we organize our stories, narratives are personal. They were also interpersonal, by providing instruction and entertainment to the listener, either inviting them or distancing them with their experiences. The interpersonal aspect provides validation and support, which can aid in the facilitation of healing and growth. The narrative process looks into the social or cultural story, viewing the events experienced by the groups and how it was significantly consolidated into the culture (Neimeyer, 2004).

The goal of PTG is related to current therapies for trauma survivors as having a goal of meaning making, which is seen as a fundamental component of trauma-related therapies

(Sheikh, 2008). In collecting the narratives of the key participants who experienced the consequences of Hurricane Katrina, this research seeks to explore PTG and whether the given title of “refugee” experience impeded or influenced their transformation into their current lives. This study will review the process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction; and how this influenced their personal, interpersonal and cultural growth and meaning making as a result of the trauma.

This research seeks to answer what are the lived experiences of individuals labeled as “refugees” during Hurricane Katrina. In order to understand the essence of this experience, it is important to grasp the concepts that help to explain it. Refugee identity points to the unique experience of the survivor and how its meaning was shaped by the meaning and personal experiences. Displacement identifies the role of loss in leaving homes to return to a place that is not quite the same. It explores the role of grief in loss and how that is a process that must be encountered to identify trauma and move into recovery. Traumas are negative events that impact people in a varying ways in terms of symptoms, duration and effects. Traumas leave a scar or impact on memories and can be rehearsed involuntary or consciously as a part of remembering or healing. Recovery is the final area of exploration that views posttraumatic growth, a notion that positive consequences can also be a result of trauma. It does not ignore the role of suffering in trauma, but acknowledges that there can be movement beyond it. The literature serves as a guide to understanding the complexities of the trauma endured in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, as this research seeks to identify the participant’s descriptions to create meaning out of this phenomenon.

Methodology

“For me, I was not able to save many objects from prior to the hurricane, but we were able to save some photographs. Something that became really meaningful for me was something that came after the hurricane. It was one of the first things that I received after and was just mine again; it was a pillow from our trailer. It provided warmth and comfort during a period of so much uncertainty and that felt safe. Years later, I still have it and although it is worn, it is comfort.”

Posttraumatic growth investigates the experience of change that results from trauma. The interest in this area of research stems from a holistic exploration of change and the process of moving forward. In the previous chapter, the selected literature on refugee identity, displacement, trauma and recovery were reviewed, and the research has been guided to better understand the lived experience of posttraumatic growth following the trauma of Hurricane Katrina under the identity of the refugee. The methodology chapter seeks to explain the investigative approach of qualitative phenomenology, and describes the process of recruitment of participants, measures used, data collection and analysis.

Philosophical Basis of Phenomenological Research

The phenomenological investigative approach was chosen because the hurricane was indeed a unique phenomenon and the descriptive nature of this approach would be best to examine the lived experiences of those affected. Phenomenology seeks to answer the question “what?” instead of “why?” and searches for a deeper understanding of an event. It provides an appreciation of and sensitivity to the experience (Polkinghorne, 1989). Hurricane Katrina is understood in large part as a natural disaster that impacted the southern part of the nation. This research seeks to appreciate the individual and the very personal life changing event. Pure phenomenological research aims primarily to describe rather than explain, and to start from a perspective free from preconceptions (Husserl 1970). Preconceptions about lived expe-

riences of participants will be addressed to avoid contaminating the descriptions of lived experiences. In this research, personal biases will be bracketed and through follow-up interviews, the researcher's interpretation will be assessed for accuracy (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014).

The use of quantitative methods in the exploration of the phenomenon under investigation would not capture lived experiences and give meaning to the experience of surviving Katrina. The quantitative investigation limits the understanding of the individual's lived experience, by searching for facts and universal truths (Smith, 2008). The quantitative approach would not be appropriate because the focus of the research seeks to understand specific experiences and their meanings. Qualitative methodology cannot be generalized because there is not one universal truth. There are multiple truths based on meaning and lived experiences. Meanings have the power to change over time and the change in meaning prevents generalization of data (Giorgi, 2009). Other methods such as case studies also provide a descriptive view of an individual perspective, but the ability to make positive inferences becomes more difficult to make without at least a small population to derive information. "Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions", (Lester, 1999, p. 1). In regards to the current research being proposed, a high value is placed on what the participants report as their lived experiences of Katrina over what can be analyzed. This research approach is best defined as mixed methods with an emphasis on phenomenology. The main focus is on the descriptions of the lived experience of the participant through the use of interviews that challenge the assumption that there was one truth of

those displaced by Hurricane Katrina. However, the use of the quantitative measures are present to emphasize what themes are discovered in the interview process. The research aims to bring forth multiple perceptions to capture the essence of this experience.

Phenomenological descriptions of lived experiences of survivors of Hurricane Katrina are possible by turning from things to their meaning. It is more than just a description of the event. Phenomenological descriptions seek meaning, by returning to the original experience. This study does not seek to describe the hurricane, it aims to understand the meaningful impact this event had upon the lives of the participants. The purpose is to contribute to the understanding of trauma and give a broader understanding of their lived experience as a refugee of Hurricane Katrina. This research has high specificity in its exploration of the phenomenon. "Experience is a reality that results from your openness of human awareness to the world, and it cannot be reduced to the tier the sphere of the mental or the physical," (Polkinghorne, 1989, p.42). To represent their lived experiences, this research must explore their individual awareness to better capture the essence since no one experiences moments exactly the same regardless of circumstance.

The purpose of phenomenological exploration is to produce a clear, precise and systematic description of meaning that accounts for the activity of consciousness. The problem that may occur with studying consciousness is that there is considerable difference in individuals and there is complexity in the study of conscious experience and access to consciousness can be complicated. The objective will be to discover stories and perceptions of how the events were experienced in order to learn about the lived experiences and the meaning for each individual. The result of Hurricane Katrina was not the same for all who experienced it. There was no one way to react to the storm. Husserl (1970) investigated the consciousness of

lived experience and Polkinghorne (1989) stated that consciousness is actively guided by human intention rather than determined by mechanical causation. The research actively seeks to explore the consciousness of the experience of Hurricane Katrina. The study will explore the consciousness of the experience of the hurricane, the feelings of its representation and the effect that displacement had on the survivors.

Phenomenology is the philosophy as well as the clinical method and the research approach to the understanding of what it means to be human. The philosophy of phenomenology attempts to provide a description of general characteristics of lived experiences, but the psychology of phenomenology acknowledges that meaningful experiences are the fundamental locus of knowledge (Polkinghorne, 1989). From the lived experiences of participants in this study, the research gains its knowledge to better capture the essence of surviving Hurricane Katrina. It extensively studies a specific group of subjects in search of the related patterns and meanings from their conscious experience. Investigating the consciousness allows an understanding of the meanings behind human behavior. Polkinghorne stated that human behavior is an expression of meaningful experience rather than a mechanically learned response to stimuli. The experience of Hurricane Katrina was not in the control of those who survived it. This was not simply a response, it was a meaningful experience with each action altering lives for means of survival. Phenomenology seeks to describe beyond cause and effect, to understand the meaning of experience and the variety that exists between those who undergo a particular phenomenon. No one experience will be the same, because no person is identical regardless of circumstance. This research gives voice to the individual and their descriptions of lived experience.

The research questions explored their lived experiences and the knowledge of the key participants through semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2009). Keeping with the philosophy of phenomenology, the interview questions are designed to be open-ended in order allow the key participants to tell their story in their own words. The interview questionnaire is provided in Appendix A (pp. 122- 123). Additional questions will be used as needed to further probe for rich information. The focus is on the subject's experienced meaning instead of a description of their behaviors. The interview questions seek to answer the research questions and discover essential attributes of the phenomenon. Interviews allow people to explain the phenomena from their own perspective and using their own language. These conversations are structured and completed with purpose that is defined by the researcher. Brinkmann and Kvale (2014) decided that the interview is neither an objective nor a subjective method since its essence is inter-subjective interaction. The purpose of the qualitative interview is to gather descriptions and provide interpretations of the meaning of what is being described (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). Qualitative research interview allows the investigated participants to express the essence of the phenomena.

Gathering of Data

Key Participants

Participants were interviewed in the place where the original trauma occurred, in their home of New Orleans. The phenomena can better be understood when seen in context, (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014) and the context of the interview given in a home environment produces familiarity or comfort. The researcher conducted interviews in the homes of the participants or another setting that was comfortable for the participant (office, libraries, etc.). The interview situation itself is specific for knowledge production if the interview environment

creates a container for safe exploration (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). By going into the participants' home, there is an established level of safety, which will add in the exploration of their lived experiences. The interviews were conducted face to face, over Skype and by telephone. The phenomenon is being investigated through interviews. The interview creates a conversation between the researcher and the participant (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2014). The context of that conversation can be done in several ways.

The key participants were chosen because of their direct experience with Hurricane Katrina. There were 10 key participants including five males and five females. No specific race or ethnicity was sought to gather a cross section of the community and to collect comprehensive data that is representative of the Greater New Orleans Area. The selection criteria for inclusion in the study were individuals who were directly impacted and displaced residents of the Gulf Coast during Hurricane Katrina and who were able to describe their experiences of the phenomenon being investigated. Individuals needed to have the capacity to self-reflect. This study included adult perspectives of trauma. The participants were 25 and older, so that during the time that Hurricane Katrina occurred they were at least in their adolescence. If the participants were adolescent at the time, their language and ability to access emotions allowed them to tell the story from their point of view.

The participants must have evacuated during the storm and also returned to live in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. As one of the areas most impacted by the trauma, and most covered by the media, New Orleans provides a unique collective perspective of the hurricane, that this research aims to challenge in individual stories. This is a requirement of the participants in order to understand the experience of being ejected from their homes and

returning to a place impacted by a hurricane. The participants were able to communicate proficiently in English, and there was a shared understanding of the interview material. The participants were to be relatively free of any mental illness that would exacerbate pre-existing psychiatric conditions. Careful attention and great care was taken by the principal researcher to monitor any possible signs of re-traumatization. The participants were notified that their participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point. If re-traumatization were to occur, the participants were to be referred to mental health services for follow up care.

Recruitment

When selecting participants for phenomenological research, this question was raised: *Do you have the experience I am looking for?* (Englander, 2012, p. 19). It is, therefore, the role of the researcher to recruit and select key participants because of their lived experience with this unique phenomenon (Englander, 2012). The method of recruitment was accomplished through outreach to social service agencies and cultural centers because of their intimate contact and unique role in the community in the Greater New Orleans Area. Working through community agencies provided participants that have experiences of this natural disaster. It also provided a sample of the population willing to recall their stories. The participants contacted the primary researcher, if they were interested in engaging in the proposed study. The primary researcher assessed their criteria in participating in the study.

Instrumentation

Demographic Questionnaire

Participants reported their gender, age, ethnicity/ race, marital/relationship status, number of children in the household, educational level, employment status, and religious/spiritual belief as part of the initial survey (See Appendix E, pp. 128-129).

Quantitative Measures

Brief COPE Inventory

This measure rated the participants' experience of coping with stress in their life since Hurricane Katrina. The Brief COPE Inventory (Carver, 1997) is a 28-item measure assessing the use of various coping behaviors (See Appendix F, pp. 130-131). The Brief COPE comprises 14 sub scales consisting of two items each. The sub scales are: self-distraction, active coping, positive reframing, acceptance, planning, self-blame, religion, denial, humor, substance use, behavioral disengagement, venting, seeking social support for emotional reasons, and seeking social support for instrumental reasons (Chai, Shepard and Billington, 2012). It is a validated short version of the COPE Inventory (Carver et al. 1989). Participants were asked to identify the extent to which they were doing the behavior that each question states and not to answer based on the effectiveness of the coping strategy (Devonport & Lane, 2014). Questions were answered using a four-point Likert scale (1 = I haven't been doing this at all; 4 = I've been doing this a lot). Permission was given on the webpage where the inventory was retrieved (See Appendix H, p. 134-136).

Posttraumatic Growth Inventory

This inventory provided a measure of the negative and positive outcomes in the aftermath of trauma and points to the factors related to the measured change since Hurricane Katrina. The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996) is a 21-item inventory assessing various factors of change (See Appendix G, pp. 132-133). There are five factors in which the participants measured perceived change: relating to others, new possibilities, personal strengths, spiritual change and appreciation of life. Participants were asked to identify the extent to which they experienced change in the area described. Questions were answered using a six-point Likert scale (0 = I did not experience this change as a result of my crisis; 5 = I did experience this change to a very great degree as a result of my crisis). The authors provided permission for use and the inventory was sent through email (See Appendix H, p. 134-136).

Qualitative Measure

Research Interview

The interview is an interpersonal engagement that encourages the participant to share the details of their experience (Polkinghorne, 1989). The interview sought to discover meaning through two methods of inquiry. The first method utilizes questions that allowed the researcher to seek how meaning presents itself in experience. The second method, through the examination and discussion of artifacts, allowed the researcher to explore how objects influence the conscious experience of a phenomenon. Memories of artifacts may evoke information not assessed during the interview and provide an additional meaningful object to their lived experience. The semi-structured interview asked participants to describe their narratives

of their hurricane experience, their descriptions of loss and the perception of measured change. Open-ended questions encouraged participants to share the information they considered to be most relevant. The questions surrounding posttraumatic growth did not specifically ask for information related to positive growth or about negative change in the experience. This allowed the participants to create their own meaning of change and to avoid creating an expectation from the researcher/interviewer in either direction. The interview process allowed for a meaningful exploration for the participants. As they told their stories, it created another level of meaning making. The participants were asked all questions on the interview appendix and participants encouraged people to elaborate when the meaning is unclear (See Appendix A, pp. 122-123).

Materials

Participants were also encouraged to bring or discuss artifacts that reflect the conscious experience of the hurricane and their return home. The artifacts were any objects that were representative of meaning for the participants. Artifacts allowed the researcher to pursue new leads on information meaningful to the participant that may have not been present in the interview questions. It allows the participant to bring their conscious lived experience and a meaningful object that is representative to them of their narrative (Norum, 2008). The inclusion of an artifact is done in order to capture the experience and perspective of each participant as truly and completely as possible. Participants were also be asked to clarify answers when information was incomplete or unclear. The interview length was approximately 90 minutes but varied between participants.

Procedures for Data Collection

The participants who met the criteria for the study received a letter of introduction explaining the purpose of the research and the procedures that were utilized in gathering data. The participants were given an informed consent form to sign agreeing to their participation and recording of the project. The researcher explained the purpose of the study verbally to the key participants to ensure that everything was understood. Once the informed consent was understood and signed, the participants were given a brief demographic questionnaire to gather background information.

After the completion of the questionnaire, the Brief COPE Inventory was completed, measuring their current level of coping. The Brief COPE Inventory gauges how individuals are able to cope currently and the interview that precedes it will explore how they were able to cope in the past. The additional data collection confirms the perspective of coping abilities. The interview followed the inventory. Interviews were conducted to describe and record the stories of displacement, abandonment and given titles of the hurricane survivors. Participants were encouraged to include meaningful artifacts that may relate to their journey following Hurricane Katrina. Following the interview, the participants completed the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory to provide a measure of positive and negative outcomes in the aftermath of trauma and the factors related to measured change.

Participants were reminded that breaks are allowed, if needed. They were also informed that to protect their identity, they would be provided with a pseudonym in their written descriptions. The interview lasted approximately 60 minutes with each participant answering a series of questions related to the research questions. There was a 30 minute follow up

interview to ensure accuracy and to provide an opportunity for expansion. The follow up interview was conducted two to three weeks after the initial interview. The interview questions explored what life was like prior to the hurricane, their experience of the hurricane, and the influences of the changes that have occurred since.

A video recorder was used to capture the images and voices of the willing participants during the interview process. The researcher also took notes during the interview process. The visual recording allowed their stories to be seen, heard and understood in on a more complex level. Visual recording assisted in identifying non-verbal communication that participants could clarify in the follow up interview. Participants' awareness was directed towards their own experience. The participants in both verbal and nonverbal material provided the content from the interviews. The video provided the nonverbal and the written transcript helped search for verbal meaning.

Unstructured, open-ended interviews produced a better understanding of participants' viewpoints and identified their unique responses of their own lived experiences. As a result, they were not be driven by the researchers' preexisting understanding of their experiences. Linley and Joseph (2004) believed that because of the limitations of closed-ended questionnaires, open-ended response methodologies are preferred to increase the knowledge of this relatively new construct. Gambone (2009) suggested that the best method for developing an accurate and comprehensive assessment of lived experience and growth is to create a standard questionnaire for the specific traumatic event. This research assessed the lived experience of Hurricane Katrina based on analysis of the participants' responses to open-ended questions seeking to understand their descriptions of experience and possible growth.

As the span of time since Hurricane Katrina approaches ten years, the primary researcher was requesting information about artifacts from the past. Although Crucci and Luminet (2006) show that flashbulb memories can occur with traumatic events, which can increase the likelihood of an accurate memory, the researcher sought further information from artifacts. The information from artifacts had the potential to be helpful in reviving the memory as it was during that time. The participant had a choice to disclose or describe their artifact of choice, but also maintained the right not to discuss any items. The artifacts may be any item produced or recovered from the experience of Katrina until two years after the event occurred. The reasoning behind the two-year gap reflects the period of recovery and transition (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995), since most individuals were still transitioning home. It may aid in the value of their stories if key participants could bring in some artifacts from the time period that relates to their experience of Hurricane Katrina. Artifacts could be writings done recently after Katrina, photographs, or important items that are reminiscent of the experience/time period. The results of data collection produced descriptions of the phenomenon. Once the data had been transcribed, follow up interviews were conducted to ensure clarity and accuracy for selected items of importance.

Procedures for Data Analysis

The process of data analysis of the research was interpreting the meaning of the material collected, which was done by interpreting the data. In searching for the meanings that add to the phenomenon, the study focused on the lived experiences of the key participants by analyzing their data to gain an understanding of how meaning was created through their perceptions of Hurricane Katrina. The process of phenomenological investigation aims to gather raw descriptions from people who have experienced Hurricane Katrina. The researcher engaged in

the process of analyzing descriptions to discover meaningful elements that make the experience in order to present a clear and articulate description of the experience. Through reviewing the videos and transcripts, the data revealed significant statements from the lived experience. Taking those significant statements and creating meaning units of the experiences allowed the research to make sure that every meaning was brought to full awareness. From the meaning units, themes emerged that can be linked to the data given by the key participants.

Data analysis for phenomenology is the discovery of meaningful descriptions from specific narratives of experiences. The process of deriving meaning is done through reduction. Through the Giorgi (1985) method, this research was analyzed. Giorgi was a follower of Husserl and believed that phenomenological reduction was necessary to make research findings more precise (Phillips-Pula, Strunk & Pickler, 2011). During the process of reduction, the researcher brackets personal experience about the phenomenon to prevent contamination, which is the search for the essence. According to Husserl, the essence is that which holds the aspects of the phenomenon together and allows the research to present comprehensive findings to others.

The process of data analysis following the Giorgi method is conducted in six steps (Phillips-Pula et al., 2011). The first step is to read and reread descriptions of the experience to get a sense of the whole picture that each participant presents. Before dissecting the protocol/ interview, it is important to understand the entire perspective of the individual. The next step is to bracket or divide descriptions into blocks by identifying significant terms that seem to express a self-contained meaning from the researcher's psychological perspective. The researcher records each time that there is a transition in meaning, which requires the judgment

of the researcher. Each block of experience creates a meaning unit that constitutes the experience of the participants.

The third step describes the meaning of each unit and relates each of them to the dominant themes of study. The researcher takes the raw interview data and transforms it into concise descriptions of meaning that dominate each block or unit. Transformation uses common sense language and is guided by the phenomenological perspective. The transformation seeks to understand what is truly being described in the meaning unit. The aim is to gather the essential information that allows for an understanding of the psychological phenomenon that is being produced from the participant's experiences (Polkinghorne, 1989). In the first half of the data analysis, the researcher gains an understanding and transformation of the data has occurred.

The second half of the analysis undergoes another transformation, synthesis and development of a meaningful description of the essence of the experience of this phenomenon. The fourth step is to synthesize units into a consistent description of the phenomenon. The descriptions of meaning units are now integrated with the research questions. A second transformation occurs where aspects of meaning units are drawn out of the research topic and are described from a psychological perspective. The next step analyzes the transformed units focusing on intentionality. The step focuses on synthesizing transformed meaning units into a descriptive statement of essential non-redundant psychological meanings. The process of synthesis is tying together and integrating meaning units into a consistent general description of experience. It is the psychological eidetic reduction of grasping the essential elements from the re-described transformed units (Polkinghorne, 1989).

The first five steps occur for each protocol. The final step is to develop a description of the common experience of all of the participants of the study. The researcher directly synthesizes the transformed meaning units from all protocols into a final general description. This centers on those aspects of experience that are trans-situational or descriptive of general experience. The descriptive general experience was creating knowledge through its use of the literature. The researcher gains an understanding of the data, through corroborating or disconfirming the existing data found in the literature (Finlay, 2009). The analysis of the data was understood through the theory of Object Relations and its understanding of trauma and loss. The aim of phenomenological inquiry is to reveal and unravel the essence and interrelationships that exist in the phenomenon of those who experienced Hurricane Katrina.

From the Object Relations perspective, the data is understood through the relationship to home and what that means for the participants of the study. Their relationship to home reflects their attachment to their sense of security and safety that came from home and community. The trauma of losing that sense of home creates a core conflict. The core conflict is understood through the core psychodynamic problem of trauma (Summers and Barber, 2010). Conflict is experiencing the ambiguous loss of home, the participants knowing New Orleans as a place of comfort but losing some of that following Hurricane Katrina. The hurricane resulted in both a psychological and physical loss. Herman (1998) noted that essential components of psychological trauma are feelings of disempowerment in self and disconnection from others.

In researching the experience of growth, the recovery process of trauma was highlighted. The process of recovery occurs in three phases: establishing safety, retelling their narrative and reconnection with others (Herman, 1998). For the participants of this research,

there was an establishment of physical safety through evacuation or self-protection, there was a retelling of their stories with those who experienced Hurricane Katrina and again with the researcher, and the reconnection with others was seen in the participants love for their city and the people who came back.

Reliability and Validity of the Phenomenological Research

A very important step in data analysis was establishing trustworthiness criteria. It ensures that the themes discovered from the data are reliable, valid and that the information reported can be a trustworthy source of information (Creswell, 2009). Validity ordinarily refers to the concept that an idea is well grounded and well supported and therefore one can have confidence in the study. However, in regards to a phenomenological approach, the researcher must present a sound argument that is able to resist doubt or debate (Polkinghorne, 1989). To ensure validity, two types of inferences must be made in order to reach findings that are fully supported. The raw data must be transformed into phenomenological informed psychological expressions and the synthesis of transformed meaning units must present a general structural description to produce a conclusive study.

There are several ways to ensure reliability in phenomenological research. The aspect of shared experience by the researcher and key participants may also enhance the trustworthiness, because the researcher is not an outsider and has also experienced the process of trauma, loss and recovery. This allows for perhaps a deeper understanding because of a shared history and the participants may be inclined to share or reveal more material. By engaging in a thorough and rich description of the data, it allows the description of the phenomenon to be more transferable. The follow up interview strengthens the data collected and confirms the correct interpretation that can help to make certain that the study is credible.

Using multiple methods of data collection facilitates a deeper understanding of lived experiences. It triangulates the data allowing the creation of more valid and reliable results. Triangulation is using more than one method to collect data on the same topic. The objective of triangulation is to capture different dimensions of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). A single method cannot adequately uncover a phenomenon (Patton, 1999). Denzin (1978) and Patton (1999) identify types of triangulation that can be used in gaining a deeper comprehensive understanding. Methods of triangulation check out the consistency of the results generated by different data collection methods (Patton, 1999). These different methods illuminate complementary aspects of the same phenomenon and point to differences in the sample to provide insights to the individual in the phenomenon. The different methods develop a point of reference from past to present about the coping abilities of the individual with the lived experience of this unique phenomenon.

Ethical Concerns

An important aspect to any research study is considering the ethical issues that may arise during the process (Creswell, 2009). Phenomenological research involves data from people about their personal experiences. It is the researchers' obligation and ethical responsibility to protect the key participants from unintentional harm (APA, 2010). This job includes respecting the rights and wishes of participants, and making them aware of their voluntary participation and their right to decline to answer anything that they are not comfortable saying. In regards to this research, participants have the right to withdraw without explanation.

Due to the type of research investigation, the participants will not have anonymity. However, they will be provided confidentiality. This research involves a collection of personal information and it is the responsibility of the researcher not to disclose their information

to the public or any unauthorized individuals (APA, 2010). After the participants sign the consent form, they will be assigned a number for the duration of the research and their personal information will be linked only to their number. The interviews will be video recorded and during the recording, the interviewee will be given a coded number to use for the purposes of the interview. The recording would only be shown in the dissertation defense with the permission and consent of the participants (option provided on informed consent). The interview recording and transcriptions will be placed in a separate secure password protected file. The files will also be backed up on an independent storage device. The files will be stored for 7 years and kept secure until their permitted disposal. The disposal involves deleting all electronic copies of information that may link the personal identity of the participants.

Benefits and Risks

In the proposed study, there is a possible risk for psychological harm in re-experiencing emotions related to the retelling of their lived experiences. The interview brings forth sensitive information about Hurricane Katrina. It is important to provide resources for counseling if needed. The rights and the welfare of the participants were protected by providing full awareness and disclosing the participants' rights ensuring their comfort and safety. The benefits of this study will be for participants to learn something new about themselves, by gaining new meanings in relation to their experience of this trauma. It may be a healing experience to share their story and acquire a deeper understanding of their own resiliency. Their participation has the possible benefit of bringing awareness to core beliefs, and resolves conflicts from residual trauma. The experience of re-telling their narratives may provide a sense of relief and/or emotional or psychological growth. Although there are benefits for growth and healing, there is risk in this study because it is sensitive information about a past experience. It

would be important to debrief with participants to prevent any possible harm as a result of the interview.

Strengths and Limitations

In viewing this study, there are some noted strengths and limitations. A noted strength is gaining an individual understanding of how a phenomenon of a natural disaster can influence the understanding of posttraumatic growth and the experience of ambiguous loss in the years following an impactful event or perceived trauma. A limitation may be the time that has passed since the hurricane, which might make it more difficult to recall everything accurately. The sampling method may also be a limitation because it may be less transferable to others who have experienced this phenomenon. This study focus is limited to the adult populations who were residents of New Orleans during Katrina and have returned to their residence following the storm. The reason for this limitation is to gain understanding of growth and recovery from individuals who returned to the area of trauma. Another strength is gaining the personal lived experiences of the key participants as opposed to the media's collective view. The research gains authenticity of their personal accounts from a credible source. In addition, by receiving the participants' honest experiences, it improves the credibility of the study, which can be seen as another strength.

This research seeks to understand the psychological attempt to attach ambiguous loss of the home they once knew. As the researcher and an individual who was affected by Hurricane Katrina, there is some bias that my experience of Hurricane Katrina may be similar to those who will participate in the study from the Greater New Orleans area. The aim is to increase the knowledge of trauma, resilience and growth in the midst of a natural disaster. This information will be utilized to further understanding of the topic. There will be an expansion

of experience, by seeking meaningful elements of the participants' lived experiences to better understand this phenomenon. Due to the focus of the research, there are other areas that allow for further investigation and expansion of posttraumatic growth.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to obtain an understanding of the lived experiences and perceived changes among 10 individuals who experienced Hurricane Katrina and the results of its displacement. This study explored (a) lived experiences, (b) the influence of exposure to natural disasters, and (c) identified changes over time. The research questions addressed what are the lived experiences of those individuals, labeled as “refugees” during Hurricane Katrina and how has their displacement and the lapse of time shaped their current personal identity and growth?

There were six main interview questions with follow-up questions to provide more clarity. In addition to the questions, the participants were given two inventories to assist in the understanding of this phenomenon. The Brief COPE Inventory was reflective of the coping skills the participants assessed to handle their displacement. The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory was used to measure their experience of change or lack thereof following Hurricane Katrina. These resources were used to answer the research question and each individual component was used to gather information to better understand the research phenomenon.

Demographics of the Participants

Ten adult participants (five males and five females) were interviewed for the purpose of this dissertation. The participants ranged from age 25 to 61 years of age, with a mean age of 39. All but one of the participants were born in New Orleans, but all individuals were present prior to Hurricane Katrina and returned to live following their displacement.

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethnicity/ Race	Religious Beliefs	Marital status	Parent	Education	Employment Status
Bailey	53	Male	Caucasian	Jewish	Single	No	Post Grad Degree	Employed
Eli	25	Male	African American	Christian	Single	No	Some College	Employed
Charlie	38	Male	Caucasian	Jewish	Single	No	College Graduate	Employed
Morgan	61	Male	African American	Baptist	Di- vorced	Yes	Some College	Employed for Wages
Taylor	25	Male	Latino/ Hispanic	Roman Catholic	Single	No	Some College	Student Military
Alex	53	Female	Caucasian	Roman Catholic	Single	Pet owner	College Graduate	Employed
Frankie	30	Female	African American	Spiritual	Married	Yes	Post Grad Degree	Employed
Harper	53	Female	African American	Spiritual	Di- vorced	Yes	College Graduate	Employed
Kennedy	26	Female	African American	None	Part- nered	Step- mother	Some College	Student/ Employed
Jaime	26	Female	African- Latino	Spiritual	Sepa- rated	No	Some College	Retired/ Self-Em- ployed

Participants' Experience of Hurricane Katrina

The participants described their lives prior to Hurricane Katrina in a very similar manner. They stated that there was sense of normalcy and comfort in their daily routines. The participants expressed a sense of closeness within their communities and connection with the neighbors around them. There was a sense of safety established in the communities because

everyone knew each other. This was described as a part of the culture of New Orleans. It was due to the southern hospitality and the comfort of knowing your neighbors and looking out for your community.

There were three exceptions to this feeling of comfort and security. These three participants were in transitioning phases in three very different ways. Charlie had moved to New Orleans from Mississippi about a year prior to the hurricane and was still adjusting to the culture of the city. Frankie just finished college and was in the process of finding herself and what direction she wanted to take. She stated that she did not feel grounded or very connected during this time. Alex had lost her mother just before the hurricane, so she was still mourning her loss and dealing with the shock of her death. She stated that she and her mother had lived together for the past 11 years, so the loss was felt very deeply. The varying life circumstances provided some with a sense of normalcy and others a period of adjustment prior to this major upheaval due to a natural disaster.

The ten participants had varying experiences during the hurricane. When the news approached of the storm being a possible category 5, the mayor informed the city to evacuate or go to the Superdome or Convention Center to take the necessary precautions to ensure their safety. Out of the ten participants, eight willingly evacuated prior to the storm. Six of the participants described the process as a “classic evacuation” in which they would pack a few things and leave for a couple of days to return to some minor damage. Harper described it as something that was not taken seriously because the damage had never been so extensive. Some of the participants described it as a mini-vacation because they were often excused from work and school, while others felt it was a hassle.

“That was a commonplace thing. We always did evacuate. We knew how to evacuate, so that wasn’t so bad. Usually, we evacuated for 2 or 3 days, we have a good time and the wind blows, then we go back home. The aftermath of this one, when we found out we couldn’t go back was when all the bad stuff really started.” –Harper

This idea of the classic evacuation was not seen as anything that created great worry. Individuals left just in case something were to happen, but never had the expectation of anything happening. Others evacuated to avoid certain situations of limited resources that may occur with going through a storm, like the loss of electricity.

Participants Frankie and Taylor debating leaving the city for this storm because they did not want to deal with the traffic and process of evacuation. It included searching for gas and hotels and being in cars for hours, if there would only be minor damages as a result of the storm. While they debated their choice to leave, they both were thankful that they did. Bailey described evacuating as a serious precaution and it was something that he always did when there was a threat of a storm. Bailey would pack up his car with all his valuables and important documents and enough clothes to avoid doing laundry. He noted that ever since he experienced Hurricane Betsy as a young child, that he would take the extra steps to be prepared every time there was a hurricane threat.

“I evacuated to Houston before the hurricane hit and I was watching the news on Saturday and they showed the map where Katrina was going up the whole gulf and looked like it was moving this way, so I started packing up and loaded the car with everything. I guess my experience when I was a child; I had been in Hurricane Betsy. I was maybe 3 or 4 years old, but my earliest memories are leaving Gentilly Woods to go to my grandmother’s house uptown, because she had a duplex that was raised. I remember the weather being so bad and the wind whipping by. I remember being without electricity after Betsy and that’s the turning point for our family with the storms, because up to Betsy, nobody evacuated. After Betsy, we started evacuating.” –Bailey

The two participants who did not evacuate had different reasoning behind their choices. Morgan was working in the prison system in central Louisiana at the time and as he

was returning to New Orleans from a shift at the prison, he noticed the influx of traffic in the opposite direction and made nothing of it. He arrived home and was updated on the hurricane and made the decision not to leave. He spoke about remembering his experience with Hurricane Betsy and how completely different it was as an adult. He stated he felt that he had no control and felt he had lost his everyday freedoms and choices. The fourth day following the storm, he described being surrounded by death and being treated less than human as he was shipped off on the interstate to a safer location.

“Katrina hits. That Saturday morning, when I got off because I was working the morning shift, I'm driving out in the east coming back to New Orleans and I see, I'm looking at all these people leaving going westbound. I'm too tired anyway. It didn't faze me and I said, "Well, good. I got a clean shot to get home." Go home go to bed. After the four days of being stuck in Katrina, that Wednesday morning, we were at the Causeway and I-10, when the helicopter was blowing ... Same stuff that you see on TV where the helicopter's blowing trash all over here by the dogs running everywhere and crossing over dead bodies. People just packed up and everything. I wound up being evacuated to Houston.” –Morgan

Alex was born and raised in New Orleans and never evacuated in her entire life. When the news began to broadcast the severity of the storm, she did not plan on going anywhere. She stated she could not accept that it was happening. Both of her parents passed away in the house she lived in and it was hard for her to leave the house and the memories, even though there were reports saying city would be destroyed. She also had 14 pets at the time and was unable to take all of them to safety. She planned to stay and accepted the possibility that she might die if she stayed in the city. She was convinced to go to the Superdome, where she stayed very briefly due to the horrible conditions. Her brother picked her up to go back to her house and get a few things to ride out the storm downtown in an office building. When she returned to her house, she was hysterical and wanted to be left to die. During her stay downtown, chaos ensued.

“That was pretty much my adventure in Katrina. I heard a lot of shooting. We were attacked by looters when they were clearing the city one night. I’ll never forget that. I still have nightmares about Katrina to this day. That’s one nightmare I have every night is my brother had locked me and another woman in a fourth floor conference room, gave us a walkie talkie and a hand gun, and he said if anybody comes through this door that’s not us, kill them, because they’re coming to kill you.” –Alex

She spent two weeks in the office building downtown with threats of being attacked daily. She described her experience like a scene from a zombie movie, some struggling to survive and others taking advantage. She eventually returned to her home that had some damage but no flooding and she lived in her home for the next five weeks without water and other utilities.

A common conviction shared by the participants, both those who evacuated and those who did not, was the disbelief that this event would ever happen to the extent that it did. The belief in the “classic evacuation” was strongly associated with the thought that everything would be fine. There would be some minor scrapes to recover from but no serious injury. Instead there was a major road to recovery ahead. No one was prepared for the degree of damage that occurred and for the reaction of how the city and its people would respond.

Emerging Thematic Categories of Individual Participants

As a result of displacement, the participants experienced varying degrees of change in their lives. The impact of the disaster and how the country responded influenced the media portrayal of the events. The participant’s personal experiences shaped how they viewed their identities. Events following the hurricane measured their perception of change whether they believed growth occurred in spite of the losses or if they only experienced loss or they were not able to attribute change due to the events of the hurricane.

Through the process of analysis, the research yielded thematic categories developed from the themes and patterns that emerged from the interviews. Those thematic categories are: the ability to cope, the understanding of identity, the ambiguous loss of home, and the

perception of growth. These four areas of focus are used to develop an understanding of this phenomenon. Each thematic category is addressed in order to help better understand the experience of displacement, the “refugee” identity, and the impact of traumatic change that may have happened for some of the participants as they returned to the place whether their displacement occurred. The thematic categories include the elements that make up the different categories. Quotes are taken from participant interviews and included in the text to illuminate the thematic categories and use the participants’ voice to tell their story. The participants are assigned pseudonyms to protect their identities.

Thematic Category 1: Ability to Cope/BCI

“Started smoking a lot heavier, drinking. I did a little meditating. I talked a lot to what I felt was understanding people. What I found was people who didn’t go through it felt like we were exaggerating or making a big deal out of nothing. Oh, you got all this money, what are you tripping off? It really wasn’t about money. It was the loss of family, the loss of community. People, who didn’t go through it, didn’t really get it. I found myself sticking more to people who actually understood because I actually met some people.” - Harper

The participants were given the Brief COPE Inventory to assess their personal coping styles during this natural disaster and the results of its displacement. The participants described common behaviors of distracting themselves from the realities of the event, while also creating plans of how to deal with the effects of their displacement. Stroebe and Schut (1999) describe this process of oscillation between loss oriented focus and restoration oriented focus in their dual model of grief. For some of the participants, the process of coping was not necessary, while other participants relied heavily on using their coping skills to find relief from their experience of shock and loss following Hurricane Katrina.

Participant’s Profiles

Each individual subject profile is presented in this analysis in order to provide a con-

text for the participant's coping skills as well as to assist in the understanding of the phenomena being studied. The profiles present which of the 14 subscale items (self-distraction, active coping, denial, substance use, use of emotional support, use of instrumental support, behavioral disengagement, venting, positive reframing, planning, humor, acceptance, religion and self-blame) the participants reported doing as a part of their coping process.

Men's Coping Styles

Bailey did not report many coping skills because he believes he was not as impacted by this hurricane as he was as a child impacted by Hurricane Betsy. He reported infrequent use of acceptance, humor and religion to cope.

Eli reported often using active coping to do something about his then current situation, often having a positive reframe towards the situation and an acceptance of the experience of Hurricane Katrina. He reported sometimes using outside support, having work as a distraction, creating plans and the use of religion as other coping skills.

Charlie reported moving towards acceptance of the event as a means to cope. He also noted trying to have a positive outlook on the situation. He reported seldom venting and joking about the issues and actively trying to plan for how he would start again in New Orleans, only a year later.

Morgan reported actively trying to fix the situation he is in to make things better. He noted having some acceptance of the series of events that followed Hurricane Katrina, but he does not want to learn to live with his prolonged loss. He reported having little emotional support but sometimes turns towards prayer and tries to have a positive reframe when creating plans to progress.

Taylor reported often being distracted by work and other events. He stated that he uses substances to help him get through it. He noted trying to look at the positive perspective of this event that eventually led him to the army and helping others. He noted sometimes feeling stuck and trying to make things better by seeking support. He reported being critical of himself and what he has done since the hurricane and stated he sometimes jokes about the situation as another way to cope.

Women's Coping Styles

Alex reported having an acceptance of the events and sometimes giving up on trying to deal the impact of the hurricane. She stated that she sometimes seeks advice and emotional support to look for the positive side of the situation, but more often she takes actions in being prepared in the event of another Hurricane Katrina. She noted buying lots of supplies and feeling over-prepared but noted that it is a helpful distraction for her.

Frankie reported having an acceptance of the way the events unfolded because she believes that everything happens for a reason. She noted trying to see the positive that came from the event, despite the negative experience. She stated that she sometimes would turn to the emotional support of others, actively trying to improve the situation, which required a little planning and the use of spirituality to cope.

Harper reporting venting as a helpful way to cope by expressing those negative feelings. She stated trying to have a positive outlook on the situation and searching for the good that can come from it and stated she has an acceptance for the way things happened. She noted distracting herself with the use of work and other activities and stated that she used substances to feel better at times. She noted some self-blame for how the situation was handled. She reported seeking comfort in prayer and creating plans for the future.

Kennedy reported sometimes planning and addressing what things she could do to improve the situation. She reported learning to live with the changes and reported seldom using distractions through substance use, venting and joking or seeking support as a means to cope.

Jaime reported often using the distractions of work and other activities to think less about the events that occurred. She reported few periods of self-blame for her actions. She noted sometimes using substances to cope and giving up dealing with the situation. She stated that she is actively working to make her situation better and creating plans for herself. She reported trying to see the positive side of the situation and sometimes joking about it because it was an impactful event that happened. She stated that sometimes she seeks comfort in religion.

All participants reported no indication of denial about the event occurring. All of the participants were accepting the fact that Hurricane Katrina interrupted their home environment. The acceptance of the reality that Hurricane Katrina happened was endorsed by most participants, in viewing the other half of the subscale of acceptance the participants' answers varied. The remaining half of the acceptance subscale identified the ability to learn to live with the results of Hurricane Katrina. Bailey and Morgan reported not accepting this idea, while the other participants endorsed it as a way of coping.

Dealing with Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath involves a process of grieving the loss of what was and an acceptance of the changes that have come. Boss (1999) discuss the concept of ambiguous loss, where there is an attempt to make sense of what has happened and balance what is known with what is unknown. In the process of coping, some things can be under the control of the individual, while other aspects are not. The use of self-blame gives the participants some control of the known in dealing with the aftermath, even if they are not

able to make sense of the unknown pieces of the natural disaster. All males, except Taylor, did not report any self-blame, while the female participants had some seldom reports of self-blame from Harper and Jaime. The feelings of self-blame were not attributed to the event of Hurricane Katrina itself, but to their response to handling the situation. The self-blame was rarely done as a method of coping but was present among those participants.

In working with the known in the midst of a disaster, participants had control on what they chose to focus on. Many participants still participated in self-distracting behaviors. The participants distracted themselves by working, going to the movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping and shopping. Some participants reported using substances like drugs and alcohol to help them cope. Distractions from dealing with the natural disaster impacts are seen as an active part of the dual process model. The dual process model identifies that grief isn't linear. It is an oscillation where the issues are confronted at times and at other times avoided (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). Another means of moving away from the event is done through disengaging from thoughts and actions that connect to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Behavioral disengagement was not reported by any of the males, but reported by three of the females but with only one half of the subscale. Alex, Harper, and Jaime acknowledged sometimes giving up on trying to deal with the aftermath, but these participants also reported having actively coped to make their situations better.

The varying coping styles of the participants reflected their personal experiences with Hurricane Katrina and other previous hurricanes, their personal characteristics of resiliency and their perception of support. Tedeschi and Kilmer (2005) believed that people who display resilience have adjusted successfully despite adversity. Three main variables were identified in facilitating positive adaptation under in risk situations; Tedeschi and Kilmer identified

those variables as individual characteristics, warm family environment, and other context variables, such as outside support. The participants did not report often using instrumental support for their coping means, but did rely on personal characteristics to adapt during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

Thematic Category 2: Understanding Identity

I don't think they saw us as humans for a while. There was a lot of looting. There was a lot of crime. You had an element to rise up and take advantage of it. You had a lot of elderly people. People who couldn't leave. The elderly, the handicapped, who had nowhere to go. I don't know if we were discounted because we were New Orleanians, or because it was the south, or because we stayed behind, like we were the trash that stayed behind. –Alex

For most of the participants, a strong part of their identity was connected to being a New Orleanian. The culture of connection and comfort of home was a part of their lives and the identity they had built, but in a matter of days their sense of home changed and that culture of connection was altered. Hurricane Katrina shattered the basic assumptions of home. In a matter of days, everything changed and the institutions that were to provide protection, no longer seem to do so (Greenberg, 2012). Two of the participants were present in New Orleans to witness the change of the city first hand, while the other participants had evacuated and experienced this change through the presentation of the media.

Media's Misunderstanding

The participants believed that there was a misunderstanding of the culture of New Orleans and the people who resided there. The classic evacuation mindset of many of the residents in New Orleans was not seen or known by the outside media. The media at large only gained knowledge of the experience of the hurricane once the unimaginable had occurred for the citizens of New Orleans. This misunderstanding was reflected in the media's presentation of Hurricane Katrina.

The participants who evacuated and watched the media report the news as the city of New Orleans became engulfed in water witnessed a surreal reality. There was shock and disbelief in watching the events unfold. Charlie described his experience of shock and sadness for others. He had just settled in New Orleans but knew individuals whose whole lives were there and he felt immense sadness for them. There was worry about those who you knew that stayed behind and the lack of connection to ensure their safety. For most who evacuated, the media provided the news and updates on the conditions and the people in New Orleans. The media's misunderstanding of the culture and the gravity of the situation are believed to be the reasoning behind why the label of refugee was attributed to their situation.

Some participants believed the media showed a varying view of the events following Hurricane Katrina. Frankie believe the focus varied depending on the types of broadcast you chose to watch. There was a negative focus showing individuals looting, which for some was a method of survival and others greed. By contrast, there was the positive of people being rescued after being stuck in their homes. Frankie described watching television as a mesmerizing experience witnessing all of the suffering, because it was so raw. She debated whether or not she would evacuate and felt extremely thankful that she did. She noted that the media did not try to downplay the seriousness of the situation.

Others felt that New Orleans was portrayed in a negative light. One participant, Kennedy, reported the media was too overwhelming to continue watching the suffering. She noted that after two days, she was no longer able to handle it. It was depressing to see home in that condition and it became too hard to watch. Bailey believed there was a heavy focus on the negative aspects. He described their need to sensationalize the events that took place. He stated that it only focused on certain areas like the convention center, trying to capture the

worst and leaving those who lived in other areas clueless as to what had happened to their homes. He believed the media provided no explanation on why some were unable to evacuate, there was a lack of compassion for the suffering that was taking place and a lack of appreciation for those who stayed behind to provide aid.

Rejection of the Refugee

“Refugee” identity pointed to the unique experience of those displaced by such an extreme event. Most participants rejected the title because they believed it did not relate to their experience. Some related to the experience of the refugee due to their treatment but never identified with the title. In the refugee identity, there is a dual process of change that occurs. The outer changes are identified in the material loss, but the accompanying inner changes exist both in our conscious and unconscious processes (Kristal-Andersson, 2000). To the participants, the title refugee came with a sense of not belonging. There was distance created between the citizens of New Orleans and the rest of the country.

The participants had varying experiences of refuting the title and a range of impacts from being labeled by outsiders. Kennedy described feeling misplaced. She did not feel at home when she evacuated to Georgia but she did not feel like a refugee. Harper described her experience of displacement shifting from positive kindness to labeling and differential treatment.

“It’s past our little 3 days of clothes we had with us, so we went to get some clothes and there were things set up to give out clothes and everybody was really nice. This is within the first week after the hurricane. Everybody is really nice, really helpful... We actually turned down food because we had enough cash and things to buy food and stuff like that.... We got a few pieces of clothing, but within a week, the news media started changing toward the refugee word. I found myself personally not even telling anybody after the second week that I was even effected by Katrina because it was insulting to me that I had to be treated like a refugee rather than someone who had been harmed by a natural disaster, someone who has been paying taxes and homeowners. That’s what we are now, refugees. Well I don’t want anything from you. That’s how I felt.”

Harper was insulted by the title. She felt as a taxpayer and homeowner that she deserved better and did not want to accept the treatment that was given those to who were displaced.

Jaime felt the impact of the title in a different way. She experienced the distance of the “refugee” not only from the media but also from the people in her temporary community during her displacement. She described herself as starting to feel the suffering of the refugee, and did not accept the title but experienced the unwanted feeling from others.

“Because the media was telling everybody, “All right, the whole world, we're refugees. In reality, we had a home. Well we have homes, we still had the homes. To the next person, it was just like, “Oh, these are refugees. They just coming through for money. They coming through for this. Don't let them in your schools.” It was always a issue. I don't know, I kind of look down on myself. Like I'm not good enough to go to their school in Texas, so take me back home. They don't want me there; I don't give a crap about them.”

Jaime experienced the distance and struggled with the title because at the time she did not have a home base and was in the need of the resources being offered at the time. For some individuals, the title was connected with their need for support due to their unexpected displacement. In this period of displacement, the state of their home was for many unknown. Some were able to stay with family, others resided in hotels. As a part of the refugee experience, the participants were uprooted and rendered homeless. Some participants willingly left, others were forcibly displaced from their homes. Leaving your home behind is painful. Sometimes the pain is veiled by the task of survival at hand and other times the pain is most acutely felt (Grinberg & Grinberg, 1989).

I didn't like the refugee title, but evacuee seemed appropriate. We evacuated from New Orleans, now I'm an evacuee. Displaced, whatever you want to call me, I was homeless. You can call me what you want, I'm a homeless person at this point. You don't have to be on the street with a sign to be homeless. I was homeless in a hotel but I was still homeless. - Frankie

The titles of evacuee versus refugee for some made a difference in how they related to the experience of displacement and their experience of belonging. For others, the titles held less value in comparison to the other worries that surrounded their displacement. There was a bigger picture of loss that surrounded some participants as Hurricane Katrina altered the state of New Orleans drastically. Bailey described being more concerned with getting his home fixed and the revival of the city. He did not like the title of refugee but it did not offend him compared to other worries. Taylor also expressed bigger concerns of home. Taylor reported a lack of concern about the titles until they were used against him directly. Eli stated that the terms held little significance in comparison to his emotional turbulence at the time.

Outside of the titles of refugee or evacuee, individuals from New Orleans witnessed and experienced treatment that was not representative of their situation. The displaced persons were treated like they needed to be feared, instead of people who were in need. Harper believed the actions of those who offered aid were influenced by the race of the individuals in need. She recalled watching Red Cross pointing guns at individuals who would approach them for aid.

“Red Cross was formulated for wartime resource, to give out resources during wartime. For a natural disaster, I don’t know how you could have felt threatened by bringing water in to people who haven’t had water in days, so you knew it was something else motivating it. I believe it was race and class.” -Harper

For the two participants that remained in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, they were able to witness these experiences of harsh treatment first hand. Morgan described his experience being similar to that of a refugee but refused to accept that title. He described having a loss of freedom and experiencing harsh treatment from those who were meant to provide aid. It felt like those outside the situation did not understand what was going on.

“The media from other states don't understand what's going on. They're not used to what happen here on a regular basis. It's just the first time that it gotten that bad. People question, "Well, why do people stay?" Why people stay in California where there's brush fires and earthquakes and Arizona, brush fires and New York, snow, why people stay there when they know they got blizzards coming and you can't leave out your house. It's crazy.” -Morgan

Morgan did not understand the harsh criticism when natural disasters occur throughout the United States without individuals being labeled. The media commented on the situation without a full understanding. The other participant who remained in New Orleans during the hurricane described the media as misinformed but kind towards her personally. Alex had reporters approach her for local information about the culture and the city, but she believes the media still did not get it.

“I wasn't a refugee. I hadn't fled my country. I was still in the United States. It seemed like the way the military came in, pointing weapons at people, like we were the enemy. We really weren't. I wouldn't have expected that. I hadn't had that happen to me personally, but I saw it happen to other people. I'm an American citizen. This is still part of America. Instead offering me food and water, you point a gun at me and tell me to back up.” -Alex

The media was labeling the people of New Orleans as refugees and the individuals were treated as if they did not belong. Individuals were not approached as if they were people in need but treated like individuals who were ready to attack. Alex felt puzzled about where the media and providers of aid received this information because it altered how individuals were treated following Katrina.

“I don't know if it's their training or they didn't know, or maybe they were afraid they were going to be rushed for their supplies. I know CNN, it was hysterical. When they went out, they gave each reporter a couple cans of like, potted meat and Vienna Sausage, in case they got attacked. Throw the food and run, like it was some kind of wild kingdom episode. Throw the piece of meat and run so the lion won't attack you.” -Alex

New Orleans was a part of the identity of the participants because it was their home. The media's lack of understanding was evident in their decision to use the title of refugee.

The participants described various experiences to the refugee identity. All participants' identified some sense of worry about the future of New Orleans and what would become of their homes. The refugee experience had a dual process of change: the outer change of material loss and the inner alteration of identity. There were those who rejected the title of refugee, believed it did not describe their experience or refuted it because it altered how they were seen or treated. Some individuals did not give the titles any attention due to the bigger concerns around them.

Those who acknowledged the experience of the refugee, still rejected the title, but felt their experience had some representative aspects. For some their identity was temporarily tied to the sense of homelessness, while other individuals had more direct treatment of being the outsider, the unwanted. The ambiguous loss of home weighed on the individual while their identities were challenged by the title of the refugee.

Thematic Category 3: The Ambiguous Loss of Home

"It's almost like I get turned around and lost. I don't know it just all seems different and new. All the people are different, I just feel like we lost the most New Orleans of New Orleans people. Everybody that was in New Orleans from back in the day, everybody that established the culture we have, they're all gone... You find people like that in Atlanta, Florida and Houston and you know right away when you see them, you're from New Orleans, huh. You could just tell that culture was here and now it's not, you go in places it's still real personable and you feel like you're comfortable around everybody but it's just not the same. New Orleans was so cultured and just everybody was, I don't know. Now it doesn't seem as personable as it was and as small." - Taylor

Identity Connected to Home

The third thematic category was created because the understanding of home included both a connection to the identity of the participants and the experience of loss for the participants. The residents found it extremely difficult to explain the uniqueness of their culture, their connection to home and the changes that occurred following Hurricane Katrina. Jarrett

(2013) identified that our houses are not simply structure in which we live, but they are seen as an extension of ourselves and reflect who we are. The home has meaning, the home has memories, and it is not just where we live.

Alex described being unable to leave her home because there were so many memories of her family, her parents were connected to that place, she could not bear the idea of separating from it. She never left New Orleans for any hurricane and stated she never will, for her this is home and all that she has known. Her life is connected to that house.

For the participants of this research, displacement from their homes created a major shift. Not only were the participants pushed away from home, whether by choice or force, they returned to places that were not quite the same. Their homes and their identities had changed due to the forces of the natural disaster. Jarrett (2013) described that in the event of a natural disaster, when peoples' things are destroyed, a traumatic impact can follow because it is almost as if the individuals are grieving the loss of their identities. As individuals build homes, they tend to accumulate more things that are infused with their identity, so the sentimental value increases. Home had a strong connection to identity and for the residents of New Orleans, home was a very collective cultural spirit. New Orleans is embedded in the identity of home for some participants.

This strong connection to home entered into an ambiguous state when participants were displaced. The experience of displacement left participants in a state of ambiguous loss as the state of their homes was unknown. Boss (2006) described two types of ambiguous loss, where there is a struggle to make sense of the unknown and the known. Type One occurs when there is physical loss and psychological presence. Initially with their displacement, the participants experienced type one ambiguous loss. In this type, participants were physically absent from

their home, but there was a psychological presence of the memories of home. The memories of home extended beyond their houses but into their communities, their wards, and their city. The unknown status of their home brought great worry for most participants and there was a looming concern if their homes would remain the same as their psychological presence had remembered.

“I grew up in New Orleans East, which kind of got hit pretty much the hardest. To drive through this area and know that's where I grew up and it looked like a ghost town. It was just weird. Certain structures were still there but there were certain places that you'd drive and you knew something was there but they're just like completely gone. It's just weird.” –Frankie

As the participants were able to return home, their questions about the physical states of their homes were answered, but the other type of ambiguous loss manifested. Type Two is where there is physical presence and psychological loss (Boss, 2006). Upon returning home, few participants (Frankie, Bailey, Alex, Eli) were relieved to find that little to no damage had occurred in their homes; while the rest of the participants returned to homes that were submerged in water or no longer physically present.

“Our house was gone, literally gone we had just bought a new house, right outside of the East, Bayou Savage or something like that. Just got a house right there on the Bayou. The house wasn't on the water but, the water was in our backyard and it was up on stilts a little bit because the water would rise up. The house I guess just floated when the water came all the way up, the house just floated away. When we came back the only thing that was still there were the stilts the house was on, you know what I'm saying? Those big old poles that go in the ground that houses sit on the water, well just those poles were there. The whole house was just gone, around it was just land... No house left just the car wrapped around this tree almost, it was crazy. But no house.” –Taylor

The return home for all participants presented a psychological loss of home, that a feeling of connectedness was no longer present. The emotional comfort of safety disappeared as they entered the familiar city with unfamiliar eyes. Boss (2006) described the second type of loss of having this physical presence but psychological absence as sometimes more difficult be-

cause what is known is right in front of you but it is not quite the same. The loss was evidently felt upon return.

“It's not the same. The same people that was here before, you can tell there was a difference in the people. The well being and state of buildings and areas of activities is not the same. The people are not the same. Now, even to this day, I don't feel like I'm in New Orleans. I'm somewhere else. It's not New Orleans, you know. It's kind of hard to explain though. You can tell something is wrong and it's not the normal setting of New Orleans and the people that's here.” – Morgan

“I felt that we lost culture because everybody who grew up in New Orleans usually grew up the street from each other. Everybody had their own wards, their own districts, whatever you want to call them. You know, my cousin that used to live around the corner no longer lived around the corner, she was now in Baton Rouge. My sister who lived across the canal no longer lived across the canal, right up the street from my mama. I mean the culture was completely gone.” – Jaime

The participants had experienced both types of ambiguous loss surrounding Hurricane Katrina. First they were physically displaced, while maintaining the psychological meanings and memories of home. Then the participants returned to the physical structures of home, but the psychological presence and attachment was altered.

Returning Home

The shift in the experience of ambiguous loss occurred when the participants returned back to their home. During displacement, there was a sense of homelessness felt that many believed would dissipate in New Orleans. Many participants described periods of homelessness as they shuffled from hotels to staying with family to receiving aid from shelters. When the city reopened and let the residents come back in, the sense of homelessness still loomed around the participants as they entered unfamiliar territory. Participants described their return home as entering a third world country. It did not feel like their home and their city. The change was surreal and the city was almost unrecognizable. One of the most poignant changes that was noticed by the participants was the smell. The smell of Katrina was a smell of decay

and death. The majority of the city was submerged under water for weeks and during that time vegetation died, as the homes dried out, they became covered in mold and this became the smell of the city. Their homes loomed with death as the hurricane had washed the life away from New Orleans.

It was like being in a movie, like another planet or something. I mean coming back uptown where I lived, just the ... I didn't come back till late. I didn't come back till basically Thanksgiving, so people had been down here for awhile already, but the taped up refrigerators all along the roads, just the general extra dirt and filth. It was just a funky smell in the air everywhere. The city certainly felt empty. The debris from limbs and stuff still everywhere. Most of the stores still closed, hard to even find a restaurant to go eat in, just a few that were open. You had lines to get into that. Grocery stores, limited. It was like being in another world or another movie film. It was maybe a third world kind of scene.” - Charlie

The participants described their return to a ghost town. There were not many people and the city felt abandoned. Alex never left the city, so she watched firsthand this transformation and destruction of home.

“It's hard for people that evacuated. When they came back, I know they were shell shocked. I was a different kind of shocked because I stayed. It was just you never thought in your life there would be dead bodies on the street that they never picked up. They would just plastic cable tie them to something so they wouldn't leave, and they marked them on a grid. You'd walk down the street and there would be a dead person there for a week. They had cable tied them to like a mailbox. Finally, they had to come pick them up. It was bizarre. You'd walk down the street just to see what's going on in the neighborhood, and there's a body just on the side. They'd have a sign on the house, like three dead inside. The military would just walk by every day like it was nothing. After a while, it just became accepted. That was one of the oddest things I think I'll ever remember. Even after Katrina, when I started coming to work, I'd drive through the city and you would come through Gentilly and Mid City, and you could smell death, and they still hadn't found all the bodies yet.” -Alex

For those who did leave, their decisions to return varied. For most, there was a curiosity to discover what the state of their homes would be. For others, it was simply the desire to go back home because their period of displacement left them relating to the refugee identity of feeling like an unwanted outsider. It made sense to go back to the place you were born, the

place you called home. That was not the reasoning for Charlie. He was the only participant that was not a New Orleans native. He moved to New Orleans a year earlier and was just becoming familiar with the environment. His decision to return was to see what damage was done and to figure out what was next. He was not sure if New Orleans would remain his home.

“Oh, there was definite hesitation. I didn't know the extent of the flooding at first. As you're watching that, you just can't believe what's happening, but like I said, initially I was just like, 'Well, I guess New Orleans will not be my home anymore,' but I didn't immediately set in like, 'What are my plans going to be?' I knew at least I was going to go back and see what had happened and what I needed to do because I had just started my own business at the time, so I needed to go and check on everybody that worked for me and see what was going on with all of that.” -Charlie

After experiencing the media's sensationalized view of what occurred following Hurricane Katrina, there was a need to see what was happening for himself. It's one thing to watch reports of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina on the television. It is a very different experience to witness it firsthand.

For the native people of New Orleans, returning home was what you did following a hurricane evacuation. Their time away from the city was prolonged due to the damage that their homes had suffered but individuals returned to start again. The four youngest participants (Jaime, Eli, Kennedy and Taylor) described their desire to return to home to regain a sense of normalcy. During Hurricane Katrina, all of these participants were still in high school and hoped that returning home they could find some comfort being in their old schools.

Jaime felt like she was treated like an outcast in Texas and was more than ready to return home. Her parents returned home to work and take care of the house and she wanted to feel that sense of home. She returned to the city a few months later and did not get that nor-

malcy. She could not stay in her old home, her old school had not opened again and the people she felt comfortable with were gone. It felt like she was starting completely over. Eli returned to the city one year later because his parents did not want to disrupt his school year in the town where they were displaced. He reported it feeling refreshing going back to something familiar because he was able to return his old school but he noted feeling very anxious as well because the environment had changed and lost its familiar feel.

Kennedy had a similar experience to the other two participants. She expressed a desire for completion. She had spent her entire high school career at the same school and she wanted to finish there. When her parents returned for work, she decided to join them. She described having an expectation of returning home as very difficult. She was home in her city, but was unable to return to her neighborhood. Her home she had known. The experience was not the same.

Taylor's desire to return home was so strong, that he returned alone. His family had made the decision to remain in Texas and he was missing home so much that he came back to find the comfort he had known in New Orleans. His home was gone and he was not able to return to his previous school. He enrolled in school and moved between the homes of different friends. He reported feeling like a refugee in the moment, moving from place to place. The young participants were not able to reclaim that sense of normalcy that they desperately searched for because nothing was the same. Their neighborhoods, their communities and their schools were still displaced despite their return.

For the remaining participants, there were situational factors that influenced their decision to return home. Bailey described having a genuine love and concern for his city. He noted hoping that the city was able to recover and return to its previous state. However, for

him job security outweighed his desire to remain in New Orleans. He noted being a government employee for 19 years prior to Hurricane Katrina and stated that if his job was going to relocate permanently, he was going to move with it. His job remained in New Orleans, so he did not have to make a choice between home and his career. Frankie returned for job opportunities. At the time she made this decision, she was living in Texas and had recently becoming pregnant and was having difficulty finding employment. When she returned home, she was with family and able to find employment.

"I was blessed because no one hired me in Houston when I wasn't showing. No one knew I was pregnant. Then I came home to New Orleans big and pregnant and people were like, "Oh yeah, we'll hire you." Obviously, I was meant to be home. My family had come home and even though the city wasn't the same, my family was here and I enjoyed the familiar ties that I had here. Compared to Houston, that was huge and massive and I didn't know hardly anyone. It was good to come home."

The remaining two participants had factors that did not allow them to make the decision to return home for very different reasons. Morgan was in New Orleans when Hurricane Katrina hit and he was transferred to Texas to a shelter. When he was able to return to central Louisiana where he was working at the time, was when things began to unravel for him. Upon his return, he was investigated, indicted and convicted for wire fraud for alleged misuse of money allotted to him from FEMA. This series of events led to the ending of his law enforcement career and a prison sentence. Following his sentence he was released to a halfway home in Baton Rouge and then sent to New Orleans to complete his probation. The decision to return was not his to make due to the false accusations that altered his life and career permanently.

Harper always had the intention of returning home to New Orleans following the hurricane. There was no other place like home for her and she knew she always wanted to live there again. She was unable to move back to New Orleans for a few years following Hurricane Katrina because the needs of her family members required them to live where they had

access to the needed resources. Immediately following the hurricane, the infrastructure in New Orleans wasn't sound and she needed access to medical care for her mother and a stable school environment for her young daughter. She noted that her love for the city grew after being away for a long period of time, but noticed a huge change in the culture upon her return.

The Material Loss

The experience of the hurricane changed the emotional and physical landscape for many participants. The emotional changes came with the shift in displacement and the expansions in the identities of the participants. In the physical changes, some participants experienced a loss of their homes, cars and valuables inside. The initial shock of material loss impacted the participants differently. Taylor returned to a house that was no longer there. It had been physically removed from where his home once stood. Jaime experienced an initial upset with the loss of her material items but realized that most objects were replaceable. The most painful loss for her was photographs. For Kennedy, the photographs were connected to her memories of her childhood. She felt in this experience of loss not only were the photographs missing but childhood memories as well.

"I lost a birth certificate. I have like four baby pictures of myself...I mean a lot was lost, memories, I mean. Because at the end of the day, we don't remember what we ate for breakfast, we don't remember none of that. It's just memories you remember from a picture, what you was doing in that moment. I don't know pictures, pictures was all I had. I don't even remember my childhood to remember where I came from. I just kind of built my own life after that." -Jaime

Many other participants described important material loss of things that are irreplaceable. Homes are seen as the foundations for individuals, their insides retaining our memories and the experiences that happened within them (Jarrett, 2013). Memories are attached to photographs and items hold meaning, there are values in the possession. Kennedy described the

material loss as jarring but stated it was the irreplaceable things that carried the most loss. She stated that her artwork and her pets were two things that she wished could come back.

Harper noted that she never did equate her experience of loss with material things and having the experience of evacuating most of her life, she checked with her family to see what things were valuable to them. Her family identified pictures and people, so they made efforts to safely store their photographs. Another item she reported missing was her music collection. She noted being really a big collector and lost all of her albums and CDs during the hurricane. There was a universal feeling that most material items from home could be replaced. For some of the participants, their items had meaning in their quality of being irreplaceable and providing a connection to the memories of their past.

Other participants were fortunate enough not to experience material loss from Hurricane Katrina. Alex remained in New Orleans during the storm and was fortunate not to experience any flooding, so she was able to have her childhood memories and parents belongings. She had siblings who had lost everything and was able to give them some childhood mementos. She felt lucky, in spite of her experience, to be able to maintain the home she treasured and her possessions that held the memories of her parents. Bailey was very cautious about not losing any items he held as valuable. After his experience of Hurricane Betsy, he would pack up all of his valuables during the event of an evacuation. Frankie felt very fortunate that her belongings were unscathed by the hurricane, as she witnessed her family members have to start over. She was grateful that her mother was able to salvage some of her childhood photos that she can now share with her children.

Value is connected to our identity and things that we feel represent us. The participants identified values in things they owned, but one participant demonstrated value in the thing he

did. The value of self in what we do can be experienced as a loss when people are denied returning to their passion and what they have known. One participant had a very unique experience in that his experience of loss was not initially a physical loss of material items but a loss of his career, which created a greater experience of loss in trying to move forward. Morgan reported moving back to New Orleans 9 months prior to the hurricane and was working in central Louisiana at the time. He noted no loss of material things because most items were in storage in central Louisiana.

He was not worried about physical possessions, but the impact of events that followed Hurricane Katrina. This included getting support from FEMA and using those funds to reside in a hotel and the investigation that followed which created his greatest loss. He experienced his career being tarnished and the loss of the path he created since he began working in law enforcement as a young man. He was indicted for wire fraud, which did not allow him to continue his work while under investigation. He was pressured to plead guilty but refused to do so because he never forged any documents or misused any funds. He noted that this experience of loss has been very difficult and he believes he still has not recovered.

“What happened was that with that investigation, not only I lost my chance of getting with the US Air Marshals, I was indicted for wire fraud... they wanted me to plead guilty. Refused to plead guilty. All I saw was that my career going straight down the drain because not only a lie, because what you're saying about me... This lead not only led to an investigation of me being indicted, it led to a conviction, misdemeanor conviction...it took them 15 minutes to convict me. The judge sentenced me to 18 months and three years probation. I had to turn myself in to those very same people that I worked for ten years in Kentucky, which was quite the experience for me to deal with. Even to this very day, I still don't accept it. You can tell me that I've done something wrong all you want. I still haven't accepted it.”

The Cultural Community Loss

Something that was strongly felt by most participants was the loss of their sense of community. All participants noted the importance of family, people and culture above their lost

possessions. Jaime experienced the loss of the familiarity that came with the communities, wards and culture of New Orleans. Taylor felt the loss within his sense of normalcy and loss of familiar faces. Eli described some relational losses as necessary, while simultaneously spoke about some relationships that were strengthened and other strong connections that were formed. Charlie also discovered in his experience of loss, a newfound connection with his community in this shared experience of loss

“More of a bond to the city or the people in the city. We all went through it, some to a greater degree than others, obviously. Like I said, I was probably on the lighter end, but we were certainly ... Anybody that lived out here at the time was certainly tied together. Everybody wants to share their story or their personal experience I guess, at least right after that, so pretty much anybody you talk to, it's like, 'So, what did you do? Where did you go? Did you leave? Did you stay? How about your family?' All that kind of stuff.”-Charlie

The Loss of Home

The participants all described a noticeable change in the City of New Orleans after the hurricane. Outside of the physical changes that resulted from Hurricane Katrina, the participants noticed a shift in that sense of closeness and connectedness. There was a lack of New Orleans spirit.

It's not New Orleans, you know. It's kind of hard to explain though. You can tell something is wrong and it's not the normal setting of New Orleans and the people that's here. What was normal here in the city? The spirit was higher with people and people nowadays are not trustworthy like we used to be. – Morgan

Parts of New Orleans became unfamiliar and different. It was missing that sense of knowing your neighbor and your community. The people were different, many did not return to their homes and new people coming in the city, who did not understand the culture, purchased these homes. There also were people who were not given the opportunity to return.

“The gentrification is really noticeable now and it was intentional. I remember on one of my very first trips to visit back, trying to get business straight, I rode through the city and one of the first things that the city had done ... I think it was the city, I really don't know who did it, was to throw 10 or 15-foot fences around all the projects. Very few of them got water, so you

knew that it wasn't about damage from the flood, it was about keeping people out of their homes, so you knew something was happening." -Harper

Recognition of the gentrification of the housing developments reflected one of the many changes of the city. As native individuals were pushed out of their homes not due to damages but the reconstruction of the city with motivation driven by social constructs of race and class.

Despite the noticeable changes within the city, the participants were still attached to their home. The alteration of the physical loss, initially from displacement and then from natural destruction, influenced their psychological memories of what was known about home. The psychological loss of home did not discourage participants to let go of their city despite its changes.

I don't know. It was just I wasn't ready to just give up on New Orleans or my life down there, so I was like, 'This is just how it's going to be.' I felt like the city and everybody was going to be able to push through it. Obviously, it would be a process, and it still is. -Charlie

Even the watered-down warmth of New Orleans is still greater than what I felt being in those places, places I have been going all my life. When it was time to figure out if I was going to stay there, it was not a question. Not because I didn't want to move, but I didn't feel comfortable anywhere else. -Harper

Some were hesitant to start over again because there was a loss in what the city used to be, but other participants were still able to make that connection. In possessing the known of the psychological existence of the New Orleans spirit, there was psychological loss in knowing it would not be the same. In the physical realm, the structures of their houses and their city remained but there was a physical loss of home and community did not return when they came back to New Orleans. For the participants of New Orleans, there was a dual experience of ambiguous loss.

"It's funny, because I've seen a lot of different emotions. I've seen a lot of people feeling uplifted. Saying, "We are coming back and we're going to come back stronger," and, "They can never take my home away from us." This that and the third. Some people are very discouraged, as in, they'll never be the same and it'll never be the way it was. I feel like its really

funny how there can be such, I guess, polar opposites as far as the attitude towards the future". -Eli

Some individuals felt that the setback was an opportunity to thrive and push forward better than ever. Others believe it was a loss that could not be recovered but there was still some forward movement. The experience of loss presented a situation where something is taken away from the participants. For some it can be revived and returned, but for others it cannot. This disruption in their lives required individuals to move forward without the sense of safety and comfort they once had (Summers and Barber, 2010). In the physical and psychological loss, there is an experience of grief that must be acknowledged. The grief allows individuals to process the loss experienced during this trauma.

There must be an acknowledgment of the impact of trauma in order to recognize the perception of growth that can follow. Herman (1998) defined the second phase of recovery as reviewing the story of the event. It transforms the traumatic memory and becomes integrated into the participants' life story. Traumas leave a scar or impact on memories and can be rehearsed involuntary or consciously as a part of remembering or healing (Walker et al., 2009). The third phase of recovery comes after gaining an understanding of self after this experience of loss and finding your strengths to move forward. Herman (1998) believes that during trauma our basic capacities for trust, autonomy, competence, identity and connection are disrupted; and during the final phase of recovery these qualities are rediscovered.

Thematic Category 4: Perception of Growth /PTGI

I was definitely more grateful for what I have and what I had. I appreciate things a lot more. Grass ain't always greener, I guess, but when you lose so much so quickly, you definitely stop taking things for granted. That was the biggest change for me. – Kennedy

The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory was administered following the interview to provide the participant an opportunity to measure their perceived change during this experience. PTG highlights the idea that positive consequences can emerge from negative events, but it does not ignore the traumatic nature of the hurricane and its displacement. Posttraumatic growth acknowledges that there can be positive changes because of the negative event, alongside the traditional experience of a negative event. These positive changes may not always be present for every individual if the experience of the hurricane was not perceived as impactful. The change in growth may not be as obvious for individuals who are still struggling with losses. The acknowledgment of growth is very dependent on the context of the participant and their experience of displacement.

The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory was used to measure the degree of change experienced in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. PTGI is composed of five factors: relating to others, new possibilities, personal strength, spiritual change, and appreciation of life. These five factors consist of 21 items. The experience of growth for each item is rated on a 6-point scale (0 to 5). The summation of all 21 items yielded a total growth score, which ranged from 0 to 105 (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1995). Higher scores were indicative of greater growth.

Participant's Profiles

The individual profiles are presented to showcase the individual perceptions of change and measured growth following Hurricane Katrina.

<i>Participants</i>	<i>BAILEY</i>	<i>ELI</i>	<i>CHARLIE</i>	<i>MORGAN</i>	<i>TAYLOR</i>	<i>ALEX</i>	<i>FRANKIE</i>	<i>HARPER</i>	<i>KENNEDY</i>	<i>JAIME</i>
<i>Score</i>	33	88	59	89	65	82	67	47	58	72
<i>Percentage</i>	32%	83%	56%	85%	62%	78%	64%	44%	55%	69%

Men's Measured Growth

Bailey acknowledged very little growth as a result of Hurricane Katrina. He stated that he felt more impacted by his experience of Hurricane Betsy. His area of most perceived growth was relating to others, where compassion for others was ranked the highest.

Things are different, because a lot of the neighbors moved away and a lot of my friends moved away. Before, everybody was really close by and now there are people all over the country. I think that's the biggest difference is not having everyone right there in the same geographical area....I think the immediate family we got stronger, but some of the friends that have moved away, unfortunately, I've lost touch with some of them. It's just distance and years and I think so many of my cousins and stuff, we're in touch, but I don't see them. They just didn't want to come back. I understand the decision not to come back...

Eli recognized a high level of personal growth in most factors. His highest factor was personal strengths, which he highlighted as one of his major changes as a result of Hurricane Katrina. He reported being more comfortable in who he is and feeling self-reliant in handling difficulties. He stated learning during this time being accepting of who he was even if no one else would be supportive of him.

Charlie described a greater appreciation of life as his highest area of perceived growth. Relating to others closely followed appreciation of life. Charlie described after the hurricane connecting with individuals in his community over stories and the shared experience. He noted it made him much closer to the people and city. This was something that he did not feel as strongly prior to the hurricane due to his recent relocation.

Morgan reported the greatest amount of perceived growth out of all of the participants. Interestingly enough, Morgan was the participant who reported the greatest amount of loss as a result of the events following Hurricane Katrina. He endured accusations, prison and the loss of his career and reported he is currently struggling to recover from this series of events.

Morgan identified two areas of growth that were most heavily impacted; those areas were appreciation of life and personal strength. Through his adversity and loss, he has discovered a new strength to keep him going and a new appreciation of life. Even though his career in law enforcement was taken away, he appreciates still being able to connect with his family.

Taylor identified new possibilities and personal strength as his strongest areas of growth. He described his experience following the hurricane as chaotic. He returned to New Orleans alone because his family decided to remain in Texas. He shuffled around in different schools not taking it seriously and following school decided to join the military. He believed this was his best decision because it provided him with opportunities to do good for others. Going through these experiences has revealed a personal strength and reliance to care for self.

Women's Measured Growth

Alex reported appreciation of life and personal strength as her strongest areas of growth. She was the only participant who never left New Orleans before, during or after Hurricane Katrina. She was displaced from her home for a few weeks and returned to live there with very little means. She noted being prepared not to survive Katrina but stated she is very grateful to have survived that experience. She witnessed a lot of good in people but also witnessed a lot of evil. She had to the strength to survive it all, while others gave up or unfortunately did not live through it. She noted feeling blessed because there were individuals who underwent much worse than she did during the hurricane. She believed that the experience changed her definitely in some good ways and in some bad ways.

You can't explain it to people. You just can't explain to them what it was like to hear helicopter gunshots shooting down, screams all night long from people outside, gunfire outside, the smell of the smoke, the smell of death. It's something you can't describe. That's why I can't imagine when these veterans come home and they can't explain to their spouses what it was like. I can only imagine, based on what I experienced, what I was like to be in battle. I made it. I survived.

Frankie believed that things following the hurricane unfolded the way they were supposed to be. She stated that she believes her life would have turned out the same way if the hurricane had not happened but that is something she will never know. She reported the most growth in appreciation of life. Soon after the hurricane, she became pregnant and started her family and that became a life changing priority for her. This life event helped to shaped her other factors of growth as she shifted into the role of parent.

Harper reported the least amount of growth among the other female participants. Her two strongest areas were spiritual change and personal strength. She experienced a great loss in connection and community that she had known all her life. As a result, she turned inward to meditation and those close relationships she was able to maintain after the storm. She discovered more of her own strength.

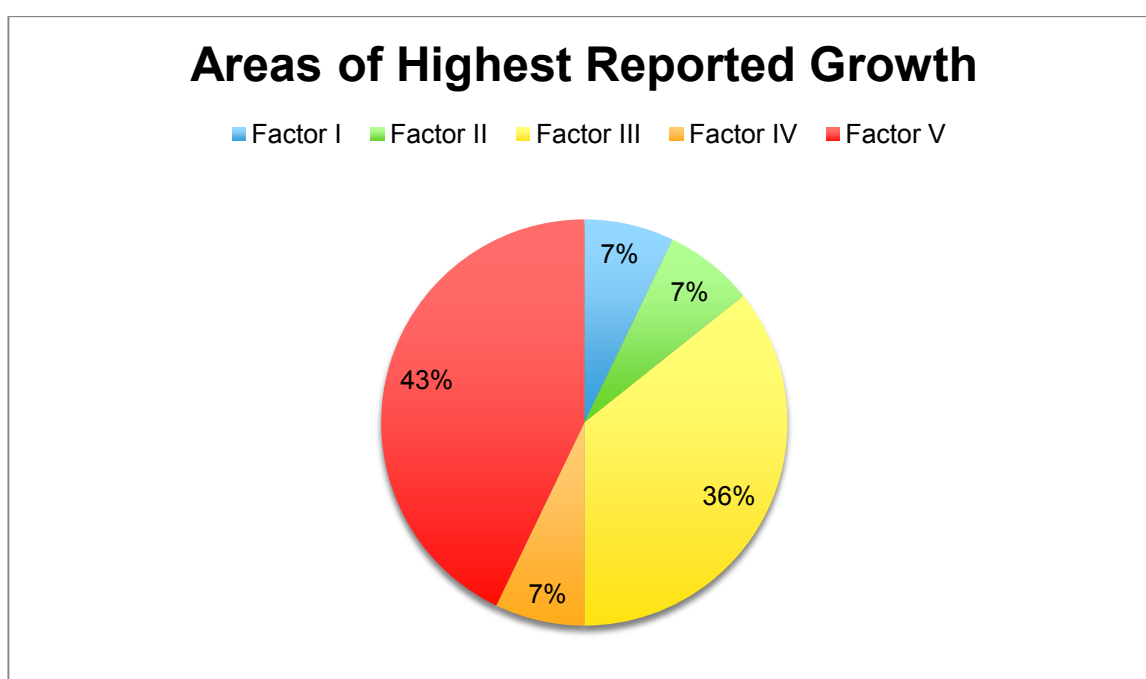
I still feel like I'm affected by it. I'm not saying I'm hanging my head down, crying about it anymore, but it does have a direct impact on what my life is right now. I can't really think of anything that I think of without saying post Katrina, pre Katrina. I say those words, but that's how I look at things. Katrina divided everything.

Kennedy reported experiencing some personal growth overall and her highest area of identified growth was appreciation of life. The experience of loss for her was very impactful and gave her a different perspective on life. She was the only participant who reported no feelings of growth towards spiritual matters or religious faith. She reported experiencing some changes within herself of letting go of her anger and being more honest with her emotions. She believes that is a positive that has come from his experience and taking the opportunity to work on herself.

Jaime reported significant growth in the areas of appreciation of life, followed by personal strength. She reported that the experience of the hurricane started out as a fun trip with

her family but quickly turned into a teenager having to grow up and take on major responsibilities to help to family get through the hardships of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. She described feeling pressured to be there for family both younger and older and stated it was a heavy weight on her shoulders. She noted getting through that and feeling stronger because of it. It changed her priorities about what was important and allowed her to be grateful for each day.

Chart 1: Posttraumatic Growth Inventory Factor Distribution



Factor I: Relating to Others **Factor II: New Possibilities** **Factor III: Personal Strengths**
Factor IV: Spiritual Change **Factor V: Appreciation of Life**

The two highest measures with respect to gender of self-perceived growth were given from the participants who remained in New Orleans (Morgan and Alex) during Hurricane Katrina. They both experienced very different but very impactful difficulties as a result of the hurricane. The second highest measure of growth overall belonged to Eli who disclosed following Hurricane Katrina he experienced a lot of personal growth as an adolescent and a

young gay male. Bailey reported the lowest measure of growth. He described his hurricane experience as a child being more impactful than the experience of Katrina. Harper, who believed that her life was divided by this event in an impactful way and still recognizes the loss within her own personal changes, which was evident by her measure of growth. Within the time that has occurred since Hurricane Katrina, every participant acknowledged some form of perceived change within himself or herself.

This chapter presented data collected and analysis of how the lived experiences and perceived changes survivors of natural disaster and the experience of displacement. Ten adults volunteered to participate in the study. Participant's criteria included individuals age 25 years and older who experienced Hurricane Katrina and had returned home following their displacement. The participants had to be willing to share their aftermath of their lived experience through qualitative interview and two supplementary inventories. All of the data collected was documented and recorded.

Data collection and analysis were provided from interview questions and inventories relating to lived experiences and perceived changes. The thematic outcomes were derived from the participants' response to the interview questions, and the results sought to answer the research question. Four thematic categories identified were (a) ability to cope, (b) understanding identity, (c) the ambiguous loss of home, and (d) perceptions of growth. Categories and themes emerged by means of transcribing interviews. On various levels, each categorical theme produced several sub themes as it relates to the participants lived experiences and behavioral changes.

The process of data collection yielded a variety of experiences following Hurricane Katrina and provided a range in the perceptions of measured change. The results from the data

collected in the interviews were inconsistent with the researcher's expectation of perceived growth and change as a result of displacement from a natural disaster given the choice of returning home and the amount of time that has passed since Hurricane Katrina occurred. The bias of experiencing loss and the expectation of growth following a traumatic event was not supported given some of the participant's experiences of no change or continued loss following the natural disaster.

In looking at the participants' attachment to home from the Object Relations perspective, the connection provided them with a sense of comfort and security. The trauma associated with the hurricane removed that comfort. The traumatic experience of displacement from a natural disaster brings a violation of safety. This violation allows fears of loss and abandonment to surface. As the participants managed their fear of the unknown, they began to cope through self-distractions. Stroebe and Schut (1999) identified that the process of understanding loss can be overwhelming and through the dual process model individuals oscillate to manage their everyday needs and the experiences of mourning their loss. Herman (1998) identified safety as the first step in the process of recovery and the participants sought safety by not diving directly into their experience of loss but allowing themselves some protection through distractions and other coping skills.

This loss was not only experienced by the participants but was also witnessed on the national level as the media misconstrued their experience as refugees. There was a universal rejection of the refugee title by the participants, even though some experienced treatment that evoked feelings of being homeless and unwanted. The "refugee" identity explains their experience of displacement and upon their return home, they encountered a place that did not feel familiar. The core psychodynamic problem of trauma (Summers and Barber, 2010) explains

that when trauma occurs we lose our safety and a core conflict occurs within ourselves. For the participants, this conflict was the experience of the ambiguous loss of home. The hurricane brought forth both a psychological and physical loss. Boss (2006) described ambiguous loss as a struggle between the unknown and known. The participants knew home, New Orleans, as a place of comfort but being displaced left them with a physical loss. Upon their return, some of the physical structures were still present but now there was a psychological longing for what home meant prior to Hurricane Katrina.

Through the experience of loss both in material items and the psychological sense of connectedness, the participants were changed. Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) identified that in discovering posttraumatic growth, it would be naive to ignore the negative consequences of the traumatic event, but they also emphasized that the experience of distress can be a motivating factor for growth (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 1996). The participants' report of growth varied with their experiences of loss. All participants reported some level of growth since their experience of displacement. The most identified factor of growth was appreciation followed by personal strengths as a result of their experiences.

The loss can be concurrent with the experience of growth, as seen in the participants' narratives. The two participants who experienced the greatest loss during and following the hurricane reported higher levels of growth. Morgan lost his future, his career and he attributes that to ending to the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Alex lost her sense of being safe and comfort from her traumatic experience. The adverse loss helped to strengthen their growth. Two other unique results of reported growth were from Eli and Harper. Eli reported the second highest measure of growth. His growth was not connected to a huge experience of loss following Hurricane Katrina but to a discovery and acceptance of himself and his sexuality.

Harper reported the second lowest measure of growth. For her, the experience of loss is still present and has divided her life into pre-Katrina and post-Katrina categories. She was able to recognize her personal strengths but also still acknowledges the impact.

Adverse loss was not necessary to have an experience of growth. Two participants (Frankie and Bailey) felt they did not grow as a result of Hurricane Katrina. For Bailey, his PTG score was the lowest and representative of his report. However for Frankie, her score indicated growth that related to her growth and changes in becoming a parent. The participants having varying experiences of loss did not invalidate their ability for growth, given the ten years that has occurred. The researcher took into consideration the time period as Hurricane Katrina occurred almost a decade before. The average individual has some experience of growth within that given amount of time. Herman (1998) identified the third phase of recovery being the reconnection with others. The experience of reconnection involved an integration of their altered identities and understanding of home. For the participants who struggled from Hurricane Katrina, the spirit of the New Orleans community was altered with the physical damages. However, their connection to that spirit of New Orleans was internalized and many cherish that their home is in New Orleans.

Conclusion

The research seeks to address the gap that exists in the literature between the group perspective of trauma and growth and the individual perception in relation to this specific natural disaster and the measurement of personal growth. This phenomenological inquiry investigated the lived experiences of individuals who underwent Hurricane Katrina to better understand the “refugee” experience of displacement from an individual perspective and the impact of trauma during a natural disaster. The exploration of their traumatic experiences is explored through the lens of posttraumatic growth.

Ten participants agreed to participate in this exploration. The qualifying criteria included adults who were age 25 and older, who were displaced by Hurricane Katrina and returned home following their displacement. The participants were willing to share their aftermath of their lived experience through a qualitative interview and two supplementary inventories. There were six main interview questions with follow-up questions to provide more clarity. The Brief COPE Inventory was reflective of the coping skills that the participants assessed to handle their displacement. The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory was used to measure their experience of change or lack thereof following their return. These resources were used to answer the research question and each individual component was used to gather information to better understand the research phenomenon. All of the data collected was documented and recorded.

There were four areas of focus used to gain context to further develop this phenomenon by gaining a better understanding of their refugee identity, the experience of displacement, the effects of trauma, and the changes that can occur in recovery. Outcomes from the analysis of

the data produced four main themes, which explored the individual's processes of coping, understanding and experiencing change due to their displacement. In this final chapter, the research question is answered and the discoveries from the analysis are explored. The conclusions and clinical implications pertaining to this study and recommendations for further research will be presented.

Answering the Research Question

The purpose of this research is gain an understanding of this phenomenon by answering this research question: What are the lived experiences of those individuals labeled as “refugees” during Hurricane Katrina and how has their displacement and the lapse of time shaped their current personal identity and growth?

This study explored (a) lived experiences, (b) the influence of exposure to natural disasters, and (c) identified changes over time. The complexities of the trauma endured in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina altered the city of New Orleans and the sense of normalcy for its residents. There was an attempt to attach to the ambiguous loss of the home they once knew. This disruption in the participants' sense of normalcy, comfort and safety created a dual process of ambiguous loss, once during their displacement and then upon the return home. Through the process of data collection, four themes emerged in the understanding of this phenomenon. Four thematic categories identified were (a) ability to cope, (b) understanding identity, (c) the ambiguous loss of home, and (d) perceptions of growth.

The Emerging Themes

In exploring their descriptions, the research seeks to better understand the experience of displacement. This information is processed through the first thematic category of the participant's ability to cope. All of the participants reported an acceptance of the event but their

coping styles differed. Their coping styles reflected behaviors that were distractions from the experience of displacement. The findings from the coping experiences were supported by the dual process model of grieving. The movement between loss-oriented and restoration-oriented activities was reflected in their coping skills.

The second thematic category sought to understand the refugee identity. The participants described their identities as being connected to home and during their displacement they watched the media distort their realities. All participants reported a rejection of the refugee title. Some because they simply believed the title did not fit their experience, while others who rejected the title felt the experience of refugee identity through their treatment, feelings of homelessness and being unwanted. Even though their experience reflected the outcast identity of the refugee, the participants refused to align their identity with the title.

The third thematic category sought to explore the ambiguous loss of home. Since New Orleans is a very unique city with a strong collective culture, the identities of most participants included their homes as an extension of self. During their displacement, the participants experienced a physical loss of home and upon their return entered a place that was not quite the same. For the participants of New Orleans, there was a dual experience of ambiguous loss. The first experience of ambiguous loss was their homes missing in a physical sense, but still psychologically present. The second ambiguous loss occurred when they were able to return to the physical structures of their houses but experienced a psychological loss of home.

The loss for participants extended beyond their physical things and impacted the way the individuals were able to move forward. In viewing the effect of this traumatic event, things lost were understood by what the participants valued. There was a range of loss experienced with regard to physical items and property. Some participants experienced little to no

damage of property, while others experienced a complete loss of everything they used to own. Most participants were not upset about the loss of things that could be replaced, but many participants referenced losing photos, family heirlooms and other irreplaceable items. The participants reported gaining an appreciation for those sentimental things, and stated that their material focus weakened as a result. The participants reported valuing their lives and the lives of loved ones above anything else. Residents of New Orleans felt the value in their way of life. The return home revealed the loss of the collective community and a noticeable difference in the culture of New Orleans. For some, it altered their attachment to the community and the people. For others, it sparked a fire to fight for the return of their homes.

The final thematic category views the perception of growth. This sought to understand the changes that occurred during the return and period of recovery following Hurricane Katrina. This was measured through the use of the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) and supported by interview questions. The highest area of growth reported was a greater appreciation of life, followed by personal strengths. The remaining three factors of the PTGI (relating to others, new possibilities and spiritual changes) did show some growth but held less value among the group of participants. All participants reported some growth.

Summation of Results

The results from the data collected in the interviews were inconsistent with the researcher's expectation of perceived growth and change as a result of displacement from a natural disaster given the choice of returning home and the amount of time that has passed since Hurricane Katrina occurred. The bias of experiencing loss and the expectation of growth following a traumatic event was not supported given some of the participant's reported experi-

ences of no change or continued loss following the natural disaster. The results produced interesting results of the influence of refugee identity and perception of growth. All participants refuted the title of refugee, even though some described feeling related to the experience of being homeless, unwanted and an outcast.

Although all participants reported some growth on the PTGI, the range of the growth scores varied greatly and not all measured growth reflected change directly related to their displacement with Hurricane Katrina. The participant's varying experiences of loss did not invalidate their ability for growth, given the time that has occurred. Since Hurricane Katrina occurred almost a decade ago, the factor of time must be considered.

The participants' measurement of growth was concluded as follows:

I. The adverse experience helped to foster major growth for three participants (Alex, Morgan, Eli) for very different reasons.

- Morgan lost his career and status as a law enforcement officer and struggled to move forward with a career. Morgan believed that no growth came from his situation of continuous loss over the years, but reported the highest level of measured growth on the PTGI.
- Alex stated that she has been traumatized and is now always in survivalist mode, over preparing in the event another hurricane approaches with the same force. Alex reported experiencing growth and gratitude from surviving this experience and for her the measured growth on the PTGI was representative.
- Eli disclosed that following Hurricane Katrina, he experienced a lot of personal growth as an adolescent and a young gay male.

II. Moderate changes were reported for 3 participants (Kennedy, Jaime, Taylor). The displacement created a space where individuals became more reliant as they witnessed those around them also faced with uncertainty. The major areas of growth that were highlighted in this group were the appreciation of life and personal strength. These participants were in high

school during Hurricane Katrina and this propelled their growth in adjusting and coping with a profound experience of loss.

III. A moderate change was identified by Charlie, the one participant who was not a native of New Orleans. The experience of the hurricane gave him a greater appreciation of life and a better connection with his community after this shared experience.

IV. Limited changes were reported for Harper but she still believes that she struggles with hardships that psychologically followed Hurricane Katrina and has created a disconnect in the City of New Orleans.

V. No changes for Frankie and Bailey were reported during the interview.

- Frankie felt life would have been the same if the hurricane had not occurred and does not believe that she was very impacted. Frankie believed that she did not change because of Hurricane Katrina but reported moderate growth on PTGI due to life circumstances.
- Bailey believed that this had no impact in comparison to his childhood experience of Hurricane Betsy. His PTGI score reflected that with the lowest reported growth.

Findings derived from all interviews noted that lived experiences after a natural disaster occurrence can contribute to acknowledgement of loss and experience of growth. This supports the posttraumatic growth model proposed by Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) that present alongside of traumatic loss; individuals have the possibility of growth. To achieve this process of growth, individuals must grieve the loss that was experienced by the natural disaster. The loss for the participants was ambiguous and occurred both in the physical and psychological realms. Stroebe and Schut (2006) believed that the management of grief was processed through the dual process model in which individuals oscillate between restoration oriented and loss oriented activities. The participants demonstrated this through their coping styles.

Clinical Implications

This research provides several clinical implications to this area of posttraumatic growth, by exploring the process of PTG from an individual adult perspective with the inclusion of directly addressing the trauma experience of a natural disaster by returning home. The clinical implications are listed below:

- Home is connected to identity and expressions of self for individuals from the collective communities of New Orleans.
- When home is forcibly removed, the experience of the refugee may represent the experience of displacement for some, but there is still a universal rejection of the title on the basis of belonging to the country.
- Internal factors, such as coping and previous experience, can impact the level of measure of growth.
- An experience of loss and adverse hardships appeared to produce more reported internal growth despite reported current struggles.
- The understanding of ambiguous loss was experienced in both the physical and psychological states in the participants' displacement and return home.
- Growth is likely to occur for individuals over a period of time, given the different stages of life they may enter (i.e. entering adulthood, parenthood).
- No growth after a traumatic experience is possible, if the event was not perceived to be traumatic to the individual.
- The experience of trauma and growth can occur concurrently, if the individual has experienced growth in some areas and is struggling with loss in others.
- An acknowledgement of growth does not disregard the experience of loss.

It is important for the clinician to pay attention to context within any situation of trauma. The multicultural variables can have a great impact on how the event is perceived and the participant's understanding of their own personal story. In this unique experience, the participants identified as residents of the distinctive culture of New Orleans, where the collective

community was strongly felt, and their experience of loss was dually felt. In viewing the displacement from Hurricane Katrina, the participants' each had their own conflicts unique to their situation, but there were also similarities shared between them. The experience of loss, the acknowledgment of change and the perception of growth were all identified by the participants in this study. In the process of healing, the trauma experienced must not be ignored. The retelling of the story is an integral part of the healing and clinicians must be mindful of giving their client's control in the process of retelling their narratives. The trauma of a natural disaster takes away that sense of control and the experience of displacement left the participants having to deal with the unknown. In the process of healing, regaining that control of self is accomplished in telling their stories of their known experience.

Limitations and Recommendations

There were some limitations in this phenomenological research that decreased the validity and generalizability. One limitation was the use of purposive sampling. This study had a small sample of adult participants who were chosen because of their experience of displacement due to Hurricane Katrina and the decision to return home following the storm. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all victims of natural disasters due to the different types of disasters that can occur. The interpretation of data analysis is seen as a limitation due to the researcher being the primary instrument for understanding. Creswell (2003) proposed that findings from a qualitative study could be subject to other interpretation. Mostakas (1994) believed that the researcher's interpretation could be influenced by personal bias, but with the corroboration from the participants on the researcher's interpretation the accuracy improves. In furthering the research on PTG as a response to natural disasters, if the measurement of

growth could be quantified and still capture the experience, then a larger sample of participants could be gathered and the information can become more generalizable.

This study provided a measurement of growth almost ten years following the event. The factor of time gave participants enough space between the trauma and their narratives to feel safe, but other life events that occurred during that time could be a confounding influence. A suggestion for future research would be longitudinal studies measuring the development of posttraumatic growth over time. In viewing the participants' lives over increments of time, the growth could be followed as it develops. This could provide more insight into the periods where growth begins and which of the five factors tend to develop first.

Limitations surrounding the inclusion criteria were created to capture the experience of a natural disaster and the return home. This study focus is limited to the adult populations who were residents to New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina. Therefore, limitations of the study were the exclusion of younger participants and other ethnicities due to the sampling design. This unique experience revealed a dual ambiguous loss of home. Further exploration of the dual process of loss would aid in understanding the experience of displacement and the adaptations faced upon the return. A comparison study viewing the growth of those who decided not to return versus those who did could be an area of future study distinguishing the impact of the different types of ambiguous loss.

Another possible limitation could be the order of the research interview. In having the PTGI as the last measurement, the reported measures of growth may carry some influence from the interview. The researcher believed that if given before the interview, the participants may feel inclined to report more growth than what is present. Future research could be conducted to measure the difference in results when the PTGI is given prior to the interview

through a comparative analysis of the order effects.

Despite the several limitations addressed to the study, the results far outweigh the limitations. The function of phenomenological qualitative data is not to form generalizations, instead it discovers the essence of how a phenomenon of a natural disaster can influence the understanding of posttraumatic growth and the experience of dual ambiguous loss over a period of time. The research gains authenticity and credibility through learning their personal accounts. This study provided insight and obtained an understanding of the lived experiences and perceived changes of victims of natural disasters and the return home, so that future studies can continue to advance the knowledge in the field.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the lived experiences of those given the “refugee” identity following their displacement. The natural disaster caused a disruption in the sense of comfort and safety the participants felt with their connection to home. In looking into the participants’ lives, the researcher sought to learn about the influence of identity, the development of growth and the perception of change due to the impact of trauma during Hurricane Katrina.

By using qualitative interview questions and supplemental inventories as well as documenting and corroborating the participant’s answers, the researcher attempted to fully understand each participant’s response. The researcher conducted all interviews in person, which were digitally recorded and transcribed after interview. Following the completion of the transcripts, the collected data was used to discover the emerging themes and direct quotes from the participants were included to capture the essence of the phenomenon. The study used the underlying foundation of Object Relations to analyze the data and their attachment to home.

Hurricane Katrina was witnessed on a national level as the media misconstrued their experience as refugees. There was a universal rejection of the title, but the experience was felt in varying degrees. The “refugee” identity explains the experience of displacement and the physical loss of home. Upon their return to New Orleans, some participants’ encountered familiar physical structures but felt a psychological loss of home. As the participants managed their experience of loss, they began to cope through self-distractions. During recovery, the participants sought safety through the dual process model of coping. The process of recovery and the role of time showed growth in all participants with the most reported areas being appreciation of life and personal strengths.

Exploring lived experiences among the survivors of natural disasters provided a series of notable themes. These themes were consistent with the findings of prior research and provided insight into elements of the connection of identity related to ambiguous loss and the development of PTG with those displaced due to the Hurricane Katrina. Key emerging themes included, an exploration of coping abilities, ambiguous loss, identity, and the perception of growth. These themes added richness to the literature on growth among survivors of a natural disaster.

I claim this place as my home because it's where I came to be...

New Orleans

Remember it for what it was, Fight for what it can be, Love it for what it is...

My heart. My home. Forever changed.

8/29/2005

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Appendices

Appendix A: Interview Questions

Appendix B: Letter of Introduction

Appendix C: Informed Consent

Appendix D: Community Outreach

Appendix E: Demographic Questionnaire

Appendix F: Brief COPE Inventory

Appendix G: Posttraumatic Growth Inventory

Appendix H: Copyright Permissions

Appendix A: Interview Questions

- 1) How would you describe your personal life prior to experiencing the hurricane? {Security? Continuity?}
 - 1a) How would you describe life in your community prior to Katrina?
 - 1b) How would you describe your interpersonal relationships with [support from] others?
 - 1c) What, in particular, was the most meaningful experience for you prior to the hurricane?

- 2) How would you describe your experiences during the hurricane?
 - 2a) How would you describe the experience of being evacuated from the disaster area?
 - 2b) In your own words, why did the hurricane happen?

- 3) Was your identity influenced by the media's portrayal of Hurricane Katrina? If so, how?
 - 3a) What was your personal experience watching the media coverage of the hurricane?
 - 3b) What did it mean to hear the title of refugee and evacuee?
 - 3c) Did your personal experience of the hurricane influence the descriptor (e.g. refugee or evacuee) that you chose to identify with?

- 4) How would you describe your decision to move back to New Orleans following the hurricane?
 - 4a) How would you describe your experience of seeing your neighborhood upon your return to your home?
 - 4b) How do you describe yourself and your life after going through this experience?

- 5) How would you describe your experience of loss, if any?
 - 5a) Do you have an item that is personally meaningful to you that survived the hurricane?
 - 5b) What were the material items that were important to you that you lost in the hurricane?
 - 5c) Do you have an item that is personally meaningful to you that you acquired after the hurricane?

- 6) How would you describe your coping styles following the hurricane?
 - 6a) In your own words, can you describe how you are presently coping with the aftermath of Katrina?
 - 6b) Describe your experience of support in your relationships following the hurricane.

Appendix B: Letter of Introduction for Interview Project

Dear Participants,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology Program at Antioch University Santa Barbara. I am in the process of writing my dissertation and collecting personal experiences of people who lived through Hurricane Katrina. For my dissertation, I am interested in discovering individual stories of change through adversity, and what role that time has had on their lives since Katrina.

My project is the discovery of individual response and change, in the aftermath of experiencing a natural disaster. These personal stories will be collected through questionnaires and the interview process. Once the informed consent is signed, giving permission to conduct the interview, the participant and I will meet for an interview and discuss the topic through a list of questions. The information discussed with me will remain confidential when it is used for the dissertation.

Please ask any questions that you have about participating in this project at any time. I want to ensure that you have the information that you need to make the decision to conduct an interview. Thank you for the time and assistance in completing my project. I am grateful that you are willing to engage in this meaningful exploration.

Sincerely,

Kandice Timmons, MA
Doctoral Candidate
Antioch University Santa Barbara

Appendix C: Informed Consent for an Interview Project

Title of Study: *Understanding the "Refugee" of Hurricane Katrina: An Exploration of Titles, Time and Post-traumatic Growth.*

I agree to have Kandice Timmons, MA (doctoral candidate and principal investigator) give me questionnaires and ask me a series of questions about my experiences with Hurricane Katrina. These questions will be asked in a private setting or in my home and will take approximately 60 minutes with a 30-minute follow-up interview at a later date. The follow up interview will be conducted two to three weeks after the initial interview.

The series of questions will be audio and video recorded for the purposes of the research accuracy and to protect my confidentiality, my name will not be used during the recording. I have the option to not have my video shown outside the use of data collection for the principal investigator. I will mark my indicated choice at the bottom of the consent form.

Ms. Timmons has explained that my name will not be recorded anywhere in the project and that my answers will be used only by the principal investigator in the final analysis of the data. I understand that I can refuse to answer any question and withdraw from this study at any time without any consequence. I am not receiving any compensation for participating in Ms. Timmons's study.

Information about this study and the place of my interviews for this study has been given to me by Ms. Timmons. If I have any questions about this study I can contact Ms. Timmons, principle researcher or Salvador D. Treviño, PhD, the dissertation chair for Ms. Timmons.

I will allow the use of my video recording in the presentation of research data.

I will not allow the use of my video recording in the presentation of research data.

Signature _____ Date _____ Time _____

Appendix D: Community Outreach

[Your Name]
[Street Address]
[City, St. Zip]

[Today's Date]

[Name of Recipient] [Title]
[Company]
[Address]
[City, St. Zip]

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Kandice Timmons and I am a doctoral candidate at Antioch University, Santa Barbara. I am currently engaged in writing my dissertation, which is titled Understanding the "Refugee" of Hurricane Katrina: An Exploration of Time, Titles and Post-Traumatic Growth. It is a study that aims to explore the personal experiences of those who went through Hurricane Katrina, what it was like to hear the titles given by the media, their experience and how their lives have changed since the storm.

I am contacting your agency to request assistance in finding participants willing to share their story. I believe that this is an important and special opportunity to allow individual voices to be heard and show the changes that have occurred for them. Being a New Orleans native, this dissertation resonates with me personally as well. The media's labeling of those who suffered overshadowed the portrayal of the individual experience. I want to provide a voice to the individual and show that through a traumatic experience there can be positive and negative changes.

I believe working through community agencies would provide great prospects and experiences of this natural trauma. I would like your agency to let potential participants know of the study through the attached flyer and if they are interested in participating to use the contact information provided. I would appreciate the opportunity to further discuss the intentions of my dissertation.

Best Regards,

Kandice Timmons, MA
Doctoral Candidate
Antioch University Santa Barbara

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS NEEDED**UNDERSTANDING THE “REFUGEE” OF HURRICANE KATRINA: AN EXPLORATION
OF TITLES, TIME AND POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH**

Kandice Timmons, M.A.

PURPOSE: The purpose is to explore the lives of those who went through Hurricane Katrina, what it was like to hear the titles given by the media, your experience of displacement and how your lives have changed since. This study seeks to gain personal understandings of your experience of Katrina and how the lapse of time has shaped your current personal identity and growth.

ELIGIBILITY: There will be 8 individuals, 4 adult males and 4 adult females, who are 25 years of age and older. The participant must have been displaced during the storm and also have returned to live in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. Must have average language ability to communication in English, with at least an eight-grade education.

BENEFITS: Participants can learn something new about themselves, by gaining new meanings in relation to their experience of this trauma. It may be a healing experience to share their story and acquire a deeper understanding of their own resiliency.

CONTACT: Kandice Timmons, Principal Investigator

There will be no compensation for participation in this research study.

Appendix E: Demographics Questionnaire

1. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender

2. What is your age?

- 18-29 years old
- 30-49 years old
- 50-64 years old
- 65 years and over

3. How would you classify your ethnicity/ race?

- Asian/Pacific Islander
- Black/ African-American
- Caucasian/White
- Hispanic/Latino
- Arab
- Indigenous or Aboriginal
- Multiracial
- Would rather not say
- Other _____

4. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Some high school
- High school graduate
- Some college
- Trade/technical/vocational training
- College graduate
- Some postgraduate work
- Post graduate degree

5. What is your religious preference?

- Muslim
- Mormon
- Orthodox Church
- Protestant
- Jewish
- Seventh Day Adventist
- Christian Scientist
- Roman Catholic
- Other (please specify) _____

6. What is your current marital status?

- Divorced
- Living with another
- Married
- Separated
- Single
- Widowed
- Would rather not say
- Other (please specify) _____

7. How many children under 16 years old live in your household?

- None
- 1 child
- 2 children
- 3 children
- 4 or more children

8. Employment Status: Are you currently...?

- Employed for wages
- Self-employed
- Out of work and looking for work
- Out of work but not currently looking for work
- Homemaker
- Student
- Military
- Retired
- Unable to work

Appendix F: Brief COPE Inventory

These items deal with ways that you've been coping with the stress in your life since you were displaced from Hurricane Katrina. There are many ways to try to deal with problems. These items ask what you've been doing to cope with this one. Obviously, different people deal with things in different ways, but I'm interested in how you've tried to deal with it. Each item says something about a particular way of coping. I want to know to what extent you've been doing what the item says. How much or how frequently? Don't answer on the basis of whether it seems to be working or not—just whether or not you're doing it. Use these response choices. Try to rate each item separately in your mind from the others. Make your answers as true FOR YOU as you can.

1 = I haven't been doing this at all 2 = I've been doing this a little bit 3 = I've been doing this a medium amount 4 = I've been doing this a lot

1. I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off of things. []
2. I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation that I'm in. []
3. I've been saying to myself "this isn't real.". []
4. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better. []
5. I've been getting emotional support from others. []
6. I've been giving up trying to deal with it. []
7. I've been taking action to try to make the situation better. []
8. I've been refusing to believe that it has happened. []
9. I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape. []
10. I've been getting help and advice from other people. []
11. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it. []
12. I've been trying to see it in a different light and to make it seem more positive. []
13. I've been criticizing myself. []
14. I've been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do. []
15. I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone. []
16. I've been giving up the attempt to cope. []

1 = I haven't been doing this at all 2 = I've been doing this a little bit 3 = I've been doing this a medium amount 4 = I've been doing this a lot

17. I've been looking for something good in what is happening. []
18. I've been making jokes about it. []
19. I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping. []
20. I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened. []
21. I've been expressing my negative feelings. []
22. I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs. []
23. I've been trying to get advice or help from other people about what to do. []
24. I've been learning to live with it. []
25. I've been thinking hard about what steps to take. []
26. I've been blaming myself for things that happened. []
27. I've been praying or meditating. []
28. I've been making fun of the situation. []

Appendix G: Posttraumatic Growth Inventory

Indicate for each of the statements below the degree to which this change occurred in your life as a result of displacement during Hurricane Katrina, using the following scale.

0= I did not experience this change as a result of my displacement.

1= I experienced this change to a very small degree as a result of my displacement.

2= I experienced this change to a small degree as a result of my displacement.

3= I experienced this change to a moderate degree as a result of my displacement.

4= I experienced this change to a great degree as a result of my displacement.

5= I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my displacement.

1. I changed my priorities about what is important in life. []
2. I have a greater appreciation for the value of my own life. []
3. I developed new interests. []
4. I have a greater feeling of self-reliance. []
5. I have a better understanding of spiritual matters. []
6. I more clearly see that I can count on people in times of trouble. []
7. I established a new path for my life. []
8. I have a greater sense of closeness with others. []
9. I am more willing to express my emotions. []
10. I know better that I can handle difficulties. []
11. I am able to do better things with my life. []
12. I am better able to accept the way things work out. []
13. I can better appreciate each day. []
14. New opportunities are available which wouldn't have been otherwise. []

0= I did not experience this change as a result of my displacement.

1= I experienced this change to a very small degree as a result of my displacement.

2= I experienced this change to a small degree as a result of my displacement.

3= I experienced this change to a moderate degree as a result of my displacement.

4= I experienced this change to a great degree as a result of my displacement.

5= I experienced this change to a very great degree as a result of my displacement.

15. I have more compassion for others. []

16. I put more effort into my relationships. []

17. I am more likely to try to change things, which need changing. []

18. I have a stronger religious faith. []

19. I discovered that I'm stronger than I thought I was. []

20. I learned a great deal about how wonderful people are. []

21. I better accept needing others. []

Appendix H: Copyright Permissions

Brief COPE

Permission to use this inventory was given on the inventory's webpage. <http://www.psy.miami.edu/faculty/ccarver/sclBrCOPE.html>

The items below are an abbreviated version of the COPE Inventory. We have used it in research with breast cancer patients, with a community sample recovering from Hurricane Andrew, and with other samples as well. The citation for the article reporting the development of the Brief COPE, which includes information about factor structure and internal reliability from the hurricane sample is below. The Brief COPE has also been translated into several other languages, which have been published separately by other researchers (see below).

We created the shorter item set partly because earlier patient samples became impatient at responding to the full instrument (both because of the length and redundancy of the full instrument and because of the overall time burden of the assessment protocol). In choosing which items to retain for this version (which has only 2 items per scale), we were guided by strong loadings from previous factor analyses, and by item clarity and meaningfulness to the patients in a previous study. In creating the reduced item set, we also "tuned" some of the scales somewhat (largely because some of the original scales had dual focuses) and omitted scales that had not appeared to be important among breast cancer patients. In this way the positive reinterpretation and growth scale became positive reframing (no growth); focus on and venting of emotions became venting (focusing was too tied to the experiencing of the emotion, and we decided it was venting we were really interested in); mental disengagement became self-distraction (with a slight expansion of mentioned means of self-distraction). We also added one scale that was not part of the original inventory--a 2-item measure of self-blame--because this response has been important in some earlier work.

You are welcome to use all scales of the Brief COPE, or to choose selected scales for use. Feel free as well to adapt the language for whatever time scale you are interested in.

Citation: Carver, C. S. (1997). You want to measure coping but your protocol's too long: Consider the Brief COPE. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 4, 92-100. [[abstract](#)]

Following is the BRIEF COPE as we are now administering it, with the instructional orientation for a presurgery interview (the first time the COPE is given in this particular study). Please feel free to adapt the instructions as needed for your application.

Kandice Timmons <ktimmons@antioch.edu> Sun, Jun 7, 2015 at 10:25 PM
To: ccarver@miami.edu
Hello:

My name is Kandice Timmons and I am a doctoral candidate at Antioch University Santa Barbara. The title of my dissertation is Understanding the "Refugee" of Hurricane Katrina: An Exploration of Time, Titles and Post-Traumatic Growth. It is a phenomenological study capturing the experience of identity, displacement, trauma and recovery.

Last year, I included the use of the Brief COPE Inventory (BCI) in my doctoral dissertation with the permission for use that was granted on your webpage <http://www.psy.miami.edu/faculty/ccarver/sclBrCOPE.html>.

Now I am in the process of publishing my dissertation electronically. I have attached a copy of the appendices and how the inventory will appear in the dissertation. I want to ensure that I have requested permission to publish the Brief COPE Inventory (BCI) from the copyright holders.

My published dissertation will appear electronically on these two databases: Proquest Dissertations and Theses Database and that Proquest is a Print on Demand Publisher <http://www.proquest.com/products-services/pqdt.html> Ohiolink Electronic Theses and Dissertations Center and that Ohiolink ETD Center is an open access archive <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/> AURA: Antioch University Repository and Archive and that AURA is an open access archive. <http://aura.antioch.edu/>

Thank you for your time and the use of your inventory to further my research.

Charles S. Carver <ccarver@miami.edu> Mon, Jun 8, 2015 at 7:39 AM
To: Kandice Timmons ktimmons@antioch.edu

As long as it is attributed to me, it's fine.

Charles S. Carver
Department of Psychology
University of Miami
Coral Gables FL 33124

Fellow, Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences
Stanford University

ccarver@miami.edu
<http://www.psy.miami.edu/faculty/ccarver/>

The Dual Process Model Figure

The image below provides permission for the Dual Process Model figure (p. 25). Permission to use this figure was also acquired through email from the authors of the Dual Process Model.

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Title: THE DUAL PROCESS MODEL OF COPING WITH BEREAVEMENT: RATIONALE AND DESCRIPTION

Author: Margaret Stroebe, Henk Schut

Publication: Death Studies

Publisher: Taylor & Francis

Date: Mar 1, 1999

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The email is attached below:

Stroebe-Harrold, M.S. (Maggie)

Dear Kandice,

Thank you for your email. I am glad that you find the model useful. It is no problem for you to use the model, Henk and I hold the copyright ourselves.

All the very best for your interesting dissertation.

Best wishes,

Margaret S.

From: Kandice Timmons

Sent: Thursday, June 19, 2014 10:27 PM

To: Stroebe-Harrold, M.S. (Maggie)

Subject: Request for Permission

Dear Dr. Stroebe

My name is Kandice Timmons and I am a doctoral candidate at Antioch University Santa Barbara. I am writing to request permission for the use of the image of the dual process model from Figure 1 in your article for the purposes of my doctoral dissertation.

The article I am referencing is Stroebe, M & Schut, H (1999). The Dual Process Model of Coping with Bereavement: Rationale and Description, *Death Studies*, 23:3, 197-224.

The title of my dissertation is *Understanding the Refugee of Hurricane Katrina: An Exploration of Time, Titles and Post-Traumatic Growth*. It is a phenomenological study capturing the experience of identity, displacement, trauma and recovery.

I believe the dual model process beautifully explains the process of grief and the oscillation that occurs within the experience of loss that I am seeking to capture in understanding post-traumatic growth. I think this image provides a great explanation to that process and visually shows the fluidity in coping.

If you are able to grant permission for its use, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Posttraumatic Growth Inventory

Assistance to PTG Researchers

We provide to researchers this information about the measures we have published in relation to posttraumatic growth (PTG). You may note that the PTGI was first published and the term first used by us (Tedeschi & Calhoun) in the 1995 book *Trauma and Transformation*. However, the version we have used was published with a revised response format in *Journal of Traumatic Stress* in 1996. Other measures have been published since then in order to research PTG in children, and to provide a measure of both positive and negative outcomes on the aftermath of trauma, and to assess other variables that are central to our model of PTG processes. That model is also reproduced here. The references that follow are a selected list that includes some work with researchers outside our department with whom we collaborate, and our students in our research lab.

In Reciprocation

There is no charge for the PTGI and these other measures, and there is no charge for the reproduction of the scale for use in research.

We welcome the use of our scales in not-for-profit research. However, these inventories are not to be reproduced for any kind of general distribution and may not be used in for-profit enterprises.

In reciprocation, we would like you to send us a gratis copy of any manuscripts, theses, dissertations, research reports, preprints, and publications you prepare in which our materials, or any version of them, is used. Both R. G. Tedeschi and L.G. Calhoun can be contacted at: **Department of Psychology - UNC Charlotte - Charlotte, NC 28223 USA. Email to rtedesch@uncc.edu.**

Dear Kandice--You have permission to publish the PTGI in your appendix. The proper title for the measure is The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory.

Congratulations!

R. Tedeschi

Hello,

Thank you for your interest in PTG research. We welcome the use of our scales in not-for-profit research such as this. The PTGI and associated scales, along with instructions for use, are attached.

Best wishes,

Posttraumatic Growth Research Center, UNC Charlotte

Department of Psychology

9201 University City Blvd

Charlotte, NC 28223-0001 USA

Lawrence G. Calhoun (lcalhnr@uncc.edu)

Richard G. Tedeschi (rtedesch@uncc.edu)

Arnie Cann (acann@uncc.edu)

www.ptgi.uncc.edu

<http://www.routledgejournal.com/books/details/9780415645300/>.

Curriculum Vitae

Kandice Timmons M.A.

EDUCATION*Antioch University Santa Barbara*

Santa Barbara, CA

Doctorate of Clinical Psychology Program: Emphasis in Family Therapy, Forensic Track June 2015

Dissertation: Understanding the “Refugee” of Hurricane Katrina Survivors: An Exploration of Titles, Time and Post-Traumatic Growth

Masters of Art in Clinical Psychology June 2012

Loyola University New Orleans

New Orleans, LA

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Sociology minor May 2010

Academic Honors, Awards, Scholarships:

Dean's List, College of Humanities and Natural Science, four semesters Loyola Academic Merit Scholarship, four years

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Psychological Association (APA)

California Psychological Association (CPA)

Antioch University Santa Barbara Alumni Association

Loyola University Alumni Association

Psi Chi, The National Honor Society in Psychology (Loyola University)

SKILLS & PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

Cognitive/Intelligence Test: Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS-IV), Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence (WASI)

Neuropsychological Test & Executive Function: Bender Visual- Motor Gestalt Test (Bender-Gestalt II), Wechsler Memory Scale (WMS-III), Delis Kaplan Executive Functioning Scale (D-KEFS), Trail Making Test

Psychological, Personality and Emotional Testing: Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI-2), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI-II), Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), Clark - Beck Obsessive Compulsive Inventory

Academic Testing: Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT- 4)

Career Testing: Self-Directed Search (SDS)

EXPERIENCE

Los Angeles Job Corps Center

Los Angeles, CA

Psychology Intern 8/2014- Present

Supervisor: Dr. Joseph Grillo

Job Corps is a career-training program that provides mental health access to its registered trainees, ages 16-26. Those services for trainees include: individual therapy, group therapy, psycho-educational training in bullying, transitioning and conflict resolution skills. Other responsibilities include participating in multidisciplinary teams and case conferences, providing clinical supervision to advance practicum students, case management, and presenting in professional seminars providing staff training.

Pacific Pride Foundation Community Based Counseling Center Santa Barbara, CA

Practicum Trainee 7/2012 – 6/2014

Supervisor: Bren Fraser, MFT

Pacific Pride is an outpatient Center that provides individual, couple, family and group counseling. Carrying a caseload of 4 to 8 clients collects data for agency reporting and participates in weekly supervision. Responsibilities also include assisting with intakes and appointment scheduling and occasionally assisting with community outreach and education.

Department of Rehabilitation

Oxnard, CA

Psychology Trainee 9/2012 - 12/2012

Supervisor: Dr. Paul Martin

Administering, scoring and interpreting numerous tests, while measuring intellectual, cognitive, emotional and behavioral abilities. Performing clinical interviewing and report writing, while becoming familiar with activities associated with a complete psychological evaluation

Brooks Institute of Photography Ventura, CA

Practicum Trainee 10/2011 - 8/2012

Supervisor: Jo Ellen Eng. Ph.D.

Provided supportive psychotherapy to help students utilize their strengths and identify their dis-tress, while supporting change. Offered students confidential services with a non-judgmental, genuine and empathic environment. Helping to normalize and hopefully reduce discomfort in what can be a stressful school environment. In doing supportive counseling it helps students find new ways to deal and cope with issues, while also encouraging students to establish a healthy routine in self-care.

Center for Developmental Play and Learning Santa Barbara, CA

Practicum Trainee 05/2011 - 09/2011

Supervisors: Pat Marquart and Jean White

Worked under the Greenspan Model with mental health issues with developmental progression. Engaged in Floor time training with parents and children, which involves learning through movement and play. Shadowed MFTs, LCSWs, Speech Therapists, Physical Therapy Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Child Development Specialists and went into the homes of the children using the Floor time model. Created picture boards as transitional models. Attended weekly team meetings for case supervision.

The Chartwell Center New Orleans, LA

Practicum Intern 9/2009 - 5/ 2010

Supervisor: Carrie Cassimere

Assisted the teachers and staff in working with autistic spectrum children, based on the ABA model. Helped the children to complete their academic task and engage in activities with one another, while maintaining a structured schedule throughout the day. Assisted the occupational therapist with helping the children learn motor skills and responding touch through brushing. Worked with the speech therapist using picture boards and typing machines to improve communication. Completed the Brigance Development Assessment.

Freedom School Open World New Orleans, LA

Servant Leader Intern 6/2009- 12/2009

Taught brief classes to the children that attended the program, it mainly focused on their reading, language and math skills. Motivated the children to be interested in reading books and planned different activities to go along with the readings. Setup a classroom environment, created activities for the students, and assisted them with homework.

LHA Charitable Trust Dharamsala, India

Volunteer 6/2008- 8/2008

Spent the summer abroad and assisted a Tibetan woman practiced her verbal, writing, and computer skills in English. Also contributed to The Missions of Charity, by helping to feed the women there and providing them with company.

Institutional Review Board Application for Ethics Review

1. Name of Principal Investigator(s): Kandice Timmons

For faculty applications, Co-Principal Investigator(s) name(s): N/A

2. Academic Department: Doctoral Program in Clinical Psychology

3. Departmental Status: Student

4. Phone Number: (a) Work (b) Home:

5. Name of research advisor: Dr. Salvador Treviño, Dissertation Chair

6. Name & email address (es) of other researcher(s) involved in this project: N/A

a) Name of Researcher(s)

b) E-mail address (es)

7. Project Title: Understanding the "Refugee" of Hurricane Katrina: An Exploration of Titles, Time and Post-Traumatic Growth.

8. Is this project federally funded: No

Source of funding for this project (if applicable): N/A

9. Expected starting date for data collection: December 2015

10. Expected completion date for data collection: June 2015

11. Project Purpose(s)

I am deeply interested in a phenomenological study of understanding and exploring the individual experiences of survivors of Hurricane Katrina. It aims to understand the "refugee" experience of displacement from an individual perspective and the impact of trauma during a natural disaster. This study aspires to gain personal understandings of their lived experience of Katrina survivors as displaced persons and how the lapse of time has shaped their current personal identity and growth.

12. Describe the proposed participants: age, number, sex, race, or other special characteristics. Describe criteria for inclusion and exclusion of participants. Please provide brief justification for these criteria. (Up to 500 words)

There will be 10 individuals, 5 adult male and 5 adult female survivors of Katrina who are 25 years of age and older.

If the participants were adolescents at the time, their language and ability to access emotions will allow them to tell the story from their point of view.

The participant must have evacuated during the storm and also have returned to live in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina.

At least eight grade education. Average language ability to communication in English.

13. Describe how the participants are to be selected and recruited. (Up to 500 words)

NOTE: If the participants are to be drawn from an institution or organization (e.g., hospital, social service agency, school, etc.) which has the responsibility for the participants, then documentation of permission from that institution must be submitted to the Board before final approval of the project. This document should be scanned and attached to this application (final section below)

The participants will be recruited and selected through purposive sampling. The method of recruitment will be done through outreach to community agencies in the greater New Orleans Area. The use of community agencies allows for greater awareness of the study, by allowing the use of advertising through the agencies.

14. Describe the proposed procedures, (e.g., interview surveys, questionnaires, experiments, etc.) in the project. Any proposed experimental activities that are included in evaluation, research, development, demonstration, instruction, study, treatments, debriefing, questionnaires, and similar projects must be described. USE SIMPLE LANGUAGE, AVOID JARGON, AND IDENTIFY ACRONYMS. Please do not insert a copy of your methodology section from your proposal. State briefly and concisely the procedures for the project. (500 words)

The participants who have met the criteria for the study will receive a letter of introduction explaining the procedures of the study and given an informed consent agreeing to their participation in the project.

The participants will be informed that their participation is voluntary and they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point. Once the informed consent is understood and signed the participant will be given a brief demographic questionnaire to gather background information such as age, gender, ethnicity, highest level of education, religious association, marital status, number of children and employment status.

After the completion of the questionnaire, the Brief Cope Inventory will be completed, which measures their current level of coping. The interview will follow the inventory and it will be video recorded and during the interview, the research will takes notes. Participants are encouraged to bring meaningful artifacts that may relate to their journey following Hurricane Katrina.

Following the interview participants will be given the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory to provide a measure of positive and negative outcomes on the aftermath of trauma and the factors related to measured change.

Participants will be reminded that breaks are allowed if they felt the need to do so. They will also be informed that to protect their identity, they will be provided a code. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes with a 30-minute follow up interview to ensure accuracy and opportunity for expansion.

The interview questions assess for what life was like prior to the hurricane, their experience of the hurricane, and influences of the changes that have occurred since.

15. Participants in research may be exposed to the possibility of harm — physiological, psychological, and/or social—please provide the following information: (Up to 500 words)

a. Identify and describe potential risks of harm to participants (including physical, emotional, financial, or social harm).

NOTE: for international research or vulnerable populations, please provide information about local culture that will assist the review committee in evaluating potential risks to participants, particularly when the project raises issues related to power differentials.

In the proposed study, there is possible risk for psychological discomfort or harm in re-experiencing emotions related to the trauma of retelling their lived experiences. There is a possibility of re-traumatizing, when memories and emotions may arise in the participants.

b. Identify and describe the anticipated benefits of this research (including direct benefits to participants and to society-at-large or others)

The benefits of this study will be for participants to learn something new about themselves, by gaining new meanings in relation to their experience of this trauma. It may be a healing experience to share their story and acquire a deeper understanding of their own resiliency.

The benefit of this study is to gain an individual understanding of how a phenomenon of a natural disaster can influence the understanding of posttraumatic growth and the experience of Ambiguous Loss in the years following an impactful event or perceived trauma. A benefit of this study is that it provides the personal individual experience as opposed to the collective view.

c. Explain why you believe the risks are so outweighed by the benefits described above as to warrant asking participants to accept these risks. Include a discussion of why the research method you propose is superior to alternative methods that may entail less risk.

Although the content of material may stir up some emotional discomfort, it also allows for the participants to have their individual voice heard. The research adds to the general knowledge of the experience of hurricane survivors.

It adds to the gaps in the literature providing some answers about the experience of a being a refugee and can benefit future displaced persons of natural disasters. This study presents an opportunity to reflect how trauma influences life and gives participants a safe space to do so. The researcher also will provide resources for those who feel the need for mental health assistance following the interview.

The phenomenological investigative approach was chosen because the hurricane was indeed a unique phenomenon and the descriptive nature of this approach would be best to understand the meaning of the stories of those affected. Pure phenomenological research aims essentially to describe rather than explain, and to start from a perspective free from preconceptions (Husserl 1970).

The use of quantitative methods in the exploration of this topic would limit the individual story, and has the potential to open up emotional content without giving the individual a voice or space to express their lived experience. “Phenomenological methods are particularly effective at bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives, and therefore at challenging structural or normative assumptions”, (Lester, 1999, p.1).

d. Explain fully how the rights and welfare of participants at risk will be protected (e.g., screening out particularly vulnerable participants, follow-up contact with participants, list of referrals, etc.) and what provisions will be made for the case of an adverse incident occurring during the study.

The researcher will clearly inform the participants of the nature of the study, so individual who are willing to participate have an awareness that the subject requires some vulnerability. The understanding, awareness and choice to consent will protect the rights and the welfare of the participants.

The researcher will provide a list of referrals during the debriefing after the interview. The aim is to prevent any harm in conducting the study and participants are informed of their ability to withdraw at any given time.

16. Explain how participants' privacy is addressed by your proposed research. Specify any steps taken to safeguard the anonymity of participants and/or confidentiality of their responses. Indicate what personal identifying information will be kept, and procedures for storage and ultimate disposal of personal information. Describe how you will de-identify the data or attach the signed confidentiality agreement on the attachments tab (scan, if necessary). (Up to 500 words)

Due to the type of research investigation the participants will not have anonymity, but they will have confidentiality. This research does involve a collection of personal information and it is the

responsibility to the researcher not to disclose their information to the public or any unauthorized individuals.

After the participants sign the consent form, they will be assigned a number for the duration of the research, their personal information will be linked to their number only. In this case, labeling data with number and keeping a list of names and participant numbers in a separate will maintain confidentiality and secure password-protected file.

The interviews will be video recorded and during the recording the participant is to give a pseudonym to use for the purposes of the interview. The recording would only be shown with the permission and consent of the participants (option provided on informed consent).

The interview recording and transcriptions will be placed in separate secure password protected file. Following the seven years for storage the files will be kept secure until disposal. The disposal involves deleting all electronic copies of information that may link personal identity of participants.

17. Will electrical, mechanical (electroencephalogram, biofeedback, etc.) devices be applied to participants, or will audio-visual devices be used for recording participants? If YES, describe the devices and how they will be used:

A video recorder will be used to capture the images and voices of the participants during the interview process. The researcher believed video recording of the interview will provide a powerful visual experience of re-exploring trauma. The visual recording will allow their stories to be seen, heard and understood in a way that just words sometimes miss. The visual will bring the artifacts and their connections to personal to stories to life as well.

18. Type of Review Requested

Exempt, Expedited, Full- A Full Review

19. Informed consent and/or assent statements, if any are used, are to be included with this application. If information other than that provided on the informed consent form is provided (e.g. a cover letter), attach a copy of such information. If a consent form is not used, or if consent is to be presented orally, state your reason for this modification below. *Oral consent is not allowed when participants are under age 18.

20. If questionnaires, tests, or related research instruments are to be used, then you must attach a copy of the instrument at the bottom of this form (unless the instrument is copyrighted material), or submit a detailed description (with examples of items) of the research instruments, questionnaires, or tests that are to be used in the project. Copies will be retained in the permanent IRB files. If you intend to use a copyrighted instrument, please consult with your research advisor and your IRB chair. Please clearly name and identify all attached documents when you add them on the attachments tab.

I have agreed to conduct this project in accordance with Antioch University's policies and requirements involving research as outlined in the IRB Manual and supplemental materials.

