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Andrews University

School of Education

AN UNDERSTANDING OF SELECTED FAMILIAL DYNAMICS  
AS THEY RELATE TO THE PREVENTION OF  
SUBSTANCE USE AMONG YOUTH  
FROM ST. MARTIN

A Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Vincent A. David I

April 1999

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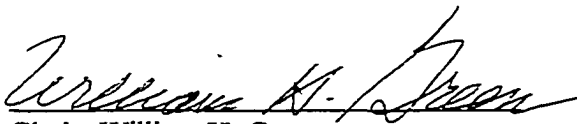
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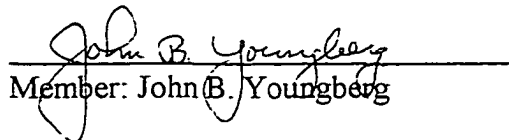
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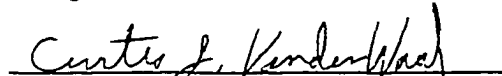
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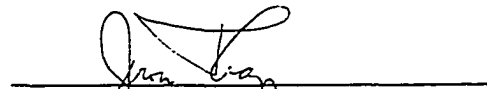
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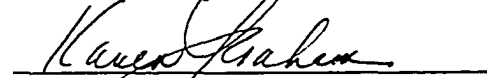
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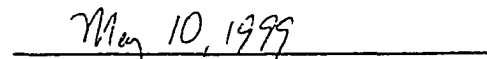
  
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ABSTRACT

AN UNDERSTANDING OF SELECTED FAMILIAL DYNAMICS  
AS THEY RELATE TO THE PREVENTION OF  
SUBSTANCE USE AMONG YOUTH  
FROM ST. MARTIN

by

Vincent A. David I

Chair: William H. Green, Ph.D.

## ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Dissertation

Andrews University

School of Education

Title: AN UNDERSTANDING OF SELECTED FAMILIAL DYNAMICS AS  
THEY RELATE TO THE PREVENTION OF SUBSTANCE USE AMONG  
YOUTH FROM ST. MARTIN

Name of researcher: Vincent Augustine David I

Name and degree of faculty chair: William H. Green, Ph.D.

Date completed: April 1999

### Problem

Various studies examined the relationship between youth, drug use, and the role that families play in influencing such use. Thus, it is evident that youth use drugs, and the reasons for their drug use vary widely. However, there have not been widespread research done on the youth who do not use drugs, particularly from a family perspective. Also, no research study has been known to be conducted on St. Martin of such nature.

## Purpose

This study sought to gain an understanding on how selected familial dynamics functioned within three families in deterring their youth from becoming involved in drugs.

## Methodology

This qualitative study used three mothers and youths within three different family structures selected by purposive sampling to explain why the youth avoided drugs. These structures were single-parent, stepparent, and two biological parent families. Data were collected through tape-recorded interviews, field notes, and reflective journal. For clarification purposes, data information from the informants was additionally provided via fax and telephone calls. A cross-case analysis was conducted and presented in text and tables.

## Findings and Conclusions

The findings provided an understanding of the youths' drug avoidance. The themes that emanated from the data were grouped within three selected familial dynamics chosen from previous research literature. The familial dynamics are relational, environmental, and religious. The study showed that the youths' relationships with their immediate and extended families either positively or negatively affected their decision to avoid drugs.

Additionally, the study revealed that all three youths were faced with positive and negative influences from friends, neighbors, and schools; yet, they maintained a drug-free lifestyle. A number of themes grouped within the religious dynamics were also instrumental in helping steer the youths from drug use. These themes were both

internal and external as they related to the families' religiosity and their church affiliation.

The study found that these youth had three catalysts against drug allurements, the relationship they experienced with their families, how they interacted with their environment, and their commitment and involvement in religious activities. The themes grouped within the relational, environmental, and religious dynamics aided in keeping these youths drug-free.



## DEDICATION

To my wife, Celeste,  
my “Mama”, Violet A. David,  
my parents-in-law, Lynch and Genevieve Rogers,  
and my loving children, Vincent II and Chaunielle  
who are always there for me.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Drug Prevalence**

Drug use among youth continues to be a problem. A wide range of studies both quantitative and qualitative have been conducted on the reasons why adults and adolescents use drugs. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1997) reported that drug use among Americans in general remained constant from 1995 to 1996. However, according to the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSAD) conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1997), there has been a decline in drug use among youth ages 12 to 17 years. This decline is the first in 5 years, since 1992.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (1998) reported that the long-term trend for 12<sup>th</sup> graders' drug use declined in the years 1980 to 1992, it increased between the years 1993 and 1995, and then it became stable for one year. In 1996, 59.9% of high-school seniors used drugs, primarily marijuana. This percentage has decreased from 78.6% in 1991 and from 60.8% in 1995. In the years 1996 and 1997 the number of 12<sup>th</sup> graders using drugs increased but it stabilized in 1998.

The University of Michigan Monitoring the Future annual survey was conducted by Johnston, Bachman, and O'Malley (1998) on some 50,000 students in over 422 secondary schools nationwide, which was representative of both public and private schools. The findings showed that drug use has recently begun to level off. For the first time in 6 years marijuana and a number of other drugs did not increase among eight-grade students in the United States.

According to Monitoring the Future (1995) the percentage of daily marijuana use increased within years 1991 through 1995 from 0.2 % to 0.8% for 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 0.8% to 2.8% for 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 2.0% to 4.6% for 12<sup>th</sup> graders. The Monitoring the Future (1998) study, also, revealed that the marijuana rates for 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders remained unchanged in the years 1996 through 1997.

The 1995 and 1997 Monitoring the Future studies found that cocaine use for 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students remained level, but for 12<sup>th</sup> graders who had used cocaine at least once increased from 7.1% in 1996 to 8.7% in 1997. The Monitoring the Future (1995) study reported that the use of crack/cocaine gradually increased 1.6 % (crack) and 2.6% (cocaine) for 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 1.8% (crack) 3.5% (cocaine) for 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 2.1% (crack) and 4.0% (cocaine) for 12<sup>th</sup> graders within the years 1991 through 1995. A later study (1998) revealed that the use of crack/cocaine among 10<sup>th</sup>- and 12-grade students was stable. The first-time use of crack/cocaine for 8<sup>th</sup> graders increased from 2.7% in 1997 to 3.2% in 1998. There was also an increase in crack/cocaine in the past year use from 1.7% to 2.1%.

The use of alcohol remained stable within the years 1991 through 1997, but it still continues to be a concern (Monitoring the Future, 1997). In 1997, the percentage of 8<sup>th</sup> graders who were reported as being drunk (in the past 30 days) decreased from 9.6% in 1996 to 8.2% (Monitoring the Future, 1997). The survey further showed that the attitude and beliefs among the majority of 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders were that drug use was perceived to be harmful (Monitoring the Future, 1997).

Reports from the Monitoring the Future study (1998) indicated that among 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders alcohol use has remained stable. Lifetime use for 10<sup>th</sup> graders has decreased some from 72.0% in 1997 to 69.8% in 1998 and past-year use from 65.2% in 1997 to 62.7% in 1998.

Amazingly, between 1995 to 1996 there has been an increase in drug use, namely cocaine, marijuana, and heroin among young adults ages 18-25 years. This drug use rate increased from 1.2% to 2.0% between 1995 and 1996 according to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1997). Kutter and McDermott (1997) found that alcohol is the most commonly used drug with more than 90% of high-school seniors reporting the use of it. This gives us an updated view on the use rates of drugs by youth. Thus, concern for the family has become an issue because of the strong youth drug involvement and the effects of drugs on youth.

### **Effects of Drug Use on Youth**

Substance use is linked to a number of ills affecting youth in society (Secretary of Health and Human Services, 1990). For instance, crime is strongly related to the use of alcohol and other drugs. More than 1.1 million annual arrests of illicit drugs violations,

almost 1.4 million arrests for driving while intoxicated, 48,000 arrests for liquor law violations, and 704,000 arrests for drunkenness come to a total of 4.3 million arrests for alcohol and other drug crimes.

The Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University (1993) reported that alcohol is the drug used most by adolescents 12-17-years-olds and the one that causes the most negative health consequences. More than 4 million adolescents under the legal drinking age consume alcohol in any given month. Alcohol-related car crashes are the number one killer of teens. Its use is also associated with homicides, suicides, and drownings—the other three leading causes of death among youth. The study further showed that alcohol and other drug use have been implicated as a factor in many of this country's most serious and expensive problems. These include violence, injury, child and spousal abuse, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, teen pregnancy, school failure, car crashes, escalated health care costs, low worker productivity, and homelessness (The Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 1993).

According to a 1991 national survey of college students, the following consequences resulted from drinking or drug use experience at least once in the past year: sixty-three percent had a hangover, 49.9% became nauseated or vomited, 39.3% regretted their actions, 36% drove while intoxicated, 33.2% got into an argument or fight, and 28% experienced memory loss (Presley & Meilman, 1992).

Mitchell (1994) stated that the use of alcohol and other drugs can affect judgement and lead to taking serious sexual risks. Among 13-24-year-olds, as reported to the

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were 18,540 cases of AIDS by the end of 1994. It further revealed that HIV/AIDS has been the sixth leading cause of death among 15-20-year-olds in the U.S. for over 3 years. For every five new cases of AIDS diagnosed, one is in the 20-29-year age group. This means that HIV transmission occurred during the teen years. Additionally, more than half of the new cases of HIV infection in 1994 were related to drug use in that a number of youth drink alcohol and use drugs prior to being involved in unprotected sexual activities.

### **Family Structure and Drug Use**

The studies concerning the effects of the family, in particular the number of parents in the home, on juvenile delinquency and its relation to drug use, have a long and substantial history (Hoffman, 1995; Toby, 1957; Wells & Rankin, 1986, 1991; Wilkinson, 1974). Hoffman (1995) stated that the presumption is that two parents provide better socialization or control over adolescent conduct than a single parent. However, when assessing delinquency and drug use, there is mixed support for this presumption.

Within the family structure there are a number of dynamics which play major roles in adolescent development and are associated with a number of behavioral problems, including the use of drugs. When speaking of family structure in this study, reference is made to single-parent families, natural-parent families, and stepparent families. Family structure in this research is the ball field in which family dynamics are played out.

These three family structures are representative of families in St. Martin, Netherlands Antilles, known as "the friendly island." One of the most important sources of moral influence is the parent(s). Hirschi (1969) posited that the relationships between



parents and youth have an influence on adolescents' propensity for deviant behavior. This theory could be generalized across all geographic boundaries including St. Martin.

A number of research studies reveal that children who are reared in single-parent families are more likely to have negative outcomes such as drug abuse, crime involvement, promiscuity, depressed economic deprivation, and low self-esteem than those with both parents (Dornbusch et al., 1985; Flewelling & Bauman, 1990; Garasky, 1995; Hetherington, Camara, & Featherman, 1983; Hoffman, 1995; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Newcomer & Udry, 1987; Zill, 1988). However, several other studies show that either family structure has only a negligible impact on child outcomes or that children from single-mother families are no more likely to be delinquent or use alcohol and other drugs than children from two-parent families (George & Farrell, 1996; Turner, Irwin, & Millstone, 1991; Watts & Watts, 1991).

Zill (1993) posited that it is vitally important to observe exactly how families are functioning rather than labeling various types of families as inevitably bad and others as invariably good. He further supports this by stating that there are a number of single parents who are able to manage their homes well, and have provided stable, secure, stimulating, and supportive home environments for their youths. Balswick and Balswick (1994) suggested that inactive involvement in family life and limited vision may be the very reason we fail to understand the family from a wider perspective. It is therefore important not only to examine the influence that family structure may have on drug use, but it is also important to understand how family members' drug use affects the family.

### **Impact of Drugs on Family**

The drug issue is not only affected by the family, but it impacts both youth and the family in one way or another. Drug addiction can become the most crucial problem that families must face. Often, families involved do not know what is happening to them (Hazelden News Bureau, 1998).

According to the Hazelden News Bureau (1998), a study based on 44,000 people conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics estimated that about 80 million adults in the United States either grew up in, married into, or have a family member who is addicted to a mood-altering substance. A number of drug offenders are incarcerated, which disrupts family connection and communication. Despair, confusion, anger, and crumbled dreams are not uncommon among families with a chemically dependent loved one.

Among other family effects, Muisener (1995) stated that several researchers have postulated that families are divided, parents lose their sense of efficacy, extreme behaviors are prompted, and the way the family adapts and functions changes. In addition, there is a distancing that happens between parent and child just when the child needs the parent's support.

A study by McBride, Mutch, Dudley, and Julian (1989) revealed that substance use could cause negative consequences. Out of 1,335 people surveyed, 35.5% reported that substance use caused them to behave in ways they later regretted. Also, of 1,335 people surveyed, 17.6% stated that substance use damaged their relationship with spouse, family members, and close friends. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

(1992) reported that people experiencing alcohol and other drug problems often feel that they hurt only themselves. However, this is not true; families, friends, coworkers, and others are also hurt. The study also revealed that 28 million persons ages 12 and older used drugs during the past year and, by current estimates, more than 76 million have been exposed to alcoholism in the family. Thus, for every person with an alcohol or other drug problem, there are at least four others affected by their behavior.

McBride (1997) stated that injecting-drug use, where individuals taking drugs intravenously accounted for 26% of all known AIDS cases and 27% in the year 1996. He further stated that the primary means through which women and children contract AIDS is injecting-drug use. Also, about 48% of women with AIDS were likely infected by their own injection drug use or that of their sex partners and that 53% of children with AIDS had mothers who were injecting drug users or who had sex with injecting drug users.

Understanding factors associated with drug use and abuse among youth may provide insight into identification of prevention measures and risk factors for building drug-free families. This qualitative case study research sought to explore family relations, family environmental settings, and family religiosity within the three types of family structures (single-parent, stepparent, and two-natural-parent) from St. Martin, as a potential means of preventing drug use and abuse in St. Martin.

### **Historical Background of St. Martin**

St. Martin is nestled in the Windward Islands of the Caribbean Sea. It is a small dual-nation island owned and governed by France and Holland. The land area measures 37 square miles with the Dutch territory in the south covering a land mass of 17 square

miles while the French government owns the remaining 20 square miles located in the north. The capitol of French St. Martin is Marigot and of Dutch St. Martin, Philipsburg. St. Martin is unique because of the two official languages, namely French and Dutch; however, the common language spoken is English. These individual nationalities influence both territories; however, the primary culture of St. Martin is strongly flavored in the sauce of the Black Caribbean culture. As a result, a strong poignant commonality exists between the people of both nations. Their spiritual heritage, their social orientation, and their cultural perspective allow them to mix and mingle comfortably and peacefully despite the two official nationalities. The youth who participated in this study are representatives of this dual nationality, culture, and heritage. It is important to note that the informants may be classified in the U.S. as minority youth because of their racial identity and orientation.

St. Martin, like a number of places including the United States, is confronted with disrupted family structures. The Government Information Services (1997) reported that in St. Martin, for every two marriages one ends in divorce. For instance, of the total number of married couples within a given year, there is a 48% divorce rate at the end of the same year with a number of these divorces involving children. This gives a picture of the single-parent dilemma that exists on the island of St. Martin.

St. Martin is also known for its rich culture and strong religious orientation and influence. Christianity is at the foundation of the island. The Catholic influence is strongest on the French side of the island, whereas Protestants greatly influence the Dutch side. However, St. Martin is not divided by religious beliefs since there is a strong

networking between these religions across the island. This involves joint worship services, religious activities, and spiritual interactions in one way or another. Every major Christian religious organization, such as, Methodist, Catholic, Baptist and Seventh-day Adventist, conducts one or more schools on the island. Once a year, precisely November 11th, the people of St. Martin celebrate what is known as St. Martin Day. This event brings the entire island together in a spiritual, political, cultural celebration of festivities of the unified past, present, and hopeful future. St. Martin is an amalgamation of people, culture, religion, and politics--a social melting pot. Hence, its name--The Friendly Island.

Both the French and the Dutch share the Princess Juliana International Airport located on the Dutch side. There is limited customs service provided at both the airport and Port Authority. Also the land boundaries are freely open without any form of surveillance, making travel from one side to the other problem-free. This, however, threatens the welfare of the island in that drug trafficking is easily conducted in this beautiful Caribbean island.

Based on the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (1996, 1997), St. Martin still shows evidence that it is a major center for cocaine and heroin shipments to the U.S. and Europe. The area around St. Martin continues to be used extensively by organizations dropping multi-hundred kilogram amounts of cocaine destined for Puerto Rico and the Netherlands. The report further stated that large shipments of cocaine continue to enter St. Martin on vessels originating from other Caribbean islands, Columbia, and the Cumana area of Venezuela.

According to the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (1998), cocaine and marijuana are the drugs of choice in the Netherland Antilles. Due to the abundance of cocaine, the production and availability of its cheaper derivative "crack" have also increased. The Dutch police and the French customs cooperate intensely to control drug trafficking throughout the island of St. Martin. With such active movements of drugs within St. Martin it is no wonder that drugs become accessible to youth on the island.

Drug selling and possession or use are illegal throughout the Caribbean, and the penalties for use or importation are harsh, yet drug use is prevalent among youth in St. Martin. According to Microsoft Expedia (1997),

Depending how you dress, your age, and your level of "hipness" you may find yourself approached by vendors hawking anything from local weed to harder stuff. We advise that some of these people work with the police, and also be advised of this: you do not want to do jail time anywhere in the Caribbean.

A number of crimes on St. Martin are related to drug-using youth, according to a report provided by The Turning Point Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Foundation (1998). The Turning Point Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Center (TP) is a nonprofit organization providing treatment, education, prevention, and professional services in chemical dependency and related addictive disorders. TP provides educational and prevention activities and programs for youth and the community schools. During 1997 and 1998 more than 650 youth benefited from programs and services provided by Turning Point Foundation.

For 10 years TP has provided treatment services to drug and alcohol addicts. It has serviced over 200 clients both outpatient and inpatient who ranged in age from 18 to

64 years old with a mean age of 37. Based on unpublished statistics, more than 90% of the clients started using drugs between the ages of 11 and 17. The widespread use of drugs among youth continues to be a major concern; however, hope is not lost. There are still drug-free young adults and youth in families whose stories have not been told.

### **Statement of Problem**

The incidence, prevalence, and reasons why youth use drugs have been prominent across research studies. Various researchers have studied the relationship between youth, drug use, and the role that families play in influencing such use. It is evident that youth do use drugs, and the reasons for their drug use vary widely. However, there has not been widespread research done on youth who do not use drugs, particularly from a family perspective. Also, no research study of such nature has been known to be conducted on St. Martin.

Literature, media, and research agencies spend much time and money to present the various reasons why teenagers and others use drugs. The negative reasons for teenage drug use is so often researched, that it seems to overshadow the positive reasons why youth avoid drugs. Furthermore, there is no research on youth drug use or drug avoidance in St. Martin.

The whole story has not been told because all youth have not used drugs. Societies do have within them families that are drug free. Amid the drug culture, parents have raised and are rearing youth who have remained drug-free adults. Their story is a success commentary-positive for society.

Often literature focuses on the family, peers, and school's influence on the youth's use or avoidance of drugs. No research is known to have examined how these three areas collectively aid youth to avoid drug use.

The commentary of the informants may hold within it means and strategies that will enable others to avoid or escape the drug culture. Since there has been no known research that focused on the relationship between these selected familial dynamics (namely, parent-child relations, environment, and religiosity) and the avoidance of drugs among youth in St. Martin from the youth's and parent's perspective, there is a call for further investigation, particularly in St. Martin. It is important to gain an understanding of how these selected familial dynamics (forces) that may have contributed to the prevention or abstinence of drug use among young adults within three St. Martin families in steering these young adults from using drugs during their youth. Before proceeding further, family dynamics and other terms used within this study will be defined.

### **Definitions**

First, it is important to clarify that *family structure* consists of (1) the *natural-parent family*, where both biological parents live in the home, (2) the *single-parent family*, having only one natural parent present, and the (3) *stepparent family*, meaning one of the parents is not a biological parent.

In this study, *family dynamics* refers to three factors that occur in the family structure. Such dynamics include *relations*, *environment*, and *religiosity*.

*Family relations* relate to those factors which aid in bonding parent and youth in a loving and caring way. Such factors include respect, support, discipline, supervision, time



spent together, encouragement, decision-making, communication, attachment, and involvement.

In speaking of *family environment* this study focuses on the community, school, one's home setting and family culture, friends, significant others, the economy, and other external forces that affect the family in one way or another. These forces may affect youth involvement or non-involvement in illicit or licit drug use.

Finally, *family religiosity* suggests church involvement, church attendance, and personal and family devotion.

A *youth* is defined in this study as an adolescent or someone from age 12 to early 20. In addition to this it is important to note that *young adult* refers to persons ranging in age from their early 20s to age 40 (Papilia & Olds, 1995).

*Drugs* is defined as substances known as psychoactive substances that affect the central nervous system and alter consciousness and/or perceptions. There are two types of psychoactive drugs. The first is *licit drugs* (legal) such as coffee, tobacco, and alcohol. The second type is *illicit drugs* (illegal) which include marijuana, cocaine, crack, amphetamines, etc. (Hanson & Venturelli, 1998).

*Drug abuse* occurs when a person deliberately misuses either licit or illicit drugs for perceived necessity, recreation, or suitability.

*Drug addiction* involves noncasual or nonrecreational drug use. There is a high level of and consistent craving with obtaining and consuming of drugs. Both physiological and psychological symptoms of withdrawal are often manifested when the craving for the drug is not satisfied. (Hanson & Venturelli, 1998, p. 7)

There are certain important ideas and practices that parents transmit to children as part of their nurturing experience. These include norms, values, beliefs, traditions,

legacies, and social and religious practices of the parents. These, in one way or another, affect the child positively or negatively.

### **Statement of Purpose**

This descriptive qualitative case study sought to understand the relationship between selected familial dynamics and how the dynamics related to the avoidance of substance use among young adults from St. Martin during their youth. The young adults are selected from three St. Martin families representing three types of family structures.

Most substance abuse literature deals with non-substance use from a deductive process, whereas qualitative case study allows the researcher to infer and know what is using an inductive process. It involves making inferences rather than being conclusive. What do these young adults have to share with us? Seeing that it is assumed that drugs are easily accessible in society and that it is normal for people to experiment with and use drugs, rather than asking why these young adults use drugs, the big question is, “Why didn’t these young adults use drugs when they were youths?”

This study allowed the young adults and parents to share their story so as to give us an understanding of how the selected familial dynamics worked in aiding youth to avoid drug use. The study hopes to have significant bearings on the families on the island of St. Martin as a point of reference regarding drug-related research. Thus, common and unique factors can be developed into programs, strategies, and preventive modes relevant to St. Martin’s culture.

The research study further intends to be an eye-opener to the locals concerning the need to focus on the good that is in the society with the hope of providing motivation for

other youth to avoid drug use. This may also prove to be an educational tool or model for families who desire to be or remain drug free. And finally, this may provide a launching pad for the island's Drug Rehabilitation Center's research program and activities. It is for these reasons that this research was conducted.

### **Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into nine chapters. Chapter 1 provides the background and importance of this study, describing the rationale and contextual framework. Chapter 2 presents a review of the related literature regarding drug use or non-drug use. Chapter 3 includes the research process through which this study was conducted. It also contains a presentation and description of the themes which emerged from the data. Chapters 4 through 6 exhibit the individual cases of each family represented in this study regarding how the youth were able to avoid drug use. Chapters 7 and 8 display the similarities, differences, and the uniqueness of the families' stories in a cross-case analysis. Chapter 9, the final chapter, concludes with a summary, conclusions, and recommendations from the research findings.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The material presented in this chapter deals with reasons for drug use and non-drug use among youth. Important to this study as a theoretical framework is Social Control Theory (Hirschi, 1969). The reader will further realize that the literature deals specifically with the relational factors between parent and child such as family structure, parent-child attachment, and parent-child support; and the environmental factors significant role models, school, peers, and neighborhood and communities. Also, the religious factors presented in this literature review include religious commitment, beliefs, and involvement. This literature review will provide a broad base knowledge to introduce the reader to the study.

The literature in respect to the drug issue are intriguing in that the drug issue has become a concern across all walks of life. The use of drugs has infiltrated social, economic, and political realms. As a result, over the years, the drug impact has drawn researchers to dig and explore its many facets, yet to this day the answers are not conclusive.

Research on the reasons for drug use is extensive. These studies provide a number of rationales for drug use by adolescents and have left researchers with innumerable factors that may or may not have contributed to substance use (Baumrind, 1985; Hoffman, 1993; National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1997; Newcomb,

Chou, Bentler, & Huba, 1988; St. Pierre, Mark, Kaltriever, & Aiken, 1997).

### **Reasons for Drug Use**

Adolescents use drugs for different reasons, under varied circumstances, and for particular purposes. Goldstein (1966) reported that most of the users claim they use marijuana simply because it gives them pleasure. According to Light (1975) and McCallum (1994), other reasons besides pleasure include: curiosity, relief from boredom, to express rebellion, to have an intense personal experience, and to seek status with a peer group. Some researchers even suggested that drug use by the adolescent may be an attempt to be more closely linked to the distant parent by forcing parental opposition to the child's drug use (Hendin, Pollinger, Ulman, & Carr, 1981) or to generate some intimacy and togetherness between the two parents, as they work to deal with the child (Chein, Gerard, Lee, & Rosenfeld, 1964; Stanton, 1979).

Still other researchers (Baumrind, 1985; Farrington, 1979; McCord, 1981; Needle, Laver, Su, Brown, & Doherty, 1988; Nurco, Shaffer, & Crisin, 1984) found similar and additional factors which can influence drug use of youth. These factors involve family rearing practices, conflicts between parents, and the family's socioeconomic status, including poor living conditions, which combine to increase the risk for delinquency, truancy from school, and drug use.

### **Reasons for Non-Drug Use**

However, research has also shown that there are a number of factors which appear to be very important in steering youth from drug use. McBride, Mutch, and Chitwood (1996) found the following reasons why youth avoid drug use; concern for health, being in control of one's life, commitment to follow Christ, unwillingness to disappoint parents, fear of damaging future children, concern for academic standing, fear of damaging future occupation and profession, fear of the law/authority, fear of parental reaction, and because their peers did not use drugs. A survey conducted by Fleming and Manson (1990) found that a well-defined spiritual belief system, a positive sense of self-worth, the ability to make good decisions about personal responsibilities, and the ability to act independently of others' influences served as deterrents to youth involvement in drugs. They further indicated that friends and peers who act in healthy and responsible ways can also serve as models for at-risk youth. Stacy, Newcomb, and Bentler (1992) discovered that a high degree of self-acceptance moderated the relationship between peer use of hard drugs and the personal-use of hard drugs such as crack or cocaine.

Research has also shown that the reasons which appear to be very important in steering youth from drug use can be attributed to a number of mediating factors called protective factors. According to Newcomb (1992), protective factors such as psychosocial influences, help to deter or minimize drug use and involvement. Psychosocial factors include the following cultural/societal, family, peer, and personality/attitudes (Brooks & Brooks, 1996).

### **Family Protective Factors**

One protective factor involved in deterring youth from drug use is a positive interpersonal relationship with one caring parent or adult (Minty, 1988; Rutter, 1987; Werner, 1986). To a great extent, the mother is often considered the one caring parent, since the children often spend more time with the mother. Thus, the characteristics of the mother become critical. Franz, McClelland, and Weinberger (1991), Lytton (1990), and McCord (1991) discovered that competent mothers who are self-confident, affectionate, and nonpunitive, and who have leadership ability and skills, produce children who are less likely to become delinquent or drug users. Garmezy (1985) and Masten and Garmezy (1985) studied stress-resistant, “invulnerable,” or resilient children and found that youth can develop into competent, motivated, and successful youth when they have a supportive family environment. Mills (1990) also found that youth are less likely to get involved in drug use if their parents have developed in them the attitude that they themselves have all that is needed to become successful. According to Santisteban, Szapocznik, and Rio (1993), a supportive and flexible family acts as a protective means for youth non-drug use in their later years. In addition, Newcomb (1995) found that close and supportive family relationships may protect children from the allurements of drugs.

Additional protective family factors include providing the right opportunities for youth to develop coping skills and self-confidence (Rutter, 1987); upholding family rituals and routines (Wolin, Bennett, & Noonan, 1979); providing academic, social, and life skills development; encouraging positive normative and moral development (Damon, 1988); through family religious involvement (Estrada, Rabow, & Watts,

1982); and helping to select positive friends and activities (Kumpfer & Alvarado, 1995).

### **Environmental Protective Factors**

In addition to minimizing drug involvement through family protective factors, there are environmental protective factors that moderate the relationship between risk for drug use or abuse. Bernard (1990) stated that when youth know that their home, school personnel, and community members (both social and religious) have high expectations of them, they tend to avoid drug use. According to McBride et al. (1996), those in the substance abuse prevention and treatment fields have come to realize the role of communities of religious faith in prevention. For example, the Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT) has published material concerning the involvement of religious groups in prevention. CSAT focused on elements of religious beliefs viewed as particularly effective in prevention. Specifically, the agency stated that the focus of the clergy concerning substance abuse is that it is a violation of the body as the temple of God. They also advocated religious beliefs, and not drugs, as a solution for hopelessness (Mitchell, 1994).

While maintaining that there are a number of factors for drug use among youth, there appears to be no single factor which stands out from the other, for some youth still manage to succeed in the face of adversity. As stated in Bernard (1993a, 1993b, 1993c), some children who live in adverse circumstances such as poverty, neglect, parental alcoholism, and criminality still grow up to lead successful and meaningful adult lives. Therefore, researchers are left to ask, What is right with these children and



what protects them? (Werner, 1990).

Thornberry (1996) suggested that success in the face of poverty and adversity is likely a result of the protective factors within these multiple domains which help to shield youth from drug use. His study discovered it was the combined force of multiple protective factors which made the difference. When these factors are present in multiple domains, such as family, school, peers, neighborhood, and the church, they can steer high-risk adolescents from drug use. A positive environment can safely and strongly help to raise drug-free youth. Youth, as explored by Richardson, Neiger, Jensen, and Kumpfer (1990), developed resiliency as they were taught skills for dealing with challenges and life traumas. Thus, many children, even in the face of multiple risks, can demonstrate resiliency at remarkable levels.

These factors, both internal and external, play a major role in providing deterrents for drug use among youth. I have chosen, however, to focus this research on relational, and environmental and religious factors or dynamics. Also, understanding will be sought within a theoretical framework, specifically Hirschi's Social Control Theory, as to how these dynamics may have worked within the family in deterring substance use among youth.

### **Hirschi's Social Control Theory**

One theory which helps explain why a person would or would not use drugs is Social Control Theory, developed by Hirschi (1969). He advanced his theory on the theoretical framework of Durkheim. According to Durkheim (1950), the reason why individuals did not commit deviant acts is because they were integrated with society.

He further believed in the necessity of social integration for the survival of society and individual fulfillment. His primary theoretical interest was in examining the nature of the social bond and in developing strategies to promote social integration and inhibit anomie.

Anomie, according to Durkheim (1950), occurs when individuals turn to deviant behavior because they are unable to achieve their goals due to society's failure to provide the means and opportunities for individuals to achieve the desired goals. In Durkheim's (1950) view, society provides the goals, direction, and meaning for individual lives. When society is in a state of anomie, it no longer can perform those functions. Mark (1974, cited in McBride, 1995) found that when left to their own resources, individuals began to engage in aberrant behavior. It was on this premise that Hirschi developed Social Control Theory.

Social Control Theory assumes that human beings are inherently antisocial and that it is natural for them to commit deviant acts. Because deviant acts are natural responses to laws and scarce resources, conformity rather than deviant acts must be explained (Hirschi, 1969). Hence, in context of the drug issue, rather than asking why people use drugs, the question needs to be, "Why don't people use drugs?"

Hirschi's Social Control Theory (1969) consists of four elements. These elements are attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. For youth, attachment consists of affective ties to parents, environment, and religion. Commitment refers to youths' desires for attending college, maintaining parent-child relationships, and belonging to a religious organization. Involvement is participation in religious organizations and activities, traditional activities within the family and society. Belief

is respect and acceptance for the rules and norms of family and society. Based on this theory individuals who are high on attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief are less prone to deviate from the norms of society--this includes norms regarding drug use. According to Hirschi (1969), conformity is based on a bond that exists between individuals and society. It is this bond that keeps them from breaking the rules. Beccaria (1967) answered the question of "Why don't they do it?" by arguing that individuals will not violate social norms if doing so would cause them pain. From this perspective, it is inferred that individuals know that there will be pain when their behavior contradicts societal norms. Thus, they are most likely to avoid such behaviors and become committed to those norms set forth by society.

As an integrated theory, researchers have used Social Control Theory as an explanation in helping to provide an understanding regarding the influences for drug use (Marcos & Bahr, 1988; Marcos, Bahr, & Johnson, 1986). While many factors may buffer youth from drug use, three factors in particular have been selected for further exploration in this study. These include relational, environmental, and religious factors. The relational, environmental, and religious factors based on research have been shown to be individually influential in affecting the youth's decision to use or to avoid drugs. Hence, this study incorporated these three factors to explore how they may have functioned together in deterring the youth drug use. Social Control Theory will be utilized as an explanation for why the buffering occurs. The following literature review provides understanding into the relationship between these three factors and non-drug use.

### **Relational Factors**

It is widely recognized that the family, a primary agent of socialization in societies, has a strong influence in the etiology of adolescent drug use. Literature suggests that strong parental bonding, high parental involvement in activities, maternal love and family history, and disapproval of drug use decrease the risks of adolescent drug use (St. Pierre et al., 1997).

### **Family Structure**

In the past it was generally speculated that there was a clear link between family structure and drug use. Much research proposed that single-parent families verses two-parent families produced adolescents who were at high risk for drug use. For example, Flewelling and Bauman (1990) found that family structure significantly affected marijuana use among adolescents both cross-sectionally and longitudinally. Additionally, adolescents from single-parent and stepparent homes were more likely to initiate and continue to use marijuana than those who lived with both parents.

In contrast, other researchers found that family structure had no effect on youth drug use. Hoffman (1993) found that adolescents who came from other types of families showed no difference on attachment or involvement when compared to adolescent from natural two-parent homes. He further stated that being in a single-parent or stepparent family does not automatically put adolescents at a disadvantage (Hoffman, 1995).

Questions are being raised concerning the positive outcomes of single-parent families. Thomas (1996) postulated that children who were considered at high risk for

drug abuse showed resilience and functioned well within their societies. Hence, it is not clear whether, or to what degree, family structure is directly related to drug use among youth. Perhaps most important is that most research in this area is correlational and fails to understand and consider how certain dynamics within any family structure--single parent, stepparent, or two-parent--inhibit adolescents' substance use.

### Parent-Child Attachment

Of all the family factors associated with drug use and abuse, the parent/child relation is very important. Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory stressed the role of parental attachment. He viewed attachment to others as an emotional dimension of the social bond that prevents an individual from violating social norms. Hirschi (1969) maintained that beliefs in the moral validity of parental norms and restrictions quarantine youth from deviance. He further stated that as long as the individual does not care about the reactions of significant others, such an individual is free to deviate. Brook, Whiteman, and Finch (1993) strongly believed that secure attachment between parent and child (which is mutual attachment) insulates the youngster from drug use. Their study shows that insulation can take place in one of two ways. One is through the adolescent's conventionality. A secure attachment between parent and child was related to the development of conventionality, which played a role in the youngster's drug use. Conventional is a term used by Kohlberg that describes the right and wrong behaviors based on societal standards. Second, this mutual attachment relationship in late adolescence could, in turn, be related to less drug use by the youth.

McCallum (1994) indicated that children who have a close attachment to their parents report low alcohol and drug use. A study conducted by McBride et al. (1996) revealed that approximately 51% of the overall population of college students surveyed stated that they did not use drugs because they were concerned about maintaining good parental relationships.

Other findings showed that family cohesion was higher for families in which a female adolescent used only alcohol as opposed to families in which the females used marijuana (Andrews, Hops, Ary, Lichtenstein, & Tildesley, 1991). Hoffman (1995) maintained that when family relations are strong and stable adolescents can be steered away from using marijuana. Hence, family relations are thought to influence the probability of non-drug or drug use by adolescents (Brook, Brook, Gordon, Whiteman, & Cohen, 1990; Coombs & Landsverk, 1988; Dembo, Grandon, LaVoie, Schmeidler, & Burgos, 1986; Dishion & Loeber, 1985; Flewelling & Bauman, 1990).

#### Parent-Child Support

Hirschi advanced his theory on the theoretical framework of Durkheim (1950), who said that human beings are viewed as the happiest and most creative when they have a strong social bond with others. He further believed that people who were highly integrated with society did abuse drugs. Children who had frequent communication with their parents used drugs and alcohol less often than children who had a decreased parent-child interaction. Individuals who were consciously, positively, and productively involved; who had a sense of belonging, and thus felt they were making a difference by contributing to society, family, group, etc., usually did not get

into trouble. It is Hirschi's belief that such individuals do not engage in deviant behavior because they are too busy and do not have the time. Therefore, establishing positive activities with children cannot be overstated as a protective factor against many problem behaviors (McCallum, 1994) such as substance use.

Reports on a survey of young people in England showed that families who spend time together are more likely to avoid social ills (Whitehead, 1996). Low levels of affection, poor supervision, and less parent-adolescent involvement are associated with greater marijuana and other illicit drug use (Brook et al., 1990; Dishion & Loeber, 1985; White, Pandina, & LaGrange, 1986, 1987).

The quality of support within the parent-child relationship appears to be very important in the nonuse of drugs. As shown by a large number of investigators, prevention of drug use among adolescents has been related to parental influence such as "closeness to one's parents" (Babst, Deren, Schmeidler, Lipton, & Dembo, 1978; Burkett & Jensen, 1975; McIntosh, Fitch, Wilson, & Nyberg, 1981; Tudor, Petersen, & Elifson, 1980). Researchers have found that parent-adolescent bonds have a significant impact on the risk of adolescent drug use. Chassin, Presson, Sherman, Montello, and McGrew (1986) studied initiation to cigarette smoking among 3,800 students in Grades 6 through 11. The smoking behavior and the relationship of the subjects were measured twice at a year interval. Youth with highly supportive parents were less likely to initiate smoking, and if they had initiated smoking, they were less likely to become regular smokers than were youth who received low levels of parental support.

McCallum (1994) commented that a close parent-child relationship occurs when the child has feelings of comfort and belonging and is being loved and accepted. According to the Louisiana State University and the University of Southern California Research Centers (1994) children who said that their parents frequently communicated with them used alcohol and drugs less often than their peers who came from families with less parent-child interaction. The study further revealed that having surveyed 1,034 fifth graders and 1,266 seventh graders that children with more parental monitoring were less likely to choose substance-abusing friends. Thus, they concluded that relationships that are defined by encouragement for the child and frequent communication between parent and child serve as an effective deterrent to drug use by adolescents. Furthermore, St. Pierre et al. (1997) stated that a warm, emotionally close relationship with a parent that includes open communication, quality time spent together, and parental assistance with problem-solving may help protect youth from drug use. They further stated that even after marijuana use had begun, family relations minimize its use.

Drug use is further reduced due to close parental supervision whereas when this is removed the chances of a child using drugs increases (Thornberry, 1996). Brook, Whiteman, and Gordon (1983) examined how stages of adolescent drug use were related to characteristics of the family and peer group. The stages were “no use,” “alcohol use only,” “marijuana use,” and “use of other illicit drugs.” They found that low parental warmth and high parental rejection were associated with a higher stage of drug use regardless of the nature of peer group. The findings from a number of other studies suggested that the strength of the parent-child bond has a significant influence



on the amount of adolescent drug use (Barnes, Farrel, & Cairns, 1986; Johnson & Pandina, 1991; McCord, 1991; Vicary & Lerner, 1986). McBride et al. (1996) further found that youth do not use drugs because they were fearful of parental reaction to them.

Poor parent-child relations allow exposure to a greater variety of peers, including drug-using peers (Elliot, Huizinga, & Ageton, 1985; cf. Simmons, Conger, & Whitebeck, 1988; Thornberry, 1987). Yet, on the other hand, strong family relations tend to decrease the number of drug-using peers thus resulting in tendency towards a reduction in marijuana use (Hoffman, 1994). This is an indication that good parent-child relations decrease exposure to drug-using peer influences.

Hundleby and Mercer (1987) examined the role of family and friends in the use of alcohol, tobacco, and marijuana among 2,000 adolescents. They discovered that although drug use by friends was the most predictive of all measures, family characteristics contributed substantially and uniquely to the variance in adolescent drug use. Parental affection, concern, and involvement were particularly important.

### Summary

Protective factors include a secure attachment between parent and child, families spending time together, the children's feelings of comfort and belonging in the family, the parents' frequent communication with their children, and parental supervision of the children. Apparently, family relations, primarily between parent and adolescent, are weakened or strengthened because of drug use or non-drug use. This does not necessarily suggest that drug use or non-drug use is a result of family

relations. Therefore, the relation between the family environment and the substance use of adolescents calls for further investigation.

### **Environmental Factors**

Even though youths' first and foremost influence comes through their family, the external system (outside the family) also reinforces positive values to protect against drug use. As suggested by Durkheim (1950), the reason why people behave the way they do is a result of the way society is structured. According to Durkheim's (1950) theory, society to a great extent sets the norms and values by which a person lives and operates within the given society. As social beings, people need each other to function happily and effectively. Therefore, if people are allowed to become an integral part of their community by working and earning an honest pay, contributing to society's development while at the same time benefiting from society, they would more likely live by the norms and values set by the society at large.

Hirschi (1969) emphasized that a shared belief system promotes social solidarity and conformity. He maintained that if individuals believe and accept traditional societal norms and values, they will be less likely to commit deviant acts. Establishing a positive bond with at least one person outside the immediate family can buffer adolescents from the risks of drug use. Youth who are exposed to multiple risks, but who also have well-developed problem-solving skills, and who have several close friends to rely on for social support tend to have more positive outcomes (meaning lower drug use) than do other at-risk youth (St. Pierre et al., 1997; Werner & Smith, 1982).

### Significant Role Models

Of increasing importance to address in drug prevention is the profound influence of peers, school and work settings, and communities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1986). This positive external support system encourages youths' coping efforts that help to protect against drug use. He proposed that children are shaped not only by the way they regard themselves, but also by the larger expanding environment in which they grow. It is evident that when human beings are immersed in their environment they become an integral part of the society.

Many attitudes are acquired from one's immediate family, yet behavior is influenced through other controls which can deter youth from deviant behavior. Garnezy (1985) stated that there is an external support system other than the immediate family that encourages youths' coping efforts, which reinforce positive values that may protect against drug use. Such systems may include school, neighborhood, friends, other relatives, and the church. Werner and Smith (1982) noted that forming a bond with at least one other person such as grandparent, teacher, friend, or other adult who is a positive role model can also hinder adolescents from risks. According to the (PRIDE) study (1996), students are using drugs far more often at home, in cars, and at places in the community other than schools.

### School

According to Thornberry (1996), there are a number of educational factors that are correlated with non-drug use. These factors include higher reading and math scores; commitment to school; attachment to teachers; aspirations towards college;

parental expectations that the child will go to college; and parental attitudes towards college. Based on a study conducted by Thornberry (1996), where 1,000 Rochester, New York, adolescents from the seventh and eighth grades through the 11th and 12th grades were surveyed, he found that after 1 year 86.6% of the high-risk youth population resisted illegal drug use if they had available six or more of the protective factors. Also, when four or five protective factors were present, 44.8% of the at-risk group resisted drug use after 1 year. McBride et al. (1996) surveyed 1,865 students from two colleges affiliated with a conservative church. This organization advocates and teaches abstinence from alcohol and other drugs. The survey focused on a wide variety of variables. It was found that 61.9% did not use drugs because of their concern for academic standing and 68.2% refused to use drugs because of their concern for future occupation/profession--an apparent commitment to educational pursuit. The National PRIDE study (1996) revealed that teachers are giving their students more guidance about drugs than students receive from their own parents and friends.

### Peers

Another strong predictor of drug use or nonuse within the environment is the peer group (Kandel, 1982; Oetting & Beauvais, 1986). Agnew (1991) pointed out that the nature of peer interaction, including closeness, attachment, time spent together, and pressure, influences the likelihood of delinquency and drug use. Peers provide an important learning environment and opportunities that can reinforce drug-using behaviors (Krohn, Akers, Radosevich, & Lanza-Kaduce, 1982). Other

researchers such as Akers (1973), Conger (1976), and Kandel, Treiman, Faust, and Single (1976) suggested that ties with “unconventional others” such as peers who are deviant greatly lessen the importance of parental influences or the other way around.

However, and most importantly, there are positive peer influences in neighborhoods that help protect adolescents from drug use. Dnistrian (1992) studied 7,288 inner-city youth from both public and parochial schools in the five boroughs of New York. He reported that:

1. Seventy-six percent of children in Grades 4-6 and 88% in Grades 2-3 reported that none of their friends used illegal drugs.
2. Ninety percent of children in Grades 4-6 interviewed did not believe that a person is more cool or popular if he or she used drugs.
3. Ninety percent of all children do not believe that drug users have more fun.
4. Ninety percent of the respondents in Grades 4-6 do not believe that using drugs helps that user to get a boyfriend or girlfriend.
5. Ninety percent in Grades 4-6 believe that users of marijuana stand to lose their friends.
6. Ninety percent in Grades 2-3 believe that marijuana use can mess up your life.

What these findings show is that children can be positively influenced about the dangers and harmful consequences of drug involvement. Also, this can set a strong foundation for resistance before they are seriously challenged to use drugs. McBride et al's (1996) survey showed that some youth avoid drug use as a result of their non-using friends. One study conducted by Hardesty and Kirby (1995) displayed that teens

do not choose friends who use drugs if their family is actively religious. This is an indication that youth develop relationships with peers who influence them in making positive choices such as not using drugs.

### Neighborhood and Community

Other research showed that certain youth are more susceptible to drug use than others (Benson & Donahue, 1989; Hawkins, Lishner, & Catalano, 1985; Kandel, Kessler, & Margulies, 1978; Johnson, Williams, Dei, & Sanabria, 1990). The presence of crime, crowding, unemployment, homelessness, poor nutrition, and dysfunctional family life is known to be associated with an increase in drug use. Researchers hold that youth who are exposed to the above circumstances are at greater risk because they may directly relate these factors to the presence of drugs in the neighborhoods and communities (Trimble, Padilla, & Bell, 1987). "Youth who perceive their neighborhood to be tough and drug-oriented are much more likely to report marijuana use for both themselves and their peers than those who do not perceive their neighborhood as tough" (Padilla, Duran, & Nobles, 1995, p. 412). The relationship between neighborhood setting and drug use appears to be drug specific. For alcohol and tobacco, familiarity with peer use was highly predictive of personal use, independent of how tough or drug-involved the neighborhood was thought to be, but quite dependent on neighborhood perceptions for personal marijuana use (Padilla et al., 1995).

These studies appeared to suggest that non-drug use among youth is contingent on the possibility that neighbors or communities are to provide healthy protective

factors, whether through peer interaction or drug preventive activities. Neighborhoods that provide these things are more able to help steer youth from drug involvement. Neighborhood and community organizations should provide drug prevention programs, intervention activities, and positive peer interaction to help youth from becoming involved with drugs. Even though the neighborhoods are drug infested or there is high drug use in the communities, organized prevention programs, intervention activities, and positive peer interaction within these neighborhoods can deter youth from drug use.

### Summary

A number of preventive factors in steering youth from drug involvement were presented in this section. These factors are shared beliefs and a positive bond with at least one person outside the immediate family such as grandparent, teacher, friend, or other adult who is a positive role model. Educational factors consist of higher reading and math scores, commitment to school, attachment to teachers, aspiration towards college, parental expectations that child will attend college, and positive parental attitudes towards college. Other factors include time spent together and avoiding “unconventional others” such as peers who are deviant.

Thus youth who are strongly associated in an active manner with significant others such as good and positive role models, peers who are influential for good, and are firmly motivated in their school and neighborhood are less likely to be involved in drug use. To summarize, as cited in the Handbook on Drug Abuse Prevention (Coombs & Ziedonis, 1995, p. 412), it is not physical environment per se that is

important, but how youth interact with the people in it and how they perceive those people in relation to themselves (Blount & Dembo, 1984).

### **Religious Factors**

Another protective factor of particular interest in the prevention of adolescent substance use is religiosity. This refers to one's spiritual well-being, commitment to and practice of beliefs, church involvement and interest, and religious proscriptiveness, which Kutter and McDermott (1997) referred to as the "predominant values held by a particular religious group regarding substance use" (p. 294).

As one develops a concern regarding conformity, the cost of deviant behavior rises. Involvement in conventional activities takes time that might be otherwise spent in deviant pursuits (Hirschi, 1969). However, Hirschi and Stark (1969) originally believed that religiosity was not associated with deviant behavior. Thus religion was not used as a theoretical tool for understanding such behavior. Nevertheless, this view began to change as researchers provided evidence to the contrary. Such evidence showed that membership in a religious organization and religiosity--defined as frequency of attendance and church involvement--were consistently related to lower levels of alcohol and drug use. Research by Burkett and White (1974) discovered that there was a moderately strong inverse relationship between religiosity and marijuana and alcohol use. In addition to these, Tittle and Welch (1983) found that religiosity was inversely related to deviant behavior. After further studies, Stark (1984) renounced his former beliefs and supported the finding that religion did have a powerful effect on human behavior and that there was a need to examine more closely



how religion affected behavior.

### Religious Commitment

Commitment is the state of being obligated or emotionally impelled to someone or something. It also includes mutual agreement that is often based on rewards. The violation of social norms is seen by Hirschi (1969), at least in part, as a rational decision in which the rewards for violations are weighed against the reward to be lost by violation. In other words, it is believed that individuals who see a positive reason(s) to be committed inevitably become and remain committed. Hence, commitment to a religious organization and its goals may provide meaning to life that makes drug use less attractive. The basic questions are: If I do use drugs, what are the benefits? If I don't use drugs, what do I have to lose? Hirschi (1969) saw individuals as free to deviate when they are not committed to goals and rewards that demand conventional behavior. In support of this theory, Hays, Stacy, Widaman, and Downey (1986) and Newcomb and Bentler (1986) found religious commitment in adolescents to be an important factor in reducing drug and alcohol use and a lesser intention to use cocaine.

A research study was conducted by Burkett (1993) in two public high schools in the Pacific Northwest. The samples were predominantly Protestant. The students completed a self-administered questionnaire as they progressed through 3 years of high school (Grades 10, 11, and 12). According to his findings, parents' religious commitment helps youth to shun alcohol use in two ways. First, they are helped by developing their own strong religious commitment, and second, by encouraging adolescents to select associates who do not use alcohol. Hardesty and Kirby (1995)

supported this position by contending that teens whose families are religiously involved avoid selecting friends who use drugs. Thus, they are sheltered from drug use. In addition, McBride et al. (1996) surveyed 1,865 students from two Seventh-day Adventist church-operated colleges. This study showed that 73% of the respondents indicated that a commitment to following Christ deterred them from choosing to be involved in alcohol and drug use.

The Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance report by Dudley and Gillespie (1992) examined faith maturity among 12,142 Seventh-day Adventist youth from Grades 6 through 12. This group was comprised of two subsets, the first, a group of 10,641 Adventist youth in Adventist schools and the other 457 Adventist youth in non-Adventist schools. When compared to non-Adventist youth on a national basis, it was discovered that at-risk behaviors are consistently lower among adolescents in the North American Division (NAD) of Seventh-day Adventists than among the total population of adolescents in the United States of America in the use of licit and illicit drugs. The research suggested that something is providing a protective environment for Adventist young people. Credit therefore can be given to the homes, the educational system, the church, and the Adventist lifestyle beliefs. Strong and supportive Christian homes seem to produce youth who tend to avoid self-destructive behaviors.

### Religious Beliefs

When researching the impact that religion plays in the prevention of drugs amongst youth, the effects are considerable. According to Dudley, Mutch, and Cruise

(1987), in a research study conducted in a Protestant denomination, non-alcohol use was found to be most related to personal prayer and family worship. McBride et al. (1996) surveyed 1,865 students from two Seventh-day Adventist church-operated colleges. This study used a wide variety of variables in order to understand youths' decision to abstain from alcohol or drugs. Among the variables used, 84.3% stated that control of one's life was one reason to avoid drugs, and 87% of the students disclosed that the dangers of alcohol and drugs to health did, or would, influence their abstinence from drug use. A number of researchers have concluded that perceived harmfulness is an important factor in the abstinence of drug use. Stacy, Bentler, and Newcomb (1991) found that, particularly for males, the perceived harmfulness of drugs had a stronger relationship to drug nonuse than any other reason for abstinence. Duncan (1988) and Sarvela and McClendon (1988) also found that in very diverse populations, perceived physical and mental consequences were strong predictors of abstinence and cessation. Similarly, as revealed in a large complex study of alcohol abstinence, DiClemente, Carbonair, Rosario, and Montgomery (1994) found that perceived physical harm was related to abstinence in light of the body being the temple of God. Thus, religious emphasis on avoiding the harmful may play a role in youth decisions to avoid or limit illicit substance use in general society.

Furthermore, McBride et al. (1996) stated that it appears that religion operates as a strong social control mechanism through general socialization in which youth are taught morally based beliefs, norms, attitudes, and ethical guidelines favorable to alcohol and drug abstinence or moderation.

### Religious Involvement

One type of conventional activity which tends to foster anti-drug attitudes and to provide controls against drug abuse is religious involvement. Rohrbaugh and Jessor (1975) maintained that an orientation toward religion can serve multiple and diverse functions for an individual. This includes providing meaning to one's life, obtaining a sense of fulfillment, securing access to social contacts and interpersonal relationships, and offering a set of standards on which individual actions are judged. From a Christian viewpoint, Orrdt (1991) postulated that "the maturity of one's moral decision-making cannot be separated from the maturity of one's spiritual development. A Christian would hardly deny that morality is significantly related to one's relationship with God" (p. 356).

According to Hirschi (1969), the person who is involved in conventional activities is tied to appointments, deadlines, working hours, and plans. In reality, there is rarely an opportunity to commit deviant acts such as drug using, dealing, and abusing. People who are very involved in church activities and who place a great deal of importance on the church activities in which they are involved tend to avoid substance use (Kutter & McDermott, 1997). Other research studies showed that drug use is less frequent among those involved in religious organizations and that a close association with any organized religion discourages drug use. A lack of involvement in conventional activities/organization reflects a weak social bond to that organization. Involvement provides a network of support that may insulate individuals from opportunities to use drugs. It also may leave individuals, whether high risk or low risk, with less time available for drug experimentation (Coombs & Ziedonis, 1995).

Further studies such as Perkins's (1985) emphasized the importance of parental religiosity in hindering/impeding youth drug use. Based on research findings by Perkins (1985), parental religious traditions and degrees of religiosity largely determine the traditions and commitments of their children which, in turn, influence the student's drinking or not drinking.

In support of this contention, Krivanek (1988) postulated that even when youth are prone to question parental and authoritarian influences, they very rarely go against parental values totally. They are also unlikely to violate social norms if they are strongly bonded to the society. Therefore, it is very necessary that society (family and church) makes clear its norms and values. Hirschi (1969) agreed that when values and norms are vividly understood and accepted, they will be internalized by individuals within the society (Hirschi, 1969). Hence, teens tend to avoid choosing friends who use drugs if their families are actively religious (Hardesty & Kirby, 1995). The shared beliefs of the family and the church's positive influence on youth may build within them the intestinal fortitude to avoid drug involvement.

Westerhoff (1976) believed that the Christian church needs to become a significant community of faith in order that children, by being involved, will develop a faith relationship with the God of that community and the church itself. It involves a broad-based knowledge of the characteristics of the community so that it can carefully examine, evaluate, plan, and develop educational programs around the aspects of corporate life. This corporate life includes the rituals of the people, the experiences persons have within the community, and the actions members of the community perform individually and corporately in the world.

## Summary

Youth who are actively religious, meaning they have a personal devotional life, attend religious services and activities, and are involved in church life, are less likely to use alcohol and marijuana than adolescents who are not religious (Amoateng & Bahr, 1986).

One can therefore understand that religiosity is strongly related to the avoidance of youth drug use. Religious organizations tend to involve people in conventional activities and a social network that does not condone illicit drug use (Bahr, Hawks, & Wang, 1993). Furthermore, individuals who are bonded well with the community of believers are not easily led to deviant behaviors such as drug use. This does not mean that they have become immune to deviant behaviors, but with an attachment to the community of believers and a relationship with God, they have the power to avoid and overcome drug use.

## General Summary

The concern for drug use or nonuse has spread widely across all walks of life. Literature has shown various reasons why individuals use or do not use drugs. Regardless of the motivation, the evidence showed that the family plays an important task as a primary socialization and controlling mechanism in affecting the likelihood of adolescent drug use or nonuse. Due to parental support, involvement, and a positive parent-child attachment, drug use amongst youth apparently decreases.

The literature has also shown that the environment of youth plays an important role regarding their choice to use drugs. Factors within the environment include

neighborhood, school, peers, other relatives, and significant authoritative figures.

However, these factors can only make an impression on the adolescents' use or nonuse based on the youth's interaction with them.

Finally, the literature stated that people who are affiliated with a religion through commitment and involvement, are accepting of religious beliefs, and have lower rates of drug use than those not affiliated with a religion.

Therefore, substance use/abuse prevention activities are likely to result from a multidimensional approach. Such an approach should not only focus on characteristics of the individual, but also emphasize interventions related to socioenvironmental conditions (National Research Council, 1993; Wallace & Bachman, 1991).

This literature review has provided an understanding of the number of reasons for drug use or non-drug use. These reasons, along with risk and protective factors, have been couched within two types of protective factors. The protective factors include family protective factors and environmental protective factors. Also, the theory used as a framework to this study was also presented. This theory is Hirschi's (1969) Social Control Theory.

Hirschi's theory consists of four elements which are attachment, commitment, involvement, and beliefs. Within this chapter, three selected factors emerging from the literature review are also presented. These factors, relational, environmental, and religious, provided a basic in-depth knowledge of youth drug avoidance.

These factors, chosen from the research literature review, provided me with a framework to conduct this research study. These three factors, referred to as dynamics within this study, apply to St. Martin for the following reason: St. Martin has a strong

family affinity and religious orientation as well as a high drug-infested environment.

The dynamics have been purposely selected because of the role they have played in the United States. Thus, this study sought to gain an understanding of how the dynamics may have related to the youths' drug avoidance in St. Martin. Chapter 3 provides the process through which I conducted the research.



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

Jenkins (1991) stated that qualitative research methods need to be used in a greater way when studying religion and family. Since meaning is the ultimate quest of humanity, this qualitative study sought to gain an understanding or meaning from both young adults and parents about the reasons why these young adults did not use drugs while they were youths.

Qualitative research builds theory from the data; it is more concerned about the development of theory than the verification of theory (Filstead, 1979; Sullivan, 1992; Woods, 1992). It is often described as “grounded theory” in that the theory develops from data rather than bringing assumptions or deductions to the research (Elliot, 1989; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). As strongly postulated by these researchers—Guba, 1978; Morgan, 1983a, 1983b; Reichardt and Cook, 1979; Shea, 1984—qualitative research is appropriate to capture the meaning of human experience. It emphasizes an inductive and holistic approach that endeavors and seeks to capture and give credence to the personal experiences and insights of the respondent as the researcher understands them (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Pitman & Maxwell, 1992).

In conducting this qualitative research I dealt with human feelings, thoughts, and experiences rather than statistical numbers and surveys. This allowed me to catch the respondents’ points of view which enhanced the study as a beneficial component

(Eisner, 1991).

Eisner (1991) vividly stated that, “in qualitative inquiry, personal stylistic features are neither liabilities nor elements that are easily replaceable” (p. 169). The informants generally spoke in their dialect. I chose to maintain their stylistic features in the quotes. As far as possible, no corrections of grammar, syntax, or word choice were made unless comprehension of their statements would be severely impaired.

“Qualitative researchers confer their own signature on their work” (Eisner, 1991, p. 169). It is here that my writing skills and expressions are reflected and displayed. My personal choice of words and phrases to convey messages and information and to share informants’ experiences is exhibited in the product.

### **Case Study Design**

It is from this referent premise that this project was conducted using qualitative case study methods. I sought to obtain information from the respondents’ experience(s) concerning the research problem under study. According to Zikmund (1991), the primary advantage of the case study is that I, the researcher, can investigate an entire situation in depth, which I did with meticulous attention to detail. A case study is highly focused and such attention empowered me as I concentrated on carefully identifying the relationships among functions and individuals (Business Research Methods, 1991).

In using case study methods in qualitative research I did not seek to prove but to discover what was on my informants’ mind and understand the reasons for their drug-free experience. This study is descriptive in nature in that it aimed to describe

events and personal experiences. To identify all of the important variables from a predictable perspective was not possible. The results are presented in a qualitative style. Qualitative case study results are presented primarily in words and picture form. It is a narrative, a story-like presentation.

In qualitative case study research, the researcher is the primary instrument (Eisner, 1991; Merriam, 1988). Hence, in this research I am the primary research instrument and I have a vested interest in drug prevention and intervention. As a resident of St. Martin, I am concerned about the drug problem that plagues so many of its residents. Presently, I serve as Executive Director of the Turning Point Foundation for Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation (TP). This foundation provides inpatient and outpatient services to drug addicts 18 years or older. Other services provided include: youth drug education and prevention programs and activities; family support and intervention services; workplace prevention workshops, seminars, and more. Therefore, it is evident that I come to this research with my own biases, such as my personal drug-free experience having lived in a drug-infested society and raised in a single-parent low income family, also my personal religious convictions, beliefs, and health practices.

Merriam (1988) stated that all observations and analyses are filtered through one's worldview, value, and perspective. Merriam (1988) further stated that one of the philosophical assumptions underlying qualitative case study research is that reality is not an objective entity; rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality. Guba and Lincoln (1982) pointed out that objectivity is not realistically possible regardless of one's research discipline. Therefore, they spoke of reconstructionism and "best fit" as

a way to capture reality. They also suggested that the best cure for biases is to be aware of “how they slant and shape what we (researchers) hear, how they interface with our reproduction of the speaker’s reality, and how they transfigure truth into falsity” (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 148).

However, some qualitative researchers see biases and subjectivity as a positive feature of the methodology (Peshkin, 1988). Although Oppenheim (1992) sounded a note of caution about the biased and unreliable aspects of interviews, he conceded that they can be genuine and can contain rich data. Therefore, I tried to be ever conscious of biases and considered them when analysis and interpretation of the data was done. I did not ask what is truth, but rather what has the informant revealed about his or her feelings and perceptions, as well as, how can that information portray a perception of reality (Dexter, 1970). Wolcott (1992) proposes that a person needs to always have an objective eye on one’s subjectivity as one records what is asked as the responses are analyzed.

### **Pilot Study**

The primary purpose in conducting the pilot study was to familiarize myself with the interview process. This experience aided me in understanding the advantages of using interviews in research. During this study, I interviewed three young adults and a mother.

In conducting the pilot study, I realized that the interview questions progressed from a general to a more specific focus as I moved from one informant to the next. Another lesson I learned from the pilot study was that important questions to the

study's interest emerged as the interview process occurred.

It was important for me to note that even though I had some structured questions, these questions provided me with a level of comfort and direction as I began my interviews. However, it was not too long into the interview process of the pilot study when I realized that the interview process was not solely dependent on such a structured approach. Hence, I depended less on them in my research interviews.

### **Sample Selection Procedure**

In order to gain an understanding of why youth did not use drugs from a family perspective, it was decided to utilize purposive sampling for this qualitative research case study. Only drug-free families who were personally contacted by me were chosen for this study. Given the focus of this study, the informants were selected based upon the following criteria: (1) residents of St. Martin, (2) drug-free youth, (3) drug-free families, (4) ages 20 through 40, and (5) belonging to a single-parent, stepparent, or two-natural-parent families.

On one of my business trips to St. Martin, I was conducting job interviews for Turning Point Drug Rehabilitation Center. It was at this time that I met one of the informants. One of the informants for this study was an prospective employee interviewed by me for employment. I was informed of other possible drug-free individuals by one of the counselors at Turning Point. Another drug-free individual was brought to my attention by a friend.

In total, eight perspective families were contacted as possible informants in this study. Five of the eight had come from two-natural-parent families. Two were single-

parent families, with one stepparent family. It was my initial intent to interview both parents and a youth to gain a wider perspective about the youths' drug avoidance. None of the fathers, however, wanted to be informants in this study, although they all consented to have their family involved in the study.

Three families were intentionally chosen for this study. They represented three types of family structures: the first being a two-natural parent family, then a stepparent family and third, a single-parent family. The informants interviewed included the mother from each family and a young adult ranging from ages 20 to 40 years old. All live in St. Martin and are residents of the island.

First, prospective informants were informed of my research study and my interest in seeking participants relevant to the study. Second, inquiry was made of the informants' involvement or non-involvement in drug use and whether or not other members such as siblings and parents from the immediate family were involved in drug use. Then each of the informants was asked of his/her interest in being a part of this study. When they agreed to participate in the study, they were asked to share the information with family members since their story would reflect the family in one way or another.

The informants agreed to inform other members of their immediate family to solicit their willingness to be participants and/or informants in this study. After receiving oral consent of their family members' willingness to be involved, they were then to notify me of this. Having received notification of the entire family's desire to be a part of the study, I then telephoned each one to confirm and orally thank them for their commitment to this study. They were then told that a formal written request

would be made.

All six informants received and signed a formal written request and consent form prior to the interview. An interview schedule was established with approximate dates and times, and sent to the informants in preparation for my trip to St. Martin to begin the interviews.

### **Data Collection Technique**

Data for this study were collected primarily through interviews, since according to Patton (1980), an interview is the best way to find out what is in and on someone else's mind. The interviews were conducted within four to six 1-hour sessions. According to Spradley (1979), this length of time will allow the researcher to capture the informant's story in a thorough fashion. Most of the interviews were tape-recorded and written in field notes. For clarification purposes, data information from the informants was additionally received by me via fax and telephone calls. The data was transcribed into an expanded account (Spradley, 1979).

Field notes were taken where necessary and applicable during the time of the interview sessions. These contain information such as time, place, and a verbal description of the setting and informants. Key words, phrases, expressions, unconnected sentences, and experiences gained during the interview were noted in what Spradley (1979) called the condensed account. In addition to this, I kept a reflective journal throughout the interview process. This contained my thoughts and observations of the informants' expressed thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. A file was created where the written analysis and the interpretation of the notes are stored.

### Interview Process

When I hear the word “interview” I think of one person asking questions, and another person providing the answers. The issue of youth non-drug involvement from a youth/parent perspective needs to be understood. Understanding can be gained when the interview is structured around “how” and “why” questions rather than “what” questions. According to Yin (1989) and Spradley (1979), “How” and “Why” questions are appropriate for case studies. However, Spradley (1979) cautioned against using “Why” questions as not to intimidate the informants but rather to seek for greater understanding of the phenomenon. Also, Hunsicker (1982) stated that “How” questions produce information and understanding. The intention of the one conducting the research is to discover what is “in” and “on” someone else’s mind. We interview people to find out from them those things we do not directly observe. Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted clearly that “they can understand no phenomenon out of relationships to the time and context that, spawned, harbored and supported it” (p. 189). Therefore, as Patton (1980) poignantly explained, “the purpose of interviewing is to allow us to enter the other person’s perspective” (p. 196). It is to ask people questions and to find out from them feelings, thoughts, and intentions. Through the interview process we gain an understanding of how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world.

The in-depth interview method that I used followed a general interview schedule, but it allowed flexibility to pursue any lines of inquiry that seemed relevant (Sullivan, 1992). Merriam (1988) said that we use interview to study a number of people in a relatively short period of time.



Interviews conducted in this study used the “life history process” that uses the following criteria: (1) each informant was viewed as a member of St. Martin culture, (2) the role of significant others in transmitting the culture was recognized, (3) the nature of social action, reality, and culture was specified, (4) an analysis was conducted of the related drug-free experience of the informants, and (5) the social context was associated with the informants’ actions (Jones, 1983).

The interview process according to Spradley (1979) involves three major steps or elements that I followed in conducting my pilot study and followed in conducting this research study. I began the interviewing process by explaining the purpose of the interview to the informants. During this step, I gave participants a summary of the interview focus so that the informants knew what to expect.

Second, I gave the informants specific details of the interview. This is what Spradley (1979) called the ethnographic explanation. During this step, I explained the plans of my project. This included the method and reasons for recording, the direction the interview would take, and the types of questions that would be asked. In addition to these, I encouraged the informants to speak in the native dialect during the interview and to just be themselves.

The third step, one of the most important steps in this process, is called ethnographic questioning. In this step I asked the informants a combination of descriptive, structural, and contrast questions. In order to provide some level of structure to the interview and to ensure adequate coverage of how the selected dynamics relational, environmental, and religious worked within the family to help to deter youth drug use, I developed semi-structured questions within the chosen

theoretical framework, which was Social Control Theory. These questions were categorized within three selected dynamics derived from the literature, namely relational, environmental, and religious. The research literature strongly focused on one or two of these three factors when seeking to find how they relate to drug use or drug avoidance. Hence, I have chosen all three dynamics in order to obtain a broader perspective in understanding why St. Martin youth used in this study were able to avoid drug use.

In asking descriptive questions, I sought to gather information about an event or incident that has taken place. In this case study, when asking structural questions, an explanation was required about family settings, situations, events, lifestyle, and experiences. Here, I tried to gather a lot of information since structural questions seek to gather specific and detailed data from selected domains or categories of focus (Spradley, 1979). They are asked along with descriptive questions to complement them. When I approached the informants with contrast questions, I sought to gather information that showed similarities and differences in cultural terms, experiences, and personal lifestyles.

I used the “big picture” approach which Spradley (1979) called the grand tour. Then I moved towards a more focused line of inquiry, known as the mini-tour. Grand tour questions can be typical, specific, guided, or task-related (Spradley, 1979). He defined typical grand tour questions as questions that ask informants to describe how things are. When an informant is asked to be specific about a day’s activity or event, they are being asked specific grand tour questions. Guided grand tour questions are asked when the informant is asked to show, explain, or demonstrate so that the

researcher can see, follow, or understand what is really happening (Spradley, 1979). Then there is the task-related grand tour question. These questions seek to involve the informants in a practical manner in order to provide a better understanding and explanation in a given situation, event, place, or activity (Spradley, 1979).

Mini-tour questions are the same as grand tour questions. However, they are different because the questions are narrowed down to a specific event within a typical setting. This allowed the informants to stay within the limits of a single incident or situation.

This was rather intriguing as the process unfolded before my very eyes and rich data flowed from the mouth of each informant interviewed. The first and subsequent session gave the informants and me the opportunity to become acquainted, causing the level of apprehension to gradually decrease with each subsequent session. As we looked at the reason for use and nonuse of drugs, the informants became more familiar with the study and they understood more fully how the study related to St. Martin. I also realized that the interview questions progressed from a general to a more specific focus as I moved from one session to the next. The rich stories which emerged from the informants' experiences gave me insight into the drug issue. In addition, three of the six informants chose not to be tape recorded. Data were therefore collected and transcribed from my field notes.

### **Data Analysis**

Glaser and Strauss (1967), Lofland (1971), Meloy (1994), Mishler (1991) and Spradley (1979, 1980) forcefully endorsed the importance of linking the collection, organizing, and analysis of data in order that they are seen as a comprehensive whole. This is of great significance in that it allows the researcher the joy of gaining a feel for the material and to seek clarification of concepts, meaning, and experience from the informant or interviewee during the process of interview. This is in keeping with the idea as portrayed by Glaser and Strauss (1967):

Joint collection, coding, and analysis of data is the underlying operation. The generation of theory, coupled with the notion of theory as process, requires that all three operations be done together as much as possible. They should blur and intertwine continually, from the beginning of an investigation to its end. (p. 43)

The data were collected using various methods. The interview data were then transcribed and labeled Volume 1 in the citations. The analysis of the transcribed data of the three families was named Volume 2 in the citations. The purpose of engaging multiple sources of data is to see how they are related to each other in order to support or contradict the interpretation and evaluation of the research. This is called structural corroboration or triangulation (Eisner, 1991).

Then the data were organized and categorized according to informants interviewed in a case database (Merriam, 1988; Yin, 1994). In analyzing the data I began by formulating what Spradley (1979) called domain analysis as I read and searched for cultural and semantic categories and meaning. In addition, I looked for basic patterns of key people, events, experiences, or conditions relating to the informant's drug-free lifestyle and experience. Spradley (1979) referred to this process

as taxonomic analysis. In conducting the taxonomic analysis, I sought to refine the various domain analyses that were formulated.

Critical to analysis is the formulation of categories. Such categories are concepts indicated by the data. In doing componential analysis (Spradley, 1979), I looked for units of meaning that the informants have assigned to their cultural categories (Spradley, 1979). I also looked for contrasts and patterns, grouped them where possible, and made record of same so that the discovered comparisons and contrasts could be assessed. Finally, in analyzing the data, I looked for emerging themes and patterns within the three individual cases. I also took note of words, phrases, metaphors, and vocabulary that were pertinent to my research study.

Having analyzed the individual cases I then conducted a qualitative cross-case analysis. Just as in the individual cases, the process of organizing and categorizing was the same; however, management of the data differed (Merriam, 1988). The qualitative cross-case analysis was the means by which differences and similarities were observed and analyzed. I looked carefully for emerging patterns across the cases (Spradley, 1979; Yin, 1994). Further analysis of the categories were necessary as I sought for what Geertz (1973) called (as cited in Eisner, 1991) "thick description," which is the search for qualities within the data which provide meaning and interpretation from below the surface of the data.

It is of great necessity to know that qualitative research is interested in meaning. Eisner (1991) postulated that qualitative research is interested in relevance and that coherence, consensus, and instrumental utility should guide the qualitative researcher.

Coherence occurred when emerging qualities from the data came together in a closely related fashion, thus producing meaning and understanding of the research data. This process allowed me to compare or contrast information so as to provide the study with a sense or level of credibility.

Consensus was achieved as I allowed the respondents of this study to read and confirm that my analysis and interpretation is a true representation of their experience and story based on prior knowledge and consistencies in the presented evidences. Eisner (1991) simply stated, "It is a matter of agreement or a form of multiplicative corroboration" (p. 56).

Instrumental utility will be achieved when this research study serves as a guide in explaining why youth do not use drugs. When this is understood it can become a tool that society (primarily St. Martin) can use as a catalyst to deter youth drug abuse. It is also a means by which preventive programs can be developed. This, according to Eisner (1991), is a primary test of any qualitative study.

In dealing with biases, it was here where my approach to the research data was handled and analyzed in an honest manner as I sought to make interpretation and meaning within context that is a true representation of the collected data. I also endeavored to maintain focus on the informants in light of their drug-free experience rather than my personal feelings and ideas (Wolcott, 1990).

## Summary

In doing the final analysis, Miles and Huberman (1990) stated that there must be an interaction of the parts of qualitative data analysis. The qualitative parts are data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The methodology of this research study includes qualitative case study design, sample selection procedure, data collection technique, interview process, and data analysis. A number of themes have emerged from the analysis of the data. These themes are defined in the following section.

### Definition of Themes

Chapter 3 described the process to which this research was conducted. In chapters 4 - 6 the data will be presented from the families' perspectives. The data within each chapter were categorized according to the three selected dynamics derived from the literature: relational, environmental, and religious dynamics. Upon analysis of families I, II, and III, various themes emerged and were categorized within each of the three dynamics. These themes were primarily congruent across all three cases.

1. Within the **relational dynamics** the following themes emerged in each family: (a) *internal family dynamics*, which included the sub-themes of intimate relations, social relations, open communication, supervision, discipline, learning responsibility, and life's satisfaction; and (b) *external family dynamics*, which included the sub-themes of positive and negative influences of family members.

The *internal family dynamics* section refers to the relationships the youth experienced with their immediate family. The closeness and love between parent and

youth described their parent-child attachment, called “intimate relations.” Family times together is where each family socialized, laughed, and conversed with one another particularly during meal times. The theme “social relations” describes the times the family spent together. The theme “open communication” explains how the parents and youth took time to engage in meaningful conversation with each other.

“Supervision,” another theme in the *internal family dynamics* section, is described as parental monitoring of the children’s activities and interaction with their friends. “Discipline” is a process through which the parents kept their children within boundaries through warning, instruction, punishment, and rewards. The theme “learning responsibility” is described as taking care of self and others, fulfilling one’s assigned duties, and contributing to our families and communities. The theme “life satisfaction” pertains to the attitude and ability to be content with one’s own possessions gained appropriately. *The external family dynamics* category portrays the youths’ relationships with their extended family members such as grandparents, cousins, and uncles.

2. Within the **environmental dynamics** the following sub-themes emanated from the families’ conversations: friends, neighbors, school, and influences that positively or negatively affected the youth outside of their homes. The theme “friends” depicts the relationships the youth shared with their peers and their parents’ guidance in their selection of and association with their peers. The influences in their “neighborhood” are considered negative by the parents and positive by the youth when they were younger and negative as they matured. The theme “school” references the negative and positive reinforcers of peers, teachers, and the parents’ interaction with



their teachers.

3. Within the **religious dynamics** are two areas: *internal religious dynamics* and *external religious dynamics*. The *internal religious dynamics* section refers to the religious activities, processes, and teachings within the home setting. The *internal religious dynamics* section contains family worship, prayer, values transmission, and religious commitment. “Family worship” indicates the spiritual- oriented activities in which the family participated. The theme “prayer” depicts a familial, personal, and communal relationship with God. The “values transmission” theme displays the values modeled and taught by parents and adopted by their youth. The “religious commitment” theme shows how the youth described their commitment to a religious and Christian lifestyle. The *external religious dynamics* sub-themes are church attendance, church involvement, and the religious beliefs and teachings of both home and church.

Each family’s story provides a colorful portrait of the family’s experience as both mother and young adult shared with the researcher. In the first family there is a mother, Caroleen, and son, John. Kay and her daughter Brenda’s story is presented in family II. Finally, family III introduces Lea and her daughter Maria’s story. The families’ stories reveal themes which provide us with an understanding about the youths’ avoidance of drugs. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 begin with a demographic profile of the families.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FAMILY I

#### **Introduction**

A tour of discovery was launched as I searched to gain understanding of how three selected familial dynamics, namely relational, environment, and religion, played in the prevention of substance use among young adults within three families. Each family was unique. Through the corridors of interviews one parent and one young adult child shared their perspectives on the avoidance of drug use by the young adult child.

The first family consisted of two biological parents and four young adult children ranging from ages 26-34 years. The mother, Caroleen, and the second of four children, John, were interviewed for a period of six 1-hour interview sessions each. Catholicism is the religion of family I. The father's and mother's highest educational level are elementary and middle school, respectively.

The young adults are all junior college or 4-year college graduates. Presently, they own their own homes and hold solid professional occupations. They operate their own businesses. According to Caroleen and John, they are not a rich family but rather hard-working, ambitious, and contented.

They live a simple life. There are no lawns or paved roads leading to the family home of 30 years. This house is a concrete structure nestled on the family property

overlooking a clear water pond. The stories of this family are presented by Caroleen and John in helping the reader to understand from a familial perspective why John did not become involved in drug use. The introduction to this prologue is Religious Dynamics.

### **Relational Dynamics**

The themes described in chapter 3 which emerged from the data have been categorized as relational dynamics and are presented in this section. The relational dynamics category provides comprehension about John's personal and familial interaction and relation to his immediate and extended families. Also, this relationship helps us understand why John did not use drugs. The category relational dynamics is divided into two groups, internal family dynamics and external family dynamics, which are presented further in this chapter.

#### **Internal Family Dynamics**

The internal family dynamics exhibits themes which emanated from the research data. These themes are individually presented as shared by John and his mother, Caroleen. Their story aids our understanding as to how these may have affected John's drug avoidance. The first of these themes portrays the close bond John shared with his family, particularly his mother.

### **Intimate Relations: “It’s a Family Life”**

John, who lived with his biological parents, used an interesting theme to describe his family. As John entered the corridors of the interview protocol, he seemed ready to share about his family’s interaction. A number of dynamics (themes) were applicable to the avoidance of drug use by John. The close bond between John and his parents is unwittingly apparent in much of his discourse.

My parents have been there for us. They have done everything possible that would assure us as long as the Lord permits them to be around us. My parents have proven to me on many occasions that they are grateful for me being the person that I am and they are willing to help even now that I am a grown man to whatever extent is necessary to allow me to maintain my head high. (Vol. 1, p. 1)

As the interview continued, John explained the relational bond he had with his parents.

As children, when we were going to school, any which way they [our parents] were able to contribute to our understanding of our school work, they were there and every way they could contribute to our functioning in the system. They were there. Whatever I did and do, I considered my mother and father; ‘cause again my father is not expressive orally but he is sentimental. I ask God to give me guidance and then I position them [to ask] how they see this. What would be the effect? My father, he would observe. He’s not as open as my mother. He would not ask, rather he would contribute to my need as he observed. My mother would come up to me and she would say, “How are you doing in such and such a situation . . .” and she would be there for me. (Vol. 1, p. 23)

As the interview protocol continued, John dug into the recesses of his memory bank. His withdrawals were indeed as what Eisner (1991) and Geertz (1973) refer to respectively as rich data and “thick description” (p. 15). Family meant everything to him. He saw his family as a close-knit unit, which he called “A Family Life” (Vol. 1, p. 4) and was very appreciative for it. The relationship between his parents, siblings, and

himself was a power for good.

I would say we have a family life. When you hear the word “family” you hear the word togetherness [and he smiles with his hands moving from out to in and from right to left]. As far as we are concerned, there are no barriers. You come with love. Live with love. Our environment is a family, you know, is a family life. There is no motive for unbalance or preference. It’s family. I consider myself to be very much loved by my parents because they do anything to keep me, to maintain the person I have maintained to this day, seeing the people I frequent. [He paused for a moment then continued.] In other words, I would say I’m a nice boy but that doesn’t mean that I only frequent people that are nice people. My parents have done much for me by their love for me. (Vol. 1, pp. 4, 5)

I asked him to explain to me why he said that his parents’ love for him had done him good. John’s awareness of his parental care and love for him sustained him in the times of trials. It seemingly kept him from becoming involved in drug use and other deviant activities.

My parents love me and they don’t want me to suffer some downfall. . . . My mom is very sensitive and in touch with me. She knows when I have a problem and I’m not okay. She may not know the problem but she knows when I have one. . . . There has always been a good parent and child relationship. My parents were my buddies. There was free communication, open, no barriers. My mom never hesitated to confront me about things in life. My relationship with my parents was based on honesty. Doing drugs is something that one could not hide. So we tried not to do things to hurt our parents. As a result of making my buddies [parents] happy, I chose not to use drugs or even do wrong. (Vol. 1, pp. 6, 9, 18)

Caroleen attested to this same perception. “I never worked. . . . I washed and cleaned and cooked and took care of them” (Vol. 1, p. 82). She was always there for her children. She did not work outside the home before her children went to school. She tried to make their home as comfortable as possible so that they could be happy.

The mother's close bond with her children lasted even after they became adults. She reported that up to when they were in their late teens, she assisted them with their personal hygiene and physical appearance. She behaved as if they were still very young.

Even at 13 years I still scrubbing [bathing with emphasis] their skin. Now, my oldest boy, I love that child so much that when he went to the army, before he left I took him behind the house and I strip him naked and I scrub his skin. (Vol. 1, p. 84)

John's description of his relationship with his parents demonstrated a close attachment. John expressed knowing and feeling loved and supported by his parents. They were present for him throughout his childhood and even his adulthood. This intimate relation was complemented by their social interaction within the family.

#### **Social Relations: "Under the Tamarind Tree"**

John's family looked forward to leisure family time "under the tamarind tree" (Vol. 1, p. 27). Benches were built by the father under the tamarind tree where one can sit or lie down. After a good cooked meal, it was the place to go and, as John put it, "to permit a good digestion" (Vol. 1, p. 27). Under the tamarind tree the family would sing and talk with each other as they enjoyed relaxing moments. Even after John moved away from home, he remembered the care and support of his family.

The family had no television up to when John was 12 years old. The tamarind tree was the place of entertainment.

We would take cakes, sodas, or whatever and listen to stories from my dad under the tree. He talked about his time in Aruba and his youth days. Under the tamarind tree the family would discuss the occurrences of the day. We had prayer time as family time where we would sing, play music, and listen to

stories. So the tamarind tree is like our next house, the house on the outside. (Vol. 1, pp. 27, 28)

John spoke about the times he and his brother enjoyed being with their father.

These he said were special moments as they went swimming and took care of the animals.

Other times together included going swimming and sailing in the pond with our dad. Going to the hills and playing and bringing in the goats and cattle and even ride the donkey. As far as the donkey is concerned, dad would sometimes walk and give my brother and I the donkey and let us ride until the donkey throw us off. We would get up and do it again and again. (Vol. 1, p. 55)

Both Caroleen and John treasured family time very much, especially around the Christmas season. She took some time to share a typical Christmas day.

Early in the morning everyone will rise and take care of themselves. The house chores were divided. Some will clean the yard while others will wash the dishes and clean the house. After the work was done, I would call them all together and begin baking a big bolo [vanilla cake], potato pudding and tart for everyone to eat at his or her leisure under the tamarind tree. (Vol. 1, p. 188)

The family often took time to discuss the day's occurrences with one another.

They would also sing, swim, and tend the animals as a family unit. These times were both relaxing and cherished and they allowed for open communication among the family members.

### **Open Communication**

Communication is said to be the heart of family life (Balswick & Balswick, 1994, p. 197). John expressed that he had a very close relationship with his parents. John's father, however, was not as communicative as his mother, but he was there for them. He provided moral support and was always willing to provide a listening ear. "My father, he would observe. He's not as open as my mother. . . . I can tell him

certain things. He won't ask me, he would just contribute. He was firm but very caring. My father is an example for good" (Vol. 1, pp. 2, 12).

John insisted that his mom had the greatest influence on his life, not because his dad's influence was not strong, but because his mom was more expressive and involved in his everyday life.

My mother is my friend, my buddy. I can tell her anything. For example, I can tell her, Mom, you see that lady down there, I like her you know. For me to go tell my father I like a grown woman, you know what's coming behind it. I can tell my mother anything, anything [his face expressed affirmation and acceptance]. (Vol. 1, p. 12)

His mom knew, as John explained, that she was the primary caretaker in the home. Because of her teaching them right from wrong, she trusted them and had confidence that they would choose right. They felt obligated to tell her everything even when they did wrong. Convinced that open communication had a positive influence on him, John continued to talk about his open relationship with his parents. John spoke of a time when he was approximately 11 years old and he assisted an older cousin in hiding some marijuana. The cousin told him not to say anything about it. His conscience apparently bothered him as he remembered his parents' expectation of him.

My cousin asked me to hide some marijuana for him until he returned to get it. So I buried the marijuana in the wall of a concrete house that was being built. I wanted to tell my parents about it but I was afraid. . . . To be perfectly honest with you, they did not find out about it but after I had disposed of it I did tell them that I had it. My mother did not beat me. My father wasn't pleased. He was absolutely not pleased. He wasn't speaking to me and my mother warned me not to do something like that again. (Vol. 1, pp. 16, 46)

There were times when John and his siblings disobeyed their parents. Most of the time they confessed their wrong-doing to their mother and she dealt with them accordingly. John and his siblings felt free to talk with their mother, Caroleen, as a



friend. They had a special relationship with her.

I don't hide nothing from my parents. It would be foolish of me to do it anyhow, 'cause my mother knows if something is going wrong. If something is wrong she would wake up at 3 o'clock in the afternoon [from an afternoon nap] and tell you that something is happening. You know it don't matter, it doesn't make sense to try and hide it. You know it will be revealed. So we established an open relationship as far as I was concerned. (Vol. 1, pp. 14, 15)

Caroleen confirmed the fact that the loving relationship that she and her children shared was one of the major influences that caused her children not to use drugs. "When your children love you, anything that they know that will hurt you they will never do it" (Vol. 1, p. 97).

Though John's father provided moral support and was willing to listen, John felt more comfortable talking with his mother. He could share anything with her. Caroleen credited her children's decision not to engage in activities that would hurt her to the loving relationship they shared. She believed that even when they acted against her wishes they would tell her. One aspect that aided their open communication was the mother's supervision of her children.

### **The Power of Supervision: "Hawk's Eye"**

Supervision was one of the integral aspects of this family. This appeared to positively influence John and his siblings in the avoidance of drug use. A very important responsibility of motherhood was the untiring supervision of her children. Caroleen insisted that "children should always be monitored and under the eye of an adult. Children should never be left up to themselves to wander on the road after school" (Vol. 1, p. 83).

When asked about the home monitoring, she replied, “They go with their father on the hill when they are not in school” (Vol. 1, p. 99). As the primary caretaker of the home, Caroleen kept things intact and monitored every aspect of her children’s lives. She even carried the children with her when she left the home. “They would go to church with me. I would take them out to a party or to dinner or to a wedding. I would go with them. They never went to carnival” (Vol. 1, p. 99) (Carnival is a social cultural festivity where dance, frolic, and negative influences such as drinking, smoking, and just about anything immoral could occur.) However, Caroleen operated under her husband’s instructions, who placed certain restrictions on where the children were allowed to go.

I use to carry them out, say like to a fair or down the road with me. My husband said to me, “I don’t want you to carry the children driving because I’m afraid something happen.” . . . Neither was I to take them to the fair or joy riding because it was too much activity and thing there. So I was such an obedient wife that I didn’t carry his children no where because if anything happened he would tell me “I told you so.” So the other children would persecute my children and say, “Your mother only carries you to church.” But I could not help because of the warning their father gave. John, when he was 19 or so, he went to carnival village and all the children cried, “Look, John get away, John get away.” But I didn’t care because John could take care of himself. (Vol. 1, pp. 99, 107, 108)

Caroleen attested in metaphoric idiom that she did look after her children “like a hawk looking over its young” (Vol. 1, p. 83). She appreciated her mother’s training and transferred it to her own children. She monitored every area of their lives.

I would always remember that I have these children and the way that my mother trained me and how we did appreciate her for training us and rearing us, not leaving us going up and down and doing what we like. We had to be submissive to her. And when I became a woman, I see it was good. So I continue the same road with my children. If they go to a wedding, I see them out. If they have an exam in school and I don’t understand, I get somebody to

help them. Even when they got older, I would be out in the road looking 'til they reach. (Vol. 1, p. 91)

John supported his mother's account of the supervisory control she had over her children. He related an experience in his late-teen years when he began to work.

I was 17 years old, I had this desire to own this pistol; and I told my mother that I would like to earn a pistol so she told me no. I did baby sitting so I had my own money. But, I was not in control of the money. You took it to the bank put it on the bank book, or I bring home the money and I give it to her and tell her what I would like to do with it, buy a T.V., buy video, buy whatever. However, I couldn't take the money and do what I wanted with it. I had to get my mother's permission and she told what I could buy and couldn't buy. So it was supervised by her. (Vol. 1, pp. 16, 17)

Caroleen tried to keep her children from unhealthy environments and places that she felt would corrupt their very being. She tried to make home a happy place so that her children would want to be there. Another means by which Caroleen monitored her children was by allowing her children's friends to come to her home to play. Her children, however, were not allowed to go to the homes of others.

The environment and classes of people are different around here. The different company of children that never listen to their parents. They got children that fool their parents and say they going here and when you look, they gone down there. . . . I don't want you to play with children in their houses while their parents are out working. Something can break and other bad things can happen to you. (Vol. 1, p. 100)

She said that some people called her strict but she did not agree with this perception. The apparent practice in this family was for them to go to school, come home, do their homework, do household chores, relax a little with some leisure time, and get ready for the next day. This, according to Caroleen, was valuable for a parent to instill in children because "children learn to become involved in drugs as they allow themselves to follow bad company" (Vol. 1, p. 82).

Here in this neighborhood, I would never let them go from door to door. You know, how some parents let their children walk about. . . . I will not let them go on the street when they don't have any school. They have to stay on the porch. Do their lesson. Go under the tamarind tree. They play but I keep a eye on them. I always watch and see what they are doing. Even some neighbors who were very busy out working never used to watch the children. So the children used to do what they like. So I would never let my children keep company with those children. Some people say I was proud, but it wasn't true. I just wanted the best, and what you start from small, when you come big, you continue. (Vol. 1, pp. 82, 83)

John reiterated Caroleen's statements regarding bad company and training her children in the right way when they are small so that they will continue this training as an adult. John mentioned in similar words that "we were instructed to stay off the streets and away from the bars and bad company" (Vol. 1, p. 83).

Both parents believed that their children should be monitored carefully and not left unsupervised inside or outside the home. Thus, the mother, who chose not to work outside the home, carefully attended to the children. Their interactions with friends were observed by Caroleen since the friends had to come to her house to play with her children. This was done to guard the children from an unhealthy environment and to administer discipline.

### **Discipline: A Process for My Good**

John's parents knew the power of discipline. Though their children at times saw parental discipline as harsh and aggressive, they knew it was for their good. For them their parents disciplined them in love.

My parents taught us right from wrong. They did not hesitate to correct us and to warn us. In disciplining us, my mother was the primary caretaker. Her first method was to tell you right from wrong. The follow-up was to speak to you. And the next one was to put a tamarind whip on your butt. (I never enjoy

getting a whipping.) As I recall, mostly she used a tamarind whip to chastise you with. I got a whipping on a Sunday morning. She took me out of church and gave me 3 lashes with a sugar apple whip. It was the 3 hardest lashes I've ever experienced in my entire life from my mom. Other than that she would tie your hands to the bed and put you to kneel down, and that's a punishment. (Vol. 1, pp. 3, 4)

As John continued to relive his experience on discipline, he mentioned only getting a spanking from his father twice in his lifetime.

I have been chastised from my father three times by spanking me with one blow each time and I never forgot it. . . . Then once he didn't speak to me for a couple days because he wasn't pleased with something that I did wrong. Perhaps he thought that my mother should have spanked me but she didn't. Realizing how displeased my dad was, my mother warned me not to do something like that again. (Vol. 1, pp. 15, 16, 41)

Caroleen believed that proper discipline was essential. She gave commands and they had to obey. She also believed in honesty. She taught them not to touch what did not belong to them. Caroleen's expressions of metaphors were vivid.

Well, I would say from small you try to let that tree grow. You cherish it; you throw water on it and you try it and I do a lot of that with the children by trying to give them a lot of moral teachings. I didn't wait on the school to do it. I did not wait on the church to give them catechism. I did it myself and they grow with it. One time "M" [one of the daughters] went to school and stole a little box. . . . I said, 'Tomorrow, by God's will you are going back to school and you are going to carry that little box and give it to "S" [a classmate] in her hand. (Vol. 1, p. 80)

Caroleen believed that if you disobeyed or went contrary to her advice, that you should be punished as a means of correction. According to Caroleen, her daughter said on many occasions she avoided hurting her parents by not doing things she wanted to do. As she contemplated how her mother would feel, she knew she had to do right. Caroleen stated that this was the mind-set of her children. She knew that they had deep love and respect for her and would not want to hurt her in anyway. Caroleen

voiced how she felt about this.

My children have never gotten tired of me. They always wait for my word. If I tell them that they shouldn't go somewhere, they would turn back. . . . I had them brainwashed that they wouldn't have a girl or boy that I didn't know. I was the first to know. If they do something wrong I would beat them up but I would tell them not to do it again. My daughter said, "Mommy, I could have done bad things, but when I studied with you, I had to walk straight. (Vol. 1, pp. 86, 87)

Caroleen, who was the primary disciplinarian, believed punishment was a means of correction if the children went contrary to her advice. John and his siblings perceived the discipline they received in their childhood years as harsh and aggressive. Yet, they stated it was for their good. Discipline was a means by which they learned and exhibited responsibility.

### **Responsibility**

John and his siblings learned responsibility from a young age. His father had a great influence on him in this area. For their family, learning to work hard, saving money, and providing for your family was a big part of being responsible.

There was a term used by John and his family when they worked hard. Because of the close-knit family life that John experienced, they laughed, cried, ate, and worked together. They found joy in working hard. This type of experience was known as "jollification" (Vol. 1, p. 37). It meant "doing strenuous work in a jolly mood" (Vol. 1, p. 37). The members of the entire family learned to work hard and love it from a young age. In many cases this was initiated by the father.

John greatly admired his father. To him, his father modeled some important aspects of life which aided him as a person and as a young man growing up. From an

early age he learned to keep his head on his shoulders and to be responsible and hard-working.

My father was a good role model for me. Let me explain. I got married when I was 25 years old and I say to myself, 'I want to be like my father. The reason for that is that there are very few men in St. Maarten and French Quarter that have children by one woman. My father had all his children by my mother. And even though I did not follow him in the age that he was married, which was 41, I found a nice woman and I married her and she is the only one I have children with. This was one of the things that influenced me to get married at an early age. If I wanted children and I love the person, I must marry. This for me is being responsible. (Vol. 1, p. 14)

John expanded on other ways in which his father helped him to be responsible.

He deemed it a privilege to have a father like his. Even though John agreed that his father was not affectionate, his father, he said, was very supportive and a good provider. As a young man, John's father left his homeland of St. Martin and traveled to Curacao and Aruba to work. John in his metaphoric language described how hard his father worked.

My father knows how to work. He worked 36 hours in 24 hours. How did he manage it? I don't know how he did it in a day. You really can't do 36 hours in 24 hours but it's an expression to say how hard he worked, you know. And that has been a very great influence in my life, teaching me early responsibility even before I considered having a girlfriend. (Vol. 1, p. 13)

"He did not have a good education and he could barely write. However, he was a very responsible individual" (Vol. 1, p. 13). John recalled an experience that taught him responsibility. He spoke of a time when he had a car that he loved dearly.

One day I met a friend who was having transportation problems and really in need. I had a car that I loved dearly. However, I had no problem giving it to him so I gave him the car without a price. When my father heard of it he was not pleased. He thought that it was an irresponsible act on my part. (Vol. 1, p. 13)

According to John, his father believed that one should work at least in part for what he or she receives. To him it was the process through which responsibility is learned.

So it was like my father's reasoning. He went out, he worked, he bought land. This I learned from my father. Today, I am doing the same for my 2 sons. I teach them to work from an early age as my father did with me. My father provided that for me. He knew how to work the ground and showed me how to take care of the animals. My father took me with him to milk the cows, and work the ground. He showed me how to work. He taught me to sacrifice today for tomorrow. Through helping me to be responsible, my father and I bonded well and I learned to act and live that way. (Vol. 1, p. 13)

Although John's father was not verbally interactive in John's life, John stated that he learned responsibility from the model his father displayed. John expressed that he wanted to emulate his father with his own family. From his father he learned how to enjoy hard work, save money, provide for the family, and to work for what you receive.

### **Life's Satisfaction**

Being satisfied and not coveting others' property was one of their strong beliefs and teachings in the home. John was taught to live within the financial limits of the family. If you did not have something and your parents could not afford it, you just had to do without it. This was an important point in the study. Apparently, drug involvement sometimes comes from not being satisfied, hence wanting more.

According to John, "When people need money and become desperate, they will sometimes resolve to drugs, by selling and using drugs to get money" (Vol. 1, pp. 47, 67). John's childhood experience taught him that being comfortable and content, mixed with a lot of love and support, was what was important to make a person a



successful and satisfied human being.

John demonstrated his contentment when he refused to accept a gift from an acquaintance. Missie, a frequent vacationer in St. Martin, stayed at the hotel where John was working. Having communicated with John for some time, Missie stated that she appreciated him. She offered to buy him a car and to have sex with him. However, drug use would be a prerequisite to sexual involvement. He refused and revealed that Missie was astonished that an 18-year-old would not take a car for fear of his parents' disapproval. John's persistent refusal to accept Missie's offer angered her. Later, he discovered that the offer of the car was simply a gateway to sex and drug involvement.

I can't take it 'cause my parents would say no. She told me that they do not have to know about it. I told her that I do not hide anything from my parents. It would be foolish of me to do it anyhow 'cause my mother would know if something is going wrong. You know, it doesn't matter, it doesn't make sense to try and hide it. You know, it will be revealed. So, we [John and his parents] established an open relationship as far as I was concerned. So at this point she told me that she had manifest her appreciation of interest in me and she also wanted me to partake of the joy of having a sexual encounter with her. However, before this happens I will have to use cocaine. I laughed and told her nope! If I didn't know that drugs, cocaine, was involved, it might have happened. But the mere fact that drugs were involved it couldn't happen. (Vol. 1, pp. 14, 15)

The issue of the car that was offered to John held within it a major component that may have led to John's involvement in drug use. According to John, Missie approached him on numerous occasions to be involved with her. To him, taking the car would have been his downfall because "one thing leads to another" (Vol. 1, p. 15). John stated that whatever he wanted he could have gotten from this lady. Disinterest in drug use and being satisfied with his life kept John from accepting Missie's offer.

The mere fact that she used drugs kept me from becoming involved with her. So just to show what you are up against, when I refused the car and cocaine she told me that it won't be long before I realized where I am, and I would think differently and I would do things differently. For a period of maybe four days she tried with no avail and she got mad and said to me, "You are from the island and you are narrow minded, but stupid with it." (Vol. 1, p. 15)

John seemingly saw the allurements to use drugs disguised in the acquiring of material benefits and chose to avoid it. In reflection, John commented, "That's what happens if you are not strong. When you can get things, new car and money and things, without working for it you can also get in trouble. This is one way why young men get involved in drugs use" (Vol. 1, p. 15).

His parents taught that contentment went along with responsibility. Caroleen claimed to have trained her children in the same manner she was raised, the "old-fashioned way" (Vol. 1, p. 106). This included having a mind of your own, not being covetous of others and their belongings, respecting people, and living in unity with those whom they worked with from day to day. Caroleen grew up without electricity, stove, or television. Of course, her children had some of these luxuries, nevertheless, she cautioned them to beware of societal ills. John recalled his mother's advice:

You see people with their big car, but you don't know what they did to get it. So what you have, make it do. Little by little a bird builds its nest and you reach. So God bless you with a decent job, just take it little by little and you will make it. Don't look for no big mansion or car. You would get it in God's own time. (Vol. 1, p. 105)

John learned from his family that he should be satisfied with his financial possessions and that he should live within his financial limits. John stated that people who are not satisfied may become desperate and resort to selling and using drugs. John therefore avoided the temptation of drug use by appropriately earning his

possessions and being satisfied with them.

Intimate relations, social relations, open communication, supervision, discipline, and responsibility, life satisfaction are themes which emerged from the data. These themes were identified as positive influences within John's internal family structure that aided his avoidance of drugs. John's external family, on the other hand, had positive and negative effects on his decision to avoid drugs.

### External Family Dynamics

#### **Negative Influences**

John had two family members whose experiences with alcohol or drugs influenced John's avoidance of alcohol and drugs. His grandmother's description of the circumstances surrounding his grandfather's death, as a result of alcohol use, became a foundation to John's non-drug stance. In addition, John's cousin, with whom he was close, became involved in drugs. This did not influence John to use drugs. Caroleen also prohibited this cousin's interaction with her son when the cousin began using drugs.

#### Grandfather's legacy

John's grandmother shared a tragic story regarding the death of John's grandfather. This loss was a result of jealousy, wrong company, and alcohol. John's grandfather at one point in time was known to be a physically and morally strong individual. To the family, the grandfather was the powerful example of a decent lifestyle. However, John's grandfather was influenced by a cousin who led him into the wrong path. "Grandfather began drinking alcohol as a result of a cousin of his who

also drank rum and alcohol” (Vol. 1, pp. 67, 68). Both John and Caroleen confirmed that “this was not a good decision ‘cause he got in trouble with the law and at times was beaten by men whom he was able to defeat when he was a decent and moral man” (Vol. 1, p. 68). This he said led his grandfather to develop associations with other alcoholics.

On one specific day, John’s grandfather went to his friend’s house and greeted his wife (the friend’s wife) with a kiss on her cheek, as the custom was. There was nothing said and the men continued to work together as buddies as they travelled from island to island. John described what happened as a result of this. It taught him a lesson about associating with bad company.

My grandfather was killed, burnt to death. All because he went to Santo Domingo to work with another guy. And when they came back from Santo Domingo, they reached to his friend’s house. The friend greeted his wife, then he greeted the friend’s wife with a kiss on the cheek like the French people do. And the friend held him in for that. One day my grandfather was walking and he saw the friend in the road with his truck that had a problem. He was walking with a guy and he said, “I don’t feel right about going over to look at that truck, but they are from St. Martin like me and I can’t leave them there stranded.” And the guy said, “If you don’t feel right about going over, you shouldn’t go.” When he went under the truck they threw gasoline on him and they lit him a fire. They were under the power of alcohol. (Vol. 1, p. 45)

John claimed that the story of his grandfather helped to keep him on the right path.

My grandmother provided the foundation for my non-involvement in drugs. She told me of my grandfather who was defeated under the influence of alcohol. This is it. The fact that if it did him that I didn’t want to be like my grandfather. Never saw him, but my grandmother told us about him. To hear was indeed sufficient. (Vol. 1, pp. 67, 68)

### Cousin's negative influence

In addition to the positive influences that encouraged John to stay away from drugs, there were the negative experiences which John was confronted with during his early childhood years.

When I was a little boy, we never really spoke of drugs. I became aware of drugs when I was about 9 years old. I had some cousins that came from the States and they were the ones that grew marijuana in my grandmother's twin sister's backyard and her flower garden. They grew marijuana and did cocaine. So it was at that age I knew what drugs was all about. (Vol. 1, pp. 43, 44)

In his teen years John observed one of his cousins become involved in drugs. Though he and his cousin had a close relationship, John was not influenced by his cousin's drug use. Instead, John became disappointed in his cousin's lack of discipline and his failure to adhere to the counsel that his grandmother gave him.

My cousin T and I were very close, very, very close. I think that day it was one o'clock when I came home from school and I went to the house and saw him in the state he was. I think that was the day he started using drugs as well and I spoke to him. He felt bad that I saw him. He then tried to reassure me that he was a disciplined person because when he was living in the United States he didn't drink alcohol even though he smoked cigarettes. He figured he could stop taking drugs any time because when he wanted to stop smoking cigarettes he stopped willingly. This is what he used to try to convince me. Yes he is doing it and he know that it's not good, but everyone in their conscience knows that it's not right, but yet they do it and it won't be long if he'll be involved in it. (Vol. 1, p. 64)

John continued describing the fate of his cousin. Though his cousin thought he would be able to give up the drug habit and live according to his upbringing, he succumbed to the habit. His drug habit apparently stripped him of dignity and self-worth, as John described using metaphoric dialect:

But he didn't stop until he was down to 'day's toenail,' and my mother wrote to his wife and she came from the States and we had 3 days looking for him. We found him hiding because he was ashamed. He was ashamed and he went

to hide from society, from the family, into the hills, and then his wife came, took him to the States, put him in a rehab center. He got help and he began working again. After 2 years he got a promotion and started the same lifestyle in sex and drugs with what they would call "top high class people." It hurt me in part because he did not listen to my grandmother. I think the fact that he lived in the States, he didn't put much value to my grandmother after she was dead. This made me strong and determined not to get involved in drugs. (Vol. 1, pp. 64, 65)

While Caroleen was rearing her children, she warned them about the effects of drugs. As the children matured, they all maintained drug-free lifestyles, turning dangerous opportunities down at critical times. Caroleen was also aware of the bad company her extended family kept and their involvement in drugs, in particular Cousin T.

I have a nephew and I found out that he was involved with drugs. And when I realized, that my nephew, such an ambitious, educated boy was involved in drugs, I went, I went crazy. And he came to me, I said T, you were reared such a clean and decent person and you went and hook up with those up-to-date people who were rich and you tried to avoid my conversation. He said to me, "I came here because I want John." I said, not this time, John is not going no where with you. I am not going to leave him keep your company anymore because you see you is in the wrong road. You don't go. You ain't going my way. I suffering. Now, I is Pointus Pilate. I wash my hands off of you and I not going to leave my children keep your company. Don't come. He sit down and he say, "My aunt, when I come, if you close the doors in my face, I going to lie down in the gallery. And if I can't lie there, I going to die in front of your door. But I not stop from coming." I say well, you better would stop from taking drugs and living a worthless life because I not going down in the pit with you. And I not going to let my children keep your company. (Vol. 1, pp. 192, 193)

The negative influences of these two family members provided John with a sense and knowledge of the dangers of drugs and alcohol, hence discouraging him from becoming involved with drugs.

### **Positive Influence**

John's grandmother positively influenced John's moral values. Everyday he visited his grandmother. He expressed that she inspired him to avoid drugs and alcohol. She described the behavior of those who drink alcohol. She also informed John of the inability to be aware of his behavior if he became intoxicated. Lastly, she demonstrated through metaphors the negative influences of bad company.

### **Grandmother—Role model and mentor**

The influences of society appear to be strong, and at times youth are encouraged by their peers to engage in conventional or non-conventional activities. Role models were very important in the life of John who seemed to have done right as a result of his home training and family influences. Therefore any deviation from the home training would apparently stir his conscience and what was taught would always be foremost in his mind. John claimed that his life was guided by the moral values he received from his grandmother.

All my moral values came from my grandmother. Anything I did as a child and do today, I always put first, what will my grandmother say? What would she have done? Even after her death at 96 years old, my grandmother continued to play an important role in my life. If I consider doing anything wrong, I would say, she'll feel bad, so I won't do it. (Vol. 1, pp. 63, 64)

Although John lived with his parents, he visited his grandmother's house daily.

His relationship with his grandmother greatly influenced his nonuse of drugs.

Everyday I went to her house, even if it was only two hours. Everyday she came to our house. . . . My grandmother has impacted my life positively. This has been a major motivation for doing right. I have been inspired to avoid drugs and alcohol. My grandmother provided the foundation for my non-involvement in drugs. (Vol. 1, pp. 63, 67)

Caroleen supported the notion that her children spent significant time with their grandmother as they played and had fun at their grandmother's expense.

They get an old cloth, and put it on the head and they would play grandmother, giving advice and counsel. The children were teasing her. And grandmother would say, "So you teasing me, and none of you have a bachelor degree. And everybody would laugh as we had fun with grandmother under the tamarind tree. (Vol. 1, p. 113)

John recalled the advice and instruction that his grandmother gave him, which had a positive influence on his upbringing. Again, metaphors emanated as he shared.

I knew from a young age that alcohol and gambling were things of the devil. As my grandmother would say, "Cards and dice are the devil's advice and alcohol is the devil's food. Because when you drink alcohol, you become drunk. When you become drunk you disrespect older people and yourself. When you become drunk you can even hit your mother because you're not conscious of what you're doing. When you become drunk you can be walked upon. You're lower than a dog because the people who watch you when you are sober will take advantage of you when you are drunk. So I would say that the powerful knowledge of the negativity that one can be a victim of or envelope [trapped] in, because of using drugs, is what has helped me. (Vol. 1, p. 44)

Caroleen agreed that her mother played a major role in rearing her children.

"My mother went to convent school. I feel that I could give them some of the education, what mom had given me" (Vol. 1, p. 102). The grandmother transmitted her religious values to her grandchildren. Caroleen further stated that much of her mother's advice to the children came in the form of story-telling along with old sayings known as metaphors such as "birds of a color flock together," "crows is bad company," "cards and dice are the devil's advice," and "alcohol is the devil's food" (Vol. 1, pp. 44, 67, 112). Caroleen discussed her feelings in this area.

My mother was very supportive and affirming. She gave those children so much praise that they never forget it. Everything for my children is "mom say this and mom say that." They had love mom very much. Today, whatever



mom said, you hear it ringing their ear bell. Mom would tell them to do the best they could do. She said, "If you don't succeed, try again." She was old but had a certain amount of wit that she shared with them like things that happened when she was growing up. . . . She would say, "If people going out and they invite you, but you don't know where they are going, don't go. You put your shoulder to the wheel and fight." My mother influenced my children in a good fashion. (Vol. 1, pp. 113, 114)

She taught them to be ambitious and to keep focused about their education.

She did not believe in fooling around when it was school time. John claimed that his grandmother, unlike his grandfather, modeled and encouraged him to work hard, stay away from bad company, and not to use alcohol. This, he agreed, "helped to keep me in the right path" (Vol. 1, p. 44).

The themes presented in sections internal and external family dynamics demonstrated some of the influences in John's family which may have guided his drug avoidance. John had other influences outside his internal and external family that affected his decision not to use drugs. Friends, neighbors, and teachers all played a part in John's drug avoidance. The interaction between John and his friends, neighbors, and teachers is explored further in the section Environmental Dynamics.

### **Environmental Dynamics**

The aspects of friends, neighbors, and school are the themes comprising the category environmental dynamics. Unveiling these themes as a result of the interview sessions has given us an understanding of John's ability to be drug free. These three themes have either negatively or positively affected John's drug-free posture.

## Positive Expectations and Respect

**Friends**

John was respected among his friends. He was an example and his friends have learned what he stood for whether they liked it or not. They knew that he stood for what he believed and they respected him for that. John had friends who used drugs and cigarettes, but when they saw him approaching, they would hide the drugs/cigarette. Nevertheless, when they offered him drugs, he refused to partake. John is convinced that his friends showed respect for him because they knew what kind of upbringing he received.

You know it's like you don't want to get in that neighborhood . . . young boys younger than I am. . . . I would miss them in the bush looking for crab and when I do catch up with them I smell smoke, I said, "You boys burning something," and they would have stolen a cigarette from somebody--their grandfather or God knows who and they would be smoking a cigarette in the bushes. . . . They try and hide it from me and I say it's no use to hide it, I smell it. And then they would offer it to me. I said, "You hid it from me, now you're offering it to me. What good did that cigarette do for you? Nothing." I mean they blow smoke out of their mouth and as far as they concern it was nothing. I say, "Hey, cigarette give you cancer." Now I didn't have the knowledge I do now, but I did hear that cigarette give you cancer and it make your mouth stink. "You're going to have a stinking mouth from a young age and you going to get cancer." So I mean in all of this is because I had communication with my parents. (Vol. 1, pp, 22, 23)

Caroleen shared that "it seems to me that if I wasn't so strict on John, whatever these fellows did, John would do. John loved friends. He is very friendly, no boldness or rudeness" (Vol. 1, pp. 108, 109). Interestingly, John informed me about a very good friend of his.

I had a very good friend. He doesn't do drugs and he just wouldn't do drugs. He did not have the same bringing up as I did. He was born out of wedlock, pressured by that fact. His father did not live with him. His mother has eight

of them in the house and none of them do alcohol, none of them do drugs. (Vol. 1, p. 52)

John seemed to positively influence his friends instead of succumbing to their negative behaviors. He would warn them of the negative health consequences. Some friends would hide their drug use when he was around. Other friends offered drugs to him but he refused. Generally, his friends respected him.

### **Neighbors**

The neighbors were very respectful of John because they knew what his parents' standards were and the training they gave him. The neighbors were also aware that his mother was a homemaker who supervised her children. Caroleen expressed her feelings with her neighbors.

All I did was mind the children. I really didn't care what my neighbors say. I washed and cleaned and took care of them. The neighbors would watch me and see how I care for my children and some would say I think I proud. Some of the other children would come to play with my children. I keep an eye on them, I let them play. Who did not play good, had to go home. Then I would be watching and their parents would not be keeping an eye on them. So I told them, you have these little girls playing up and down with these boys without watching to see what is going on. I said, I have work to do too. I can't mind my children plus all your children. Keep ar' you children home sometimes and look after them. Look to see where they are. (Vol. 1, pp. 82, 83)

John and his siblings had curfew hours and their parents set limits as to when they could come and go. John was respected for all these reasons by neighbors who would tolerate slackness from their own children, but not from John or his siblings. The neighbor's children also had respect for John's parents because they knew they were people of honesty, good discipline, and proper manners.

They see me as different to them because of the family I have that they didn't have. My mother, as I say, went to work when we were all going to school

okay. Most of the kids' mother had to go to work because they were either a single parent or their father manage his money in such a way that their lifestyle did not permit them to live on one salary. So they would see their mother/father at the end of the day, so they would be running around all day. They didn't have guidance. (Vol. 1, p. 23)

Some children in the neighborhood did not have parents who stayed at home and as a result they did not have guidance. Hence, being at home with her children, Caroleen was enabled to monitor the neighborhood children's influence on her children. This also helped them from becoming involved in bad company that could have led to drug use.

### **Teachers**

John was also respected by his teachers for the simple reason that he was different from the average school child in St. Martin as far as discipline was concerned. His parents were also respected by the teachers because they knew that they kept up with their children's progress and expected proper behavior and discipline from them. The children had their work completed and the teachers realized that John's parents were committed parents.

Some of the teachers were not a good example of non-drug use to John and his classmates. Some of them were involved in drug use, and the school children were aware of it. Here is where home training really counted, and the children must stand on their own two feet no matter what others in their environment may do.

Teachers, especially White teachers from France, were the type of teachers who used marijuana on a regular basis. The class was dominant of children who seem to have parents who did not really look into what was happening in school. In school they would go as far as to smoke and also in class. . . . Teachers during the lunch break would light up a marijuana joint and just share it up with some of the boys in the class. (Vol. 1, p. 50)

According to John, the teachers invited the students to smoke. However, “they never asked or offer me marijuana because they respected me and my parents” (Vol. 1, p. 50).

Both John and his parents were respected by his teachers. John’s parents demonstrated their commitment to John’s academic progress. Consequently, the teachers who were involved with drugs did not offer drugs to John.

Though John’s friends, neighbors, and some teachers were involved with drugs, he was steadfast in his non-drug stance. His parents’ awareness of the negative influences in their environment and their active involvement with the environment may have guarded their children against the allurements of drugs. In addition to the relational and environmental influences, John’s religious involvement also seemed to provide a protective wall against drug use.

### **Religious Dynamics**

John credited his religious beliefs and teachings as another positive influence that prevented him from using drugs. The religious themes discovered in the data are presented in this section labelled religious dynamics. The themes are divided into two categories: internal and external religious dynamics.

#### **Internal Religious Dynamics**

The internal religious dynamics discussed in this section describe the religious climate of John’s home, Caroleen’s use of faith and prayer, how values and morals were transmitted and internalized, and John’s religious commitment. These were developed and experienced within his internal family.

**Religious Climate: Home**

Spirituality and religiosity have been major components in the lives of this family. The Bible, the Ten Commandments, an awareness of God, His abiding presence, and prayer all seemed to have been an integral part in this family's lifestyle.

All the family members, according to John, participated in prayer whether the members were immediate or extended family members. They learned contentment and trust in God. Even with music in the home, John said, "we were never encouraged to listen to 'vulgar' music. Instead, we were allowed to listen to gospel songs" (Vol. 1, pp. 24, 25). As a family they met regularly for prayer and singing. "First thing I do every night before I go to sleep with my children, after they get to the age of reason, I make all of us sit down and say our prayers to the Lord. I teach them to pray from small and I pray for them. Our home always had prayer and God" (Vol. 1, p. 191). John confirmed his mother's declaration, "We would sing and pray every day. At times at least once a week we had prayer meeting time under the tamarind tree, singing and praying together. We grow strong in the Lord and learn to do the right and leave the wrong" (Vol. 1, pp. 58, 59).

At an early age, Caroleen taught John and his siblings how to pray and sing. Praying and singing as a family took place every day. John expressed that they, in turn, developed a strong relationship with God and learned to behave appropriately.

**Mother of Faith and Prayer**

At the helm of the family ship stood a mother who drew strength from her spiritually committed Christian mother. Caroleen stated that she was a God-fearing

woman. She prayed without ceasing because it gave her strength and guidance. From a young age she learned that she had no where to turn but to God. Caroleen continued, “Prayer connects us with God. My mother depended on God so I grew up with that consciousness always” (Vol. 1, p. 191). For Caroleen prayer was a wall of protection.

As a young lady, she was fearful that she may not be able to have children, and indeed something was wrong with her body. She prayed, however, for a child and had four children. This, she described, was an answer to prayer.

I married, I was 29. . . and I married and I wasn't fixed right. But I used to speak to the Lord as a young lady and would always tell Him. . . . They had to give me hormones, all kind of things before I could have conceived a child. When this happened to me the child was such a gift and I know my prayers was answered because the doctors tell me this only leave to God that I could have a child. (Vol. 1, p. 128)

Caroleen dedicated her children to the Lord and asked His protection over their lives. She declared that “I will do everything to keep them safe and protect them from destruction and wrong things like stealing and drugs. I tried to cherish them and keep them close to me” (Vol. 1, p. 87).

Caroleen described that she received her strength from God. She used prayer to connect and foster her relationship with God. She believed her children were a gift from God so she was protective of them in order to steer them from drugs.

### **Transmission and Internalization of Values and Morals**

The values and morals transmitted by John's parents possibly played a major role in helping him to abstain from drugs. John and his siblings were taught values and

morals which seemed to shield them from becoming allured by societal ills. It also helped them to realize that school, work, and housework were priorities.

One of the lessons John's father taught him was portrayed in an experience that he encountered. John received a watch from his god-mother's son. When his father saw the watch, he asked John who gave the watch to him. John told his father who gave him the watch. His father said, "Carry the watch back because no one could be sure that the watch was not stolen" (Vol. 1, pp. 41, 42). John regretfully returned the watch, however he learned a lesson that day: "that I shouldn't take things from other people no matter how innocent it seemed" (Vol. 1, p. 42).

Caroleen's father did not want her to go off to school because he felt she was too young. Consequently, she had a desire to see all her children become successful in society. She modeled right living, refrained from curse words, and showed a great interest in their overall social and academic development. Caroleen told her children, "I don't keep no kind of alcohol in this house because I don't want ar' you to grow up drinking for when you start drinking from so small you can never stop. Don't get into a habit you cannot get away from" (Vol. 1, pp. 97, 98).

Caroleen trained her children in time management, responsibility, and respect. The children learned how to be industrious by being involved in extracurricular activities, both in and out of the home, such as typing lessons and music lessons. She also instructed that values and morals worked hand in hand, thus her children had to deport themselves respectfully and decently. She instilled in them the dire importance of choosing a life occupation, working, and propriety. The children, according to Caroleen, obtained good jobs and have been living well.



All of them look for decent jobs. I say, children, are you start working and open a bank account that you work for yourself, that you all can have something. They work . . . they put their money in the bank . . . they'll bring it to me. They are just decent. They cut their hair. They just couldn't have this heap of hair on top of their head and plaits . . . no earring in their ear bell. (Vol. 1, p. 95)

Caroleen was convinced that her children and home was drug-free because they wanted to live decent, respectable lives. She taught her children to stay away from drugs and emphasized that alcohol was also a drug. Caroleen made them aware of the effects of drugs.

If you want to be decent, you could never put it in you head to take drugs because you see what drugs do to people out there. Some eating out of garbage pans, you don't want that for yourself. Try to shun it as much as possible, the person, place, and thing. . . . To be truthful, I have no problem with the two boys where alcohol is concerned. My family (my two sons and two daughters) are very obedient children up to now. (Vol. 1, pp. 105, 79)

John demonstrated the internalization of his parental values and morals as he revealed the following situation.

I've been with people that use drugs and smoke and drink alcohol. They thief and some of them I manage to say, hey, you know you shouldn't do these things. Some stopped and some didn't. . . . I know how my parents brought me up and they taught right from wrong and they are also aware that they taught me and I should keep away from places that would put me in trouble. So when I go and come back, and I didn't do the things that the guys out there were doing, they knew that their teachings were accepted by me 'cause they didn't want me to become the victim of the inviting temptations of society. (Vol. 1, pp. 5, 6)

Caroleen desired that her children become decent, respectable citizens. She taught them time management, responsibility, respect, and about the effects of drugs. Therefore, she modeled right living, refrained from curse words, and became interested in their social, academic, and religious development.

### **Religious Commitment: A Lover of God**

John felt that staying away from drugs gave him a stable, open, clear mind so that he could not be taken advantage of. A sense of control was important to him. John appreciated the fact that his parents, particularly his mom and grandmother, modeled good Christian living before him and his siblings and for teaching them the Words of God and prayer.

They taught me not only to pray alone, but to pray with and for the family. We shared confidence with prayer, and this is what I believe really impacted me to be the person that I am today. . . . God has been with me from birth. My mother has told all of us that since we born she offered us up to the Lord. . . . Prayer is very important because I know I was being prayed for constantly Prayer has always been an important part of my life. (Vol. 1, pp. 2, 52, 78)

John depended on God for guidance not only in important matters, but in small issues of everyday life. He believed that God will not allow him to go on a wrong path. Because of this, John made sure that he was responsible and that his future was guided by God.

God is an important factor in my life. I have learned to depend on God and to seek Him for guidance and protection. Only he [those] who knows the power of the Lord would understand. I asked many of my friends why they do drugs, why they drink rum [liquor]. They say they do drugs to feel good, they say they drink rum first to feel happy. . . . I believe that a God-centered lifestyle has been a wall of protection from evil, people who want to hurt you and even from drugs. . . . I have been bless with the protection and blessings of the Lord. (Vol. 1, pp. 72, 73)

John described his compassion for God as he expanded and credited his mother for his relationship with God. “My relationship with God is very close. As far as I’m concerned, my mother could not function without contact with God. This is what I got from her” (Vol. 1, pp. 76, 77). He further stated that his mother got her attitude and connection with God from her mother. This appeared to have been a transmission of

religious heritage where religious values had been transmitted from one generation to another.

With a smile on his face and a deep sense of confidence and commitment, John declared,

I am a blessed child. I can do things because I have the reassurance that my Lord will not forsake me. My Lord will not leave me go wrong. So if I have the urge to do this, and I don't look to do nothing bad because of my relation with God, it's something good, and I'm going to do it. No matter how impossible it might seem to you because I got the greatest man [God] on my side. The impact of having God and His presence was always brought forward. (Vol. 1, p. 72)

One of the goals and purposes in John's life was to share the Lord with others. So often he would go abroad and, while shopping, he would find himself in religious stores buying books to help others find Christ. He said, "When you have the Lord, you can't help but share it with others. As others share drugs, I share the Lord who protected me. This is my obsession right now. I have been successful only because of the Lord" (Vol. 1, p. 75).

John's advice to people who never used drugs is "to become conscious of God's likeness for us and to be close and stay close to God as far as possible" (Vol. 1, p. 76).

John attributed his religious commitment to his mother and grandmother. They taught him to pray individually and with the family. He learned to ask God for guidance in big and small life issues. His God-centered lifestyle apparently helped to protect him from drug use.

## External Religious Dynamics

Other influences outside John's family affected John's non-drug stance. For example, church attendance and involvement and religious belief and teachings were external themes that guided John's religious development.

### Church Attendance and Involvement

Regular church attendance was a meaningful tradition in the lives of John and his family. According to Caroleen,

My children were always in church. When I went, I would be tugging with them. I had no car, the neighbors got to come help me lift them up . . . . I didn't wait until they could walk, I carried them in my arms. I carried them in my stomach. Every Sunday, from the time they were born till now they go to church. (Vol. 1, pp. 190, 201)

It is interesting that John and his siblings were different from the others in their neighborhood and community in that John's parents saw that they went to church. Even when Caroleen bought a car she used the car only to take the family to church. As a result, the neighbors' children teased him about his "constant church going and that their car was called 'church car'" (Vol. 1, p. 200). To this Caroleen responded, "Well, Mommy don't go disco, Mommy don't go this kind of place. I say whenever we want, what better place we can go but to church" (Vol. 1, p. 200). Caroleen suggested that church going gave her children something positive to be involved in, which "kept them occupied and safe from harm's way. I had to have gone to church in order to have raise the children like how I raised them" (Vol. 1, p. 125). John also agreed that church was an integral part of his life. "I went to church every Sunday and I went to Sunday School whenever there was Sunday School" (Vol. 1, p. 84).

Caroleen was active in her church life. She claimed that she was a choir leader, teacher, and prayer leader. Caroleen continued to share that church was important.

It is at church where my children learn catechism and sing and enjoy themselves in the things of God. They use to sing in the choir and John had a sweet voice and when he opened it he charmed everybody. He use to sing a lot. (Vol. 1, p. 200)

Her other son played the organ and attended choir practice regularly, “sometimes twice a week” (Vol. 1, p. 125).

Apparently they never forgot their church-going practice and involvement and the training they received. John supported this notion. “When I was a Little boy, I sang in the choirs, I played the guitar. I have been blessed with the blessing of the Lord” (Vol. 1, pp. 72, 73).

As a teenager John’s social life revolved around the church.

I used to spend more time at the Methodist church when I was a teenager. They had fairs and church activities such as Kermes, and fund-raising events in the church yard. There was where I socialized. My friends use to go there. The church’s activities kept me active, but at the same time away from bad company and drugs. Even when partying, I would just have water or orange juice. (Vol. 1, p. 78)

The spiritual involvement and church going appeared to have influenced John’s drug avoidance. Attending church, according to John, is still a part of his life. “My schedule, I try and go to church every Sunday. If I didn’t make it every Sunday, I make sure that I go to church at least once a month” (Vol. 1, p. 76).

In his childhood years, John recalled going with his family to church often. His mother hoped that by taking her children to church they would become involved in positive activities and deterred from negative influences. Church, during his adolescent years, became a place for socialization with friends and engaging in clean activities.

This seems to have protected John from bad company and drugs.

### **Religious Beliefs and Teachings**

Though Caroleen's overall lifestyle was religious, she was not denominationally preoccupied. She concentrated on having a relationship with God. Caroleen took pride in believing and practicing the Word of God and she transmitted these values to her children.

I appreciate my children. I tell them I was raised up in the Catholic church, but I don't boast on religion, I boast on the Word of God. Because the Word was made flesh, I would love for you to live in the fear of God. (Vol. 1, p. 125)

Caroleen used the Bible to guide her when she corrected her children's misbehavior. If they lied, they had to kiss the Bible and confess. She did this to teach them to respect the Word of God.

Well, I use to correct them--well, say for instance, I bought a case of lemonade. They would take six behind the house and drink them. When I realized the lemonade was gone I asked them about it. I told them to tell me the truth. I told them to bring me the Bible and whoever drink my lemonade can kiss the Bible. I said sorry for ar you. And at that time all who drank the lemonade kissed the Bible. I said, so you all drank my lemonade? (Vol. 1, pp. 125, 126)

The Bible, Caroleen believed, was partly responsible for her children's noninvolvement with drugs. She asserted that "it was the best way to provide a strong foundation against evil in society, even drugs. If you believe in God, you will ask yourself a thousand times why I should do that? Why should I smoke drugs?" (Vol. 1, p. 191). Caroleen told her children Bible stories on a regular basis. She explained that awareness of the Bible and its teachings made them "live in fear" (Vol. 1, pp. 125, 126).

I teach my children the Bible. This is our guide. They had to know why God make them. They had to know the difference between good and bad. I tell them that alcohol and drugs is bad. They are evil. They can't do drugs or drink alcohol cause God didn't make them for that. God made them to live right. They had to get out the catechism, they had to know God, and see, and hear all things. Then they can't do drugs. . . . The Bible is the Word inspired by those holy men who wrote it from the foundation that they built on. I think that was a great help to them. By teaching them to believe the Bible. Just like they kissed the Bible when they were small . . . they came big and they live in fear (Vol. 1, pp. 187, 191)

Caroleen further shared that God gave humans some guidelines and rules to help us know how to live.

You must know how to stand up for yourself. Don't let bad company pull you down. Don't go down to reach him. He must come up to meet you. And if he can't come, let him go about his business. When we want to live right, I tell them from small we have to follow God's commandments. We doesn't use the commandments as a Marshall law. But they are there. They are right there to tell us and inspire us what we should do and what we shouldn't do, way we should walk and the way we shouldn't walk. So, if you really believe and you have the training from small, it grows just like a tree, it grow right. Doing drugs will kill you and God don't want that to happen to you. That's how I talk to them from small. (Vol. 1, pp. 191, 192)

Although the major influences of religion came from John's mother and grandmother, he regarded his father's religious influence important as well. John said that even though his father was not a very outspoken person, the things he did, the way he did them, and the way he conducted himself is indicative of the fact that his father was aware of God and His protection. "My father, to my knowledge never swear, he never drank rum [liquor] and he never ran women. . . . God is always mentioned in our family. My parents modeled spiritual living so I learn to live God's way and stay away from things like drugs" (Vol. 1, p. 77).

Caroleen's religious beliefs were derived from her relationship with God and her study of the Bible rather than a particular denominational belief. She used the

Bible as a guide in her life as well as, for her children. She claimed that her children's knowledge of the Bible was one influence that kept them from drug involvement. The analysis section below pulls together the themes that protected John from drug use.

### **Grandmother**

John expressed much appreciation for his grandmother's positive spiritual influence that may have aided him in his drug-free lifestyle. By her living he learned how to stay close to God. His grandmother taught him to put God first, and they made prayer part of their daily lives. John related this experience:

My grandmother, like my mother, was a woman of prayer. I sat and prayed with my grandmother . . . and my aunts, my sister, and my brothers. We said our prayer, "Our Father" twice a day. Obligation. Not with a machete behind of us, but we were taught to do it at least twice a day. You didn't do it fast. It was with sincerity. It wasn't a recitation. It wasn't a song. So the existence of God was always known to my family in our whole household . . . so we've been conscious of God and His presence. Prayer has always been an important part of my life. (Vol. 1, p. 70)

John emphasized how his grandmother had a major impact on his prayer life and religious life as a whole and the importance of living clean and right.

My grandmother always reminded us of the Ten Commandments. She said the commandments are for us to live right and stay out of trouble. What we wanted we must ask God sincerely and we will accomplish it. God was first in my life and all that I do or did. My grandmother, like I said, had a very great influence over me. She was a very godly person. She was a God-abiding person. Everything she has accomplished, she has accomplished it with God at her side or in front of her. My grandmother lived close to God and I always wanted to live like that. (Vol. 1, p. 78)

In reflection, John remembered an important lesson learned from his grandmother as he was frequently confronted with drug allurements. He shared.



If you do right, right will tend you and if you do wrong, wrong will do you. As my grandmother said, "Whatever a man sows he reaps." This has been an inspiration for me. So being honest with myself helped me to maintain my life from destroying and involving in drugs. (Vol. 1, p. 78)

This served as a buffer against negative societal influences and possibly aiding John's abstinence from drug use.

### **Summary**

John's close-knit relationship with his family and the steady and consistent supervision he received from his mother helped to deter him from drug use. His interaction with people in his environment such as friends, neighbors, and teachers was greatly monitored and restricted by his mother. This also prevented John and his siblings from associating with bad company that could have led to possible drug use. Another influence which appeared to guard John from drug involvement was his relationship with God. From his mother's and grandmother's guidance, John developed a personal relationship with God and committed himself to a Christian lifestyle which aided his avoidance of drugs. The following section provides a more in-depth analysis of John's and Caroleen's story regarding John's drug avoidance.

### **Analysis: A Microscopic View**

In order to capture the hidden treasure within this case I sought to analyze as it were through the lens of a microscope. This "allows for a more refined clear analysis" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 82). Five major themes became apparent to the non-drug involvement of the young adult, John, in family I. The internal family dynamics incorporated many themes. The first theme, intimate relations, described John's

relationship with his parents and siblings. John, describes this type of relationship as “A Family Life.” This included the close relational bond he had with his parents and the love they displayed for him. His mother, Caroleen, was always there for him because she did not work until her children were of age to attend school.

Another theme, social relations, exemplified how the family spent time together “under the Tamarind tree” (Vol. 1, p. 27). This was a place of significance for John and his family. Here they would laugh, talk, eat, and sleep. Here they grew closer as they enjoyed the time relaxing and reminiscing. On special days like Christmas, the family would gather under the Tamarind tree to enjoy holiday treats.

Open communication with his parents, especially his mother, was an integral theme in John’s life. Caroleen assured John that he could tell her anything and she would be there to listen. John’s openness with his mother was evident when he readily confessed how his cousin offered him drugs. His father was not as open as his mother, but he was a good example for his children.

Supervision was a very important aspect in this family. Caroleen believed that her children should always be supervised. This appeared to have influenced John’s non- drug use because Caroleen helped her children avoid bad company by acquainting herself with their associates. She did not allow her children to roam the streets due to the negative influences that may have encouraged drug use.

John described Caroleen as a loving disciplinarian. John and his siblings sometimes thought that her discipline was harsh, but they realized it was for their best interests. Caroleen’s process of discipline was to first warn, then spank and punish. Discipline was necessary to teach the children the difference between right and wrong.

At a very young age John and his siblings learned to work hard, save money, and take responsibility for their actions. John described working hard while enjoying it as “jollification” (Vol. 1, p. 37). His father also carried him to work, this played a major role in teaching responsibility. John was taught to be satisfied and content with his own possessions, not to covet, and not to do drugs to obtain money or to acquire material things.

One external family dynamic which positively influenced John’s life was his grandmother. She was his role model and mentor. In addition to teaching him values and morals, she transmitted to him her heritage which greatly impacted his non-drug use. John’s daily interaction with his grandmother taught him to avoid alcohol, gambling, bad company, and questionable environments.

Initially his grandfather had led a decent life, but he (John’s grandfather) was led astray by his cousin. He became involved with alcohol until his untimely death. He was killed by his acquaintances who were under the influence of alcohol. Caroleen confirmed her father’s unwise decision to associate with alcoholics. Although John never saw his grandfather, the power of his grandmother’s story was enough to hinder his drug use.

John’s cousin’s fate also aided John in his decision to avoid drugs. At the young age of 9, John was confronted with his cousin’s drug use. He observed how drugs destroyed his cousin’s life and thus John was determined not to use drugs. Caroleen confirmed her nephew’s drug habit and tried her best to protect John from the cousin’s negative influence.

Environmental dynamics included positive expectations and respect from friends, neighbors, and teachers. John had friends who used and offered him drugs; however, they respected John when he refused to participate in drug use. Furthermore, he capitalized on these opportunities to educate them about the effects of smoking.

The neighbors also respected John and his siblings for their standards. They knew that John was raised in a responsible and respectable manner.

John also experienced exposure to drugs from his school teachers. Though they were bad examples for their students, they never offered John drugs because they respected John and his parents.

The internal religious dynamics involved the religious climate of the home. John's parents taught him Bible teachings, the Ten Commandments, and awareness of God. The family met daily to sing, to pray, and to learn to love God and His Word.

Caroleen modeled and demonstrated to her children the importance of faith and prayer. From a young age Caroleen learned how to pray and she transmitted this to her children. She dedicated her children to God and strongly believed the Bible teachings would keep her children away from drugs and make them "live in fear of God" (Vol. 1, p. 125). John claimed that his father's religious influence in his life was demonstrated by the way he lived.

Another theme portrayed was the transmission of values and morals. John was taught priorities and proper etiquette. Caroleen trained him to be responsible and respectful. He learned the importance of choosing occupations and how to live within his means.

Caroleen also transmitted her religious commitment to God with John. Subsequently, John developed faith in God. He believed that God would guide him in the right path. He appreciated his mother and grandmother for their instilling in him a prayerful, committed Christian lifestyle, which he claimed kept him from getting involved in drugs and alcohol. He advised other young people “to become conscious of God’s likeness . . . and to be close and stay close to God as far as possible” (Vol. 1, pp. 71, 76).

The external religious dynamics included church attendance and involvement. Regular church attendance and involvement were expected in John’s family. John not only sang in the choir, but also played the organ. According to Caroleen, this was a means of keeping her children safe. John acknowledged that his spiritual involvement and church attendance influenced his choice to refrain from drugs.

One of the most important external religious dynamics in John’s life was his God-fearing grandmother. Through her John learned to put God first, pray daily, and to live holy and pure. To this day he continues to follow God’s instructions.

This chapter examined the experience of a young adult male’s discourse on possible influences that led him to avoid drugs. John was raised in a biological two-parent family, but chapter 5 examines a young woman’s choice to avoid drugs. She was raised with her biological mother and a stepfather.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FAMILY II

#### **Introduction**

Through the interview protocol I sought to discover how family II was influenced by the selected dynamics in relation to their non-drug involvement. A rocky unpaved road led to the home of family II. The road was narrow and at short intervals became uncomfortable as the car twisted and sometimes skidded. Fortunately, the distance from the main road to the house was not long. At the entrance of the rocky road there was a convenience grocery which provided shopping for nearby families.

Halfway towards my destination I noticed that among all the homes that flanked the sides of this narrow road, there was a storefront church nestled between two of the homes. People were sitting on their porches chatting with one another. Others were walking back and forth. The entrance to family II's property was paved, hence, providing a comfortable driveway.

When I approached the house, I was warmly welcomed and invited to take a seat. I sat patiently for child II and her mother. This was the first interview. Family II's home was clean and well-kept. It became the site of our scheduled interview with both mother and daughter.

The family consisted of four individuals: The mother, called Kay in this research, the father, a stepfather to child II, whom I named Brenda, and a younger sister who presently attends a parochial college in the U.S.A. Brenda, the oldest child, is 26 years old and a graduate of a parochial college with a bachelor's degree. She described herself as reserved and conservative. Currently, Brenda is employed at an accounting firm where she works as an accountant.

This chapter reveals information provided by Kay and Brenda as to why they believe Brenda was able to avoid drug use. Three familial dynamics have been selected based on the literature review in order to understand how they were related to Brenda's drug avoidance.

### **Relational Dynamics**

Themes emanating from the interview process with both the parent and young adult corroborated with the selected relational dynamics from the literature. These themes categorized within the relational dynamics are divided into internal relational dynamics and external relational dynamics. The themes appeared to have fostered Brenda's drug avoidance.

#### **Internal Family Dynamics**

Within the internal relational dynamics are other themes which evolved from the interview dialogues with Kay and her daughter Brenda. These internal relational dynamics have been divided into sub-themes, the first of which is intimate relation.

### **Intimate Relations: “My Mom and I”**

The close bond between Brenda and Kay was portrayed in much of our interview. This bond developed as Brenda grew during her childhood and adolescent years. Brenda said that she and her mom had a special relationship.

Well, mom and I are close. We did everything together. I am a lot like my mom. My mom will take us shopping, buy clothes, ice cream, talk to me about avoiding bad things and company, and even bad influences. Mom was not always an affectionate person. But on special occasions she showered us with love, hugs, and kisses. (Vol. 1, pp. 132, 133)

This for Brenda was very affirming and encouraging because when she was younger she did not always feel this way. The things that Kay did for Brenda meant a whole lot to her. However, these feelings changed as she grew.

My mom showed her love strongly by showing concern and making sure our necessities were met. We sat, laugh, talk, enjoy each other’s company, play games, and show much interest in each other. Mom made me feel good about myself [Brenda smiled and sighed softly]. As a child I feel love sometimes. My mother doesn’t have patience because when I am good everything is OK, great. But when things don’t go right, like not doing my home chores, Mom will not hesitate to punish me. As I grew I realized that mom meant good for me. Mom will hug and kiss me. It made me feel good--you know, special. This made me feel loved. (Vol. 1, p. 133)

Brenda’s mother was confident that home for the children was a place of warmth and safety.

Home was emotionally strong. Love flowed freely as we cared for and understand each other. I expressed my love to my children by playing with them, hugging a lot, spend a lot of time talking, and enjoying each other just having good times together. I enjoy Brenda more and more as she grew. We related and played together like sisters. (Vol. 1, pp. 142, 143)

Kay was the primary caretaker in the family who “held the strain and steady the ropes” [the mother kept her family in balance] (Vol. 1, p. 142). Kay’s interest in her children’s progress, socially and academically, encouraged their performance.



Brenda perceived her family as caring and appreciated her mother's strong interest in her well-being. As a result, Brenda did things to make her parents happy.

I never wanted to disappoint my parents. I wanted my parents to be proud of me. . . . I believe that I did not use drugs because I wanted to make Mommy happy. I did things to please my mom. I wanted to be appreciated and for Mommy to be proud of me. (Vol. 1, pp. 133, 135)

Brenda highly valued being appreciated by her mother. Her mother's affirmation helped Brenda to avoid the negative influences, including drug use. Brenda recalled being personally convicted to do the right thing.

When I was growing up I was scared to get involved in anything bad. I thought twice before doing anything wrong. I think from very young I tend to know what I wanted. My parents' influence helped me. I wanted them to be happy, but mostly my personal conviction. . . . I chose to do right. I chose not to use drugs. (Vol. 1, pp. 133, 135)

Reflecting was a joyful and comforting experience for Kay. As the interviews progressed, she felt more free to share openly.

I appreciate this very much. It made me feel good to remember how things used to be. We did not have everything that we have now but we had each other. Sometimes I wish things could be the way they used to be. I thank God for my children and the way they have matured. (Vol. 1, p. 140)

### **My Father**

It was interesting to know how Brenda related to her stepfather, whom she called Dad, and the influences he had on her life.

Dad was not actually involved in my life. He is very quiet. He took us driving, brought us things. Even though he didn't tell me in words how he felt about me, he showed me by his caring, providing, and looking out for my best interest that I progress through life right and fulfill my needs. Dad was supportive in his own way. (Vol. 1, pp. 134, 135)

Kay remembered clearly the father's relationship with Brenda as a child.

As a stepfather he was very close to the child. He cared for her as his own. As a father he was not an affectionately expressive person. He loved by protecting and providing for home. He helped to make home a happy and comfortable place. (Vol. 1, p. 143)

Living in a home where there was warmth and love provided a bond and hedge around Brenda. This bond or attachment Brenda had with her parents, particularly with her mom, appeared to have hindered her from drug involvement.

### **Social Relations: "Family Time Together"**

Time spent together was one of the emerging themes discovered in the interview protocol. Brenda enjoyed the times of family togetherness, such as working, playing, and enjoying leisure times with each other.

My parents, mostly my mother, and I did things together. Dad didn't talk much. We didn't know what he was thinking. As a family, we go driving and church together. We also play, watch T.V., and go shopping in town together. We enjoyed ourselves. (Vol. 1, p. 132)

Brenda's face gleamed as she reflected on the close relationship she had with her mother. Kay concurred with Brenda's statement.

The most important factor that shows that my mom and I are close is that we did everything together. We participated in activities together. Mom and I spent a lot of time talking with each other about life and just about everything. I enjoyed these times we spent together. Sometimes I saw mom as a friend. (Vol. 1, p. 132)

The times family II spent together, according to Kay, were pleasurable. She recalled reading stories to their children and playing with them.

We attend amusement park for fun, go driving regularly on Sunday afternoons, church picnics, and programs. They enjoyed stories as we read for them. We played games such as Sorry, Monopoly, and Checkers. If you lose, you drink water. If you win you rejoice and be happy. They play an important part in my

children non-involvement in drug use. (Vol. 1, p. 141)

Family II, particularly Kay, saw the importance of “family time together” (Vol. 1, p. 132) to aid in forming a close bond with her children. This brought a sense of joy and togetherness in the family.

As a family we sat and talked and laughed and played together. As a family we enjoyed eating together and particularly on Saturdays we enjoyed family times around the dinner table and otherwise. Meal times were special. The girls and me are very close. . . . We acted like sisters. (Vol. 1, pp. 143, 142)

Family times together provided Brenda and her family special and meaningful moments of fun and relaxation. Spending quality and quantity time with the family seemed to have aided Brenda’s drug avoidance.

### **Communication and Trust**

The themes of communication and trust that emerged were important to Brenda and her mother. However, it was not easy for Brenda to openly share all the time with her parents. “As a child I didn’t feel free to talk with mother. I only shared some things that I know or think she would find out anyway” (Vol. 1, p. 132). Brenda laughed as she related an incident that she remembered.

One day I had a fight on the school bus. As a result I was suspended from driving on the school bus but I didn’t tell my mother. However, she found out before I went to school the following day. When she asked me about it, I told her I didn’t have any problem because I really didn’t want her to get involved. I am a very private person. (Vol. 1, p. 132)

Brenda saw this as “lying” (Vol. 1, p. 133) and at an early age discovered that it was causing a wedge between her and her parents. She believed her parents had begun to lose trust in her.

I didn't think that I was trusted. Distrust made me feel bad and was hurting my relationship with my parents, especially my mother. This motivated me to try to gain parental trust and cease lying to get out of trouble. My parents trusted me as I grew up. (Vol. 1, pp. 132, 133)

Brenda and Kay's relationship changed as she communicated more openly with her parents. Their relationship deepened and became more meaningful. Kay expressed satisfaction for the open communication she had with her children. She understood where they were and was able to guide them.

My children spend more time with me than with their father. Communication with them was good. We talked and they were free enough to come to me with their concerns. We talked about life, problems, things like that. (Vol. 1, p. 141)

Brenda's comment concerning her willingness to talk with Kay as she grew older gave credence to Kay's conviction that "they were free enough to come to me with their concerns" (Vol. 1, p. 141). Brenda stated, "Mom and I spent a lot of time talking with each other. We talked about life and about everything. Mommy was very wise. . . . We couldn't hide nothing from Mom. She found out everything" (Vol. 1, pp. 132, 144). And with an expression of relief, she further said, "I enjoyed these times we spent together" (Vol. 1, p. 132).

Kay did not hesitate to give her children guidance and counsel. As Brenda stated,

My mom and I frequently talked about the issues of life. Such issues include career choices, relationships--social and intimate. . . . Family talk was important. We talked about Christian lifestyle, sex, and even when the issue of drugs came alive in our neighborhood and community, mom spoke to us openly about it and its dangers. (Vol. 1, pp. 132, 142)

Kay in a joint interview supported Brenda's statement as she related a case in point:

At their early years of life, drugs was not an issue for this family. However, at a given point in time, news started to spread concerning drug-infested candies. I prayerfully and firmly warned my children and told them to be careful and not to take things from people. My children were always told not to take sweets from young men or anyone. (Vol. 1, p. 146)

The privilege to share openly apparently strengthened the relationship between Kay and her children and hence served as a means in helping the children, including Brenda, to avoid drug involvement. Kay insisted, "My children are obedient and respectful and they follow my instruction and guidance" (Vol. 1, p. 150).

Brenda's father spoke to her through her mother. However, the open communication that developed between Brenda and Kay allowed them the opportunity to spend more time relating with each other and also served as a means of supervision for Brenda.

### **Power of Supervision**

Supervision also played an important role in possibly deterring family II's children, and Brenda in particular, from drug involvement. Brenda perceived her parents' supervision as good, but at times she often thought that her mom was overprotective.

Our parents tried to avoid us from getting into trouble or problems. They were supervising us and *very* [her emphasis] protective, too protective. . . . Friends holding parties and inviting us but we couldn't go because mama wouldn't let us go. She was afraid of us being influenced to do bad things. She wanted to stifle us. Time of events were too late. However, she allowed us to go to school parties that were held in the day where there were more supervision. (Vol. 1, pp. 132, 134)

Although Brenda now appreciates her mother's actions, she once thought that her mother was "old fashioned" (Vol. 1, p. 134). She related a moment of frustration in her life:

My mother was more on the serious side of life. She was old fashioned. Home was too strict. I was seriously teased because my mother kept us or did not allow me to go certain places. My friends harassed me constantly. This made me feel bad and embarrassed. . . . At times I felt like I wanted to run away from home and be by myself. I wanted to be free to do what I wanted to do. . . . [Sighing, she dropped her head in her bosom as she spoke solemnly.] But the thought that I could not live with the consequences, I chose not to. Even though I did not like certain things [restraints] at home there is no place like home. It's family. They care and are concern for me. At times you can't live with it and then you realize that you can't live without it. It was Mom's way of keeping us from wrong including drug use. Sometimes I saw my mother as a friend but other times as an enemy. (Vol. 1, pp. 132, 134)

To ensure their safety, the parents supervised and protected their children. Kay played the major role in this factor. Kay stated:

The father was not much involved in the children's life. He is a typical Caribbean father, good provider, hard worker, but not very involved. Children spend more time with me than their father. The way I supervise my children is by spending lots of time with them. (Vol. 1, pp. 141, 142)

Brenda confirmed that her "daddy was a good provider but not involved" (Vol. 1, p. 133). She further stated that "Daddy spoke through Mom to us" (Vol. 1, p. 134).

At this point in time Kay proceeded to describe a necessary posture she took in the life of her children.

After my second child was born I stayed at home until she was ready for school. This gave me time to be with both of them. Even though I worked as they grew, my job allowed me the time to be at home when they got home from school. The oldest child, Brenda, however, had a responsible caretaker at an early age. I held a half-day job for a long time which allowed me the privilege to be home for my children. (Vol. 1, pp. 142, 143)

Brenda agreed that having her mother at home was a great advantage. “Mom was always there for us. She was also very observant. Mom knew when something was not all right” (Vol. 1, p. 135). The intuitive mother expanded:

As a mother I knew that something was wrong by looking at them. There is always a change in attitude, facial expression. I'm into my children. According to what it is, I will see it even if they didn't say anything. If I see them sad, I feel sad for them. (Vol. 1, pp. 143, 144)

Kay and her husband conducted random room checks and permitted interaction and relations with friends they approved. By providing close supervision of their children, they hoped to deter their children from drug use.

I did stop to check in the children's room and bags to ensure that they were safe and to prevent them from hiding secrets. I did this as a responsible mother. At times they knew and at other times they didn't. We did this to protect them from wrong such as drugs use. (Vol. 1, p. 142)

Kay claimed that her children's safety was her utmost concern. As a responsible parent she was willing to do whatever she could to shelter them.

My children were allowed to play with the neighbor's children under my supervision. I didn't let them go out freely with their friends because I wanted to watch over them. (Vol. 1, p. 147)

Supervision, physical protection, and Kay's sensitivity to her children provided them in her words, “a safe haven from the influences of societal ills such as involvement in pre-marital sex and drug use” (Vol. 1, p. 145). As Brenda noted, “One can objectively see the power of supervision as I was kept from these negative things” (Vol. 1, p. 134).

## Discipline

Another internal family dynamic that played an important role in Brenda's life and seemingly aided in her non-drug involvement was discipline. "Mom was too strict. Sometimes I saw her as an enemy" (Vol. 1, p. 132). Brenda then smiled with a brief sigh. "I was very much afraid of consequences, meaning punishment by my mother" (Vol. 1, p. 133). During her childhood, Brenda sometimes became involved in fights. Consequently, other children were afraid of her. Brenda was quick to express her feelings. Kay agreed with the notion that Brenda was easily angered by others.

Brenda is very quiet and doesn't go around looking for trouble. But Brenda becomes very angry when persons disturb and bother her. It is for this reason that I did my best in guiding her in life. Brenda saw me as being strict and that's what Brenda needed. (Vol. 1, pp. 141, 142)

Kay followed a simple but effective style of discipline. "I sought to guide them. I taught them right from wrong by pointing out the wrong and acknowledging the right at times" (Vol. 1, p. 143).

Kay said that she provided warning first (instruction and command). When this did not work she used time-out by having her children kneel in the corner of the house facing the wall. Other times she reverted to punishment by spanking. This she stated helped in keeping them in the right path.

Brenda remembered that one of the reasons for avoiding inappropriate behavior was the fear of consequences (punishment by mother) and the fear of being discovered.

My mother doesn't have patience. Whenever something doesn't go right Mommy will be ready to punish--no tomorrow, no later, [Brenda smiled]. . . . My mother believes in the belt. She "blows" us. Spanking was it, but first she talked and warned us. When spanking didn't work we were put in the corner to stand and face the wall. She also deprived us of certain things such as keeping us from watching T.V. (Vol. 1, pp. 133, 135)



Brenda agreed that both parents taught her the difference between right and wrong by instruction, correction, and then by punishment. Interestingly, Brenda did not see her father as harsh as her mother. Primarily, he used reasoning over spanking. He did not believe in overpunishing his children.

Though there appeared to be some differences in the way discipline was viewed in family II, Kay and Brenda agreed that it all worked out for the best interest of Brenda. Her parents' discipline provided a protection against the ills of society. "As I look back I can say it was for my good 'cause it kept me from doing wrong and even getting involved in drugs' allurements" (Vol. 1, p. 135).

As a result of the discipline Brenda received she claimed to be a responsible person and also to be satisfied with the commodities her parents provided for her.

### **Responsibility and Life's Satisfaction**

Learning responsibility also appeared to have served as a deterrent to drug use. It allowed the children to be involved in skillful and meaningful activities. Kay stated:

From an early age my children were given responsibilities. . . . They share chores in the home. I gave them a time line and made them accountable. Doing so helped them to become productive and busy. One wash, the other hang the clothes out to dry. Home life was not easy. (Vol. 1, pp. 142, 146)

Kay shared how teaching her children contentment was important and that necessities took priority over luxuries.

As a family we rented a two bedroom, living room and a kitchen home. For the purpose of being home, we sacrificed economically. At first we had no television, but in their junior years we got a T.V. I wanted to see that my children were brought up in the right way. As parents we did not give the children things they did not need just to satisfy their fancy. . . . I taught them to be content with what they have so they'll have no reason to crave other things which could have led to drug involvement. (Vol. 1, pp. 146, 142)

Regarding Brenda's home life, she expressed warmth and comfort. She felt that her parents did all they could to make them happy.

To me home life was warm. I looked forward to coming home. Our family was small but we made the best of it. We lived in a small house, but we kept it clean and organized. We were taught to be satisfied with what we have. We really didn't have reason to wish for things we didn't need. My mom made sure that our necessities were met. (Vol. 1, pp. 134, 135)

The themes of responsibility and life's satisfaction were integral aspects of Brenda's upbringing. Having learned them apparently helped her to shun drug use.

It appeared that these internal family dynamics, functioning within the family, served as deterrents to Brenda's drug avoidance.

In addition to the internal family dynamics, Brenda was also faced with a number of external dynamics which were primarily negative in nature or influence. The first of these negative influences that affected Brenda's drug avoidance was the negative influences of her grandparents.

### External Family Dynamics

#### **Negative Influences**

##### My grandparents

Brenda's experience at home often caused her to look forward to visiting her grandparents who lived on another island. Kay was born on this island but she left during her late teens. According to Brenda, her family would visit there every 2 years for vacation. "Going to our grandparents was great. I looked forward to it. It provided me a greater level of relaxation. It provided a change of environment.

Relaxation from the strictness of my parents came when I was with my grandparents” (Vol. 1, p. 133).

Grandparents, as far as Brenda was concerned, were fun. Her grandparents cared for them and did things with them. They provided warmth, a sense of belonging, love, and affirmation outside of the immediate family.

We are the hearts of our grandparents. That’s sweet. Our company was a joy for them. It provided opportunity for family walks and other family interactions (cousins, aunts, uncles). . . . It was always important that my grandparents approved of me therefore this motivated me to be good. They affirmed and encouraged me. (Vol. 1, pp. 133, 136)

All the experiences that Brenda had with her grandparents were not positive, however. Reflecting on her grandparents seemed to have left an unpleasant memory. Her grandparents were alcoholics. This for Brenda was very unhealthy but a lesson learned. Their alcoholism positively influenced Brenda to refrain from drinking alcohol.

“My grandfather and grandmother were alcoholics. It was very strange to see them drink. I was afraid. It was scary. They behaved different under the influence of alcohol. I don’t like it” (Vol. 1, pp. 136, 137). Brenda’s face was tinged with sadness mixed with scorn when she spoke. She proceeded to share a typical day when her grandparents were under the influence of alcohol.

I remember one day, I went to visit my father [biological father]. Having visited him I returned to my grandparents’ home where I was staying. As I entered the property, I greeted my grandmother who was drunk. She was not a pleasant sight. Later that evening I overheard her saying that I was not in and it was too late. So I went out to tell her that I came back a long time ago. (Vol. 1, p. 137)

Realizing her grandparents’ stupor due to the alcohol influence Brenda was

confronted with a negative buffer that apparently assisted in her non-drug stance. “I realized that my grandmother was confused and had no understanding” (Vol. 1, p. 137). This, she expressed, served as “a motivator to abstain from alcohol” (Vol. 1, p. 137). At times Brenda’s grandfather offered her alcoholic beverages, but she refused.

Strangely, Kay never in any of her interviews responded to questions or initiated conversations about her parents’ alcoholism or the involvement of other relatives in drugs.

### Uncles

Other relatives were also involved in drugs and alcohol. Brenda knew two uncles who used drugs when she was a child. Their drug-involved lifestyle had a major influence on Brenda’s non-drug involvement.

They used drugs . . . and were always in trouble with the law. This influenced me not to even try drugs. Their behavior was “weird,” very stupid. Drugs and alcohol made them do stupid things. To see them was to be embarrassed. I love my uncles but I didn’t like what they did and how they behaved. They would swear and fight and get locked up in prison and so I did not want to be very stupid or weird. (Vol. 1, p. 137)

Brenda saw her uncles’ drug influence as being very unhealthy and uninviting, “but a lesson learned” (Vol. 1, p. 137).

Brenda was confronted with negative influences deriving from her extended family. These emerging themes, as represented by her grandparents’ and uncles’ alcohol and drug involvement, discouraged and embarrassed Brenda. As a result, Brenda’s decision to avoid drugs was apparently strengthened by these external dynamics. The internal and external themes with the relational dynamics positively or negatively influenced Brenda’s decision to avoid drugs. However, there were also

other themes which aided in inhibiting drug use by Brenda. These themes emerged from the interview sessions and were grouped within the selected category environmental dynamics.

### **Environmental Dynamics**

#### **My Friends**

The interview revealed information about Brenda and her relations with environmental factors. These dynamics appeared to directly or indirectly affect Brenda's life for good, though it did not seem this way to Brenda initially. The first of these environmental dynamics was Brenda's friends. Brenda shared how she felt when she was not allowed to do things with her friends.

As a child I enjoyed playing with my friends. We could not go with them. . . but my mom allowed them to come to our yard to play. . . . Mother was very interested to see the kind of friends we had, how they dressed, behaved, and talked [conversation]. So she allowed our friends to come to our home to play. (Vol. 1, pp. 136, 143)

Brenda did not think it was fair that her friends be allowed to come to her home while she was not allowed to go to theirs. She particularly blamed her mother for this action. Brenda did not understand the reason for this rule.

Our community was not very violent, average compared to others. It was a clean environment. Our neighbors' children came to our place to play with us. We couldn't go by them. I think my parents, mostly my mother, was unfair in not allowing us to play at our friends' place. Mom didn't see things as I did or think. . . . My peers were important to me. I could relate to them. They understood me. They shared the same concerns and ideas. . . . However, I made decisions without them [was not influenced by peers]. (Vol., 1, pp. 132, 136, 138)

Kay was fully aware of the influence friends could have on each other. She wanted to ascertain that her children were not influenced negatively. This was the

primary reason why she did not allow her children to visit their friends' houses.

I wanted my children to be influenced positively. I don't want friends to mar or destroy what I taught them. I know friends could be very influential. As children they were not allowed to go to their friends' homes. However, I welcomed their friends at our home. (Vol. 1, p. 143)

Brenda disagreed with her mother. To the contrary, Kay thought differently, therefore she kept firm boundaries around her children. As a result, Kay said, "their friends were selected" (Vol. 1, p. 143). Consequently, Brenda was faced with what she called "embarrassment" (Vol. 1, p. 134).

To amplify this embarrassment, Brenda recounted an experience she encountered in school and the impact it had on her:

At school, I was considered strange, outcast, different, because I didn't dress like the rest, go certain places like others. My schoolmates used to laugh and make joke of me. They call me, "Mommy, mommy girl." I was hurt inside, but I made it appear that it didn't bother me. This impacted my self-esteem. (Vol. 1, p. 137)

Brenda claimed in the interview session that she made her decisions on her own (without her friends). She believed that her parents had done a good job at teaching and modeling right principles before her. Kay influenced Brenda's decision-making process when she was faced with the temptations of her friends and her own youthful desires. Her decision not only included adhering to right principles but also the avoidance of likely possible consequences from her mother.

I had friends who tried to influence me to do bad things. They try to encourage me to use things and drink things that I shouldn't, but I didn't because I was fearful of being found out by my mother. . . . Also I was taught to think and live up to certain standards. I wanted to do the right thing. . . . So I try to avoid friends who did not hold the same views as I do. Therefore, I chose friends who would not tease or pressure me to drink alcoholic drink, rather made me feel more comfortable around them. (Vol. 1, pp. 137, 139, 134)

Having friends was important to Brenda. However, Brenda learned or discovered that her parents' insistence on positive friends' selection and relations was for her best interest. Thus, Brenda saw the need to choose friends who would not encourage her to do wrong, including drug use, rather having friends with similar beliefs and convictions.

### School and Conventional Activities

Other themes that emerged and were categorized in the external environmental dynamics appeared to have aided Brenda's non-drug use, including school and conventional activities. This provided Brenda a high sense of self-esteem and pride.

I was involved in school sports particularly track and field. I enjoyed the races. I was good at running. I ran fast, and I won many races. Playing ball at school was great. I am a very good player. We also played ball at home and school. Doing this helped to keep my mind and body fit. I always enjoy looking good and yes, feeling good. (Vol. 1, p. 136)

According to Brenda, "being involved in these social activities provided me less time to be involved in the wrong" (Vol. 1, p. 136). Kay agreed with this concept. As she stated to me, "Positive involvement deters negative activities" (Vol. 1, p. 148). To prevent this from happening she allowed her children to become involved in clean and healthy activities.

My children were allowed to play, have fun. I played bat and ball with them. It was great just to see them involved and enjoying themselves. . . . We would go to the hillside and look at the sea and enjoy nature together. This gave them a sense of worth and understanding of God. (Vol. 1, pp. 145, 147)

Another way in which school possibly played an important role in Brenda's choice not to use drugs was through drug awareness.

Drug talk was very strong at school. There were schoolmates who were scanded as drug users. The Dutch school next to us was branded as a drug school. Drugs was known to be around our school. So, our school warned us about the dangers of drugs. Drug education was presented at our school assembly. (Vol. 1, p. 137)

Brenda's mother further stated that their school work kept them deeply involved and "that homework check was a constant thing as children were encouraged, confirmed, and corrected" (Vol. 1, p. 146), which "was always a rewarding experience" (Vol. 1, p. 146). In her words "positive involvement keep you from negative activities like using drugs" (Vol. 1, p. 148).

Brenda recalled times when her mother would visit the school to have conferences with her teacher. This, she said, made her feel proud that her mother had interest in her and that her school performance was great. Brenda stated that her mom was her motivator. "She always encourages me to do all that I can and to do my best. When mom came to school I was happy to see how happy mom was when she got my report" (Vol. 1, p. 142).

In addition, Kay credited her choice of school in her children's non-drug use.

My children went to two of the best schools on the island. Elementary school was a Methodist Christian school and secondary was a private school. Both schools held high Christian values. As a result, they provided a basic safe haven for our children. This too played an important role in their non-involvement in deviant behavior even alcohol and drug use. (Vol. 1, p. 145)

A positive school environment where parent-teacher relations existed, and where drug education was provided, along with involvement in conventional activities at school and home, may have worked in steering Brenda away from drug allurements.



Friends, school, and involvement in conventional activities were themes which may have affected Brenda's drug avoidance. Whereas Brenda initially had no apparent problem with her friends and community, her mother thought that they were not the best influence for Brenda. However, as Brenda grew, she began to see the dangers in her community and she was also forced to choose friends with similar ideals. Having these, along with drug education provided by her school, and her involvement in sports and other positive activities seemingly kept Brenda from drugs' attraction. In addition to these themes within the environmental dynamics, there were also themes relevant to the religious dynamics which may have prevented Brenda from becoming involved with drugs.

### **Religious Dynamics**

The influences in Brenda's life were also affected by a number of emanating themes that have been categorized within the religious dynamics.

#### **Internal Religious Dynamics**

A number of themes that surfaced from the data as possible deterrents to Brenda's drug avoidance are the internal religious dynamics presented in this section. The first of these themes is family worship.

#### **Family Worship**

The interview revealed that the theme family worship for both parent and child was a relevant, meaningful, and positive experience. It appeared that family worship may be one of the factors that kept Brenda from becoming involved with drugs.

Family worship both kept the family together and provided protection from wrongdoing.

Some of our good times were spent in family worship. Worship was meaningful and educational. As children we would sing along with our parents. It is one spiritual event that has helped me [Brenda] to avoid drug use. Family worship taught us good. We learned to pray and to build a personal relationship with God. In worship we learn to take care of our bodies, to live right, and to avoid evil, including drugs. (Vol. 1, pp. 139, 140)

Brenda expressed high appreciation for family worship. She saw it not only from a family perspective but also from a personal point of view. She shared strongly the benefits of family worship in her life and the impact it has had and still has on her.

Our family worship was regular. Family worship has impacted me positively. It made me a better person, taught me respect for God, others, and myself. We discussed about God, life, we pray together. Family unity was a key factor in family worship--very educational. This was one of the only times in the home that family--parents and children--came together to discuss seriously. I learned right values in family worship. The issues of sin and righteousness and the consequences of both were presented. So doing the good and avoiding the wrong like drugs became a natural for me. There was always a reward. (Vol. 1, pp. 139, 140)

Kay confirmed that family worship was of great importance in the life of her children. She described how she and her husband tried to make worship meaningful.

We study our lesson and I taught them to fear God, to honor Him and to remember that God is watching them. I teach them to be respectful, honest, and courteous--to respect humanity. . . .The Bible was very important in morning and at night for sure. At times I wrote the Bible texts on the house wall. I read it for them and had them memorize Bible text. Our children were allowed to read and sing. Family worship was meaningful and educational. It was good. It was in worship where they learn many spiritual lessons. . . . As a family we enjoyed worshipping together. Family worship was interesting to the children. We would read stories, picture stories for them. They enjoyed it very much. At times I didn't have to call them for worship. They came habitually. (Vol. 1, pp. 148, 149, 150)

Thus, it appeared that family worship where a faith relation with God was fostered and encouraged seemingly enhanced Brenda's drug avoidance. Family worship was educational and fun where Brenda developed a meaningful and devotional family prayer life.

### **Prayer**

The theme prayer that evolved from the interview conversation was an integral component of the devotional life of the family. It seemed to work as a catalyst against drug use and non-conventional activities as it kept them in tune with their relationship with God. Brenda relayed how important prayer was to her as a child.

We would pray together. Daddy would pray for us. Mother would read. My parents' prayer for me reminded me that they care and that God cares for me. Prayer, and also the spiritual reading, played a major role in my life's direction. To hear my parents pray for me made me feel connected to God and that He was there for me in time of need. Also, being conscious of God's presence helped me do the right thing. (Vol. 1, pp. 139, 140)

Kay concurred with the notion that prayer played a major role in her children's life. As parents, they taught their children to pray and to maintain a relationship with God.

As parents we prayed for our children. I pray for them as a group and as individuals. From the time they were small I pray for them. We taught them to pray and stay close to God. I also pray with them. Prayer has been a stabilizer in our family life. Prayer is very important. It's the best way to begin the day with God. It was a shield of protection from bad things like drugs and other sins. When we study and pray, the home was emotionally strong in that it brought the family together more for family worship. This helped us to stay together. (Vol. 1, p. 148)

Brenda not only learned to pray and appreciated her parents' prayers on her behalf, which enhanced her relationship with God, she also learned other important values from her parents which were beneficial to her upbringing.

### **Values Transmission**

The theme grouped within the category internal religious dynamics portrayed an important function that parents played in modeling a consistent, caring, moral, and Christian lifestyle based on moral values for their children's well-being. This aspect seemingly protected the children from the ills of society, including drugs, and it gave them a sense of direction in life. Brenda discussed her mother's influence on her.

Both my parents were very much involved spiritually in my life. They taught us to be honest, kind, and true. . . . My mother influenced my moral life to be respectful no matter what. They conduct themselves decently and with a high level of pride and dignity. . . . Mother was a very religious person. She attends church regularly. She positively influenced me. As a result I consciously and naturally adapt the same or similar pattern of lifestyle. The way Mommy did things, she always did it as she considered God. Hence, I learned to appreciate God, and my lifestyle was ordered in light of God. (Vol. 1, pp. 133, 139, 140)

Kay supported Brenda's assertion that Brenda had been instructed and she also desired to do the right thing. She chose to share an incident that was revealing:

Many times to prove my children I will take them to work with me. [It is important to note that Brenda's mother worked as a domestic servant at a hotel.] While on the job, as I did my work with their help, they will ask for something to drink and I will then tell them that there is only coke or other alcoholic drink that the guest left in the refrigerator. [She paused and then smiled.] And I feel happy very good that they didn't even go to see what was there. They knew of themselves that they don't use coke and alcohol, hence they stayed away from the refrigerator. . . . My children grew up to be respectful and obedient. (Vol. 1, pp. 145, 150)

Kay agreed that her children's deportment in life was an internalization of family religious values both learned and seen in the home.

My children are respectful, honest, caring, and loving. Their behavior in life and their relationship with God and me is evident of this fact. . . . If my children didn't have it in from small, I don't know what will happen with them now. . . . I taught them to respect all people and in particular older ones. Children were rather caring for other children and people in general. I sought to instill in them manners because manners can take them anywhere, even places where money can't take them. Having manners was key in their moral development. (Vol. 1, pp. 144, 146, 142)

Kay shared that the father did not spend much time with the children, but he played an important role in their spiritual development, which helped them to avoid deviant behaviors including drug use.

Their father encouraged them to spend time studying the Word of God. He also studied with them. We taught them the Ten Commandments. It kept them away from wrong involvement. The Ten Commandments provided them a level of guidance and security in the right paths. By studying and memorizing them they learn to obey and to do what is right. Through this I believe they were kept from stealing, drugs, and all other evil. (Vol. 1, p. 149)

Both Kay and her husband modeled and taught values to Brenda which aided in her drug avoidance and religious commitment.

### **Religious Commitment**

The theme religious commitment emanated from the data as a possible hindrance to Brenda's use of drugs. Kay believed that her children developed personal spiritual lifestyles not because it was mandated, but rather taught and modeled.

By the teaching my children received from home it helped them to choose to be spiritually minded and to have faith in Christ. They loved the Lord. In my absence my children would come together for prayer and singing. I will come home and see them enjoying spiritual fellowship. I think if I used to force them they would become rebellious. I sought to reach their mind [heart], so out of love they responded. I didn't have to force them to do spiritual things, but I

had to lead and guide them in the right path. I made it fun and attractive and this is what they liked about it. I involved them in spiritual activities. This made them build/develop a personal relationship with God. I had a positive hold on them when they were small so now they are big they are still walking in the right path. (Vol. 1, p. 150)

Brenda expressed appreciation for the spiritual training she received from her parents. She was confident that their instruction and lifestyle helped her to be spiritually committed.

My parents taught me right from wrong, first by instruction, correction, and then even by punishment, by example they lived it. They don't lie, don't steal. . . . One thing that will show that I am committed spiritually is my conversation. I try as much as possible to speak positive, to communicate clean and spiritual, abstaining from curse words and saying bad things to and about people. I live according to God and His Word [The Bible] and live the way He wants me to live. I am a Christian by lifestyle. Hence, I choose to avoid wrong. I didn't use drugs. I do what is right. (Vol. 1, pp. 135, 139)

A personal devotional life and a committed religious lifestyle, modeled by parents and fostered by example, was an important theme in Brenda's experience. Brenda's commitment to a religious lifestyle served as a possible deterrent to drugs.

The internal religious dynamic themes which emerged from the research data functioned primarily within the home setting. This apparently aided Brenda's drug avoidance. The internal religious dynamics were directly or indirectly germane to the themes within the external religious dynamics.

#### External Religious Dynamics

The themes within the external religious dynamics are church involvement, religious beliefs and teachings, and expectations.

## Church Involvement

Brenda was not only religiously committed but was also actively involved in church activity. When inquiry was made on how church life may have impacted Brenda's non-drug involvement, Brenda shared her experience and the benefits she received from her faith community, the church.

As a child I was very much involved in church activities. Church life was great. I was in the youth group, pathfinder, drama, and I attended camps [church sponsored] regularly. I was involved in the church choir for sometime. This helped to build my character and shifted my mind from worldly [devious] things to more spiritual things. (Vol. 1, p. 139)

Kay agreed that church life has been significant for her children. "Church life guarded them from getting involved from other activities that could be bad for them. Involvement in church kept them in the church and close to God" (Vol. 1, p. 148). She believed that her changed lifestyle (from a more social to a more practical biblically based one) had enlightened her and strengthened her relationship with God. This she said has helped her children to be drug free.

My conversion to Adventism from Methodism provided me a broader understanding of God's Word and a deeper relationship with God. As a result, my children grew up under the same environment and religious influence. . . . A relational knowledge of God helped deter my children from wrong behavior and lifestyle. (Vol. 1, p. 148)

Both Kay and her husband frequently had their children involved in church life as often as possible as they did with school activities. Their lives to a great extent revolved around their church and its activities.

Any church activity, you name it, concerts, choir, youth socials and fellowship programs, everything, we were allowed to go. No problem. Sometimes, especially when we were smaller [younger], we had no choice. But I enjoyed church life and still do. (Vol. 1, p. 139)

Kay commented that Brenda was always encouraged to be involved in church life but, initially, Brenda was very fearful and reluctant. Their friends were there. Church provided activities for the overall growth and development. She further agreed that her children enjoyed going to church with them as a family. "Our children modeled after us in going and attending church. We go so they go with us. Church, though it was a must, became a joy" (Vol. 1, pp. 148, 149).

In retrospect, Kay saw her children as any other children but with a level of difference to the children in their neighborhood. This difference related much to their spiritual upbringing and religious beliefs.

Whereas we took our children to church with us, the neighbors' children had no one to take them to church. However, through our influence, some children of our neighbors attended church with us. This made our children happy. (Vol. 1, p. 149)

Kay's insistence and encouragement of Brenda's attendance and active involvement in church was accepted and lived out by Brenda. Hence, being affiliated to her church through attendance and involvement in church activities may have provided Brenda with meaningful activities and a support network which may have helped her from becoming involved in drugs.

### **Religious Beliefs, Teachings, and Expectations**

Religious beliefs, teachings, and the expectations of the church in addition to church involvement were emerging themes apparently germane to Brenda's drug avoidance. Brenda conveyed other ways that the church positively influenced her life. The church beliefs were transmitted to her and became a guide in her life.



In church I learned to be conscious of certain things. The church taught me to be respectful, obedient, and to be moral. As in my home, I learned right values in church. I also learned to think and live up to certain standards and beliefs. (Vol. 1, p. 139)

These beliefs included honoring God by taking care of her body. Brenda believed that her body was “the temple of God” (Vol. 1, p. 137). Both Kay and Brenda were convinced that this religious belief played an important role in her children’s non-drug involvement.

The body is the temple of God according to the Bible which is our belief. Knowing this helped our children to take care of their body and to avoid anything that may or can destroy the body--the temple of God. . . . Our church, through programs and activities, taught me about the danger of drugs and its harm to the body the temple of God. (Vol. 1, pp. 148, 137)

Brenda poignantly summed up her experience with the church.

The church as a concerned and caring body expects you to live and do certain things. As a result, you live according to values and expectations of others, especially the church. You also learn right from wrong and choose the right and stay away from the wrong like drugs and other things. There were people in church I can talk with--caring people. (Vol. 1, p. 139)

The theme of religious beliefs, teachings, and expectations provided Brenda with reinforcement which apparently helped to steer Brenda from drug involvement.

### Summary

Relative to Brenda’s drug avoidance were the themes that emerged from the data and grouped within the five categories. These themes provided an understanding of how family, both immediate and extended, affected Brenda’s decision to withstand drug allurements. Brenda’s environment both negatively and positively inspired within her a determination to refuse drugs. Also her religious affiliation, beliefs, and involvement aided in forming Brenda’s motivation to live a Christian and drug-free

lifestyle. The following analysis enhances our understanding on how Brenda was able to remain drug free from a familial perspective.

### **Analysis: Through the Lens of the Telescope**

As the telescope is used to focus on its object, bringing it closer for a more definite observation, likewise the analysis is viewed with keenness and close proximity to grasp the themes as they emerged from the data. Brenda, the eldest of four, and her mother, Kay, reflected as they sought to discover how these familial dynamics may have been related to Brenda's non-drug involvement.

Portrayed in family II are a number of internal family dynamics. The closeness and love between parent and child was expressed by hugs, kisses, and support. They sought to make each other happy. Although the father was quiet, his part in the intimate relation was felt through his protection and provision. In order to build family closeness, there was a need to spend time together. The family socialized, laughed, and conversed with one another particularly during meal times.

Brenda and Kay described their relationship in terms of communication and trust. Brenda realized that trust was a necessity in forming a deep meaningful relationship with her mother. Kay viewed open communication with Brenda as a direct means of discussing the "issues of life."

Kay explained the "Power of Supervision" (Vol. 1, p. 134) in her time spent with the children. In order to observe her children, their company, and direct their activities, Kay maintained a part-time job. Brenda, on the other hand, perceived her parents' supervision as "too protective" (Vol. 1, p. 132) when it came to her friends,

but powerful in keeping her away from deviant acts such as drug use. In addition to supervision, Kay also administered discipline to guide and teach her children. Her discipline procedure followed a series of progressive steps. First, she spoke, then she warned, and as a final resort she used spanking. Kay was aware that Brenda thought she was too strict, yet Brenda agreed that the discipline was for her own good because it kept her from drug involvement.

Kay asserted that teaching Brenda responsibility and satisfaction aided in her positive direction. Brenda became accountable for her time. She was taught to be satisfied with what she had because home met her basic needs and was a place of warmth.

Brenda's external family dynamics involved her grandparents whom she loved to visit. Unfortunately, they were alcoholics. Their negative influences motivated her to abstain from alcohol use. Other loved ones involved in drugs and alcohol were her uncles. Their behavior kept them in trouble with the law, which influenced Brenda to avoid drugs.

It was discovered that specific environmental dynamics also affected Brenda positively. Like with any child, Brenda's peers were important to her. Kay, aware of the influence of peer pressure, permitted Brenda to bring friends home, but she was not allowed to go to their homes. Brenda, however, disagreed with this rule and thought her mom was unfair. She was ridiculed by her friends and at times experienced embarrassment. The times when her friends encouraged her to go contrary to her parents' teaching Brenda claimed that she adhered to what she knew was right. By doing this, Brenda exhibited Kay's positive influences in Brenda's choice of friends.

Along with choosing good friends, Brenda involved herself in school and conventional activities. She played sports and found ways to spend her time wisely. She adhered to the warnings and dangers of drugs she learned in school. Kay's active involvement in Brenda's school performances was a source of motivation and support for Brenda.

Kay and Brenda discussed the benefits of a Christian lifestyle. Family worship was a meaningful and educational experience for Kay's family. It provided family unity and taught values and morals. Brenda relayed the good times spent in worship and described how it helped her develop a lasting relationship with God. The internal religious dynamics proved to be a strong theme in hindering Brenda's drug use.

Prayer was not only a part of worship, but also a central part of life. It provided a source of protection, and it strengthened the family unit. Her parents taught her the value of prayer and Brenda continued to rely on prayer. Her caring parents' prayers for her made her feel loved and it showed Brenda the importance of having a relationship with God.

Brenda's parents did not force her to participate in spiritual activities but they made the spiritual activities attractive and fun. Through her parents' spiritual influence and lifestyle Brenda developed and exercised their teachings. She followed after their example by displaying respect, honesty, caring, and love.

Kay reported that the Ten Commandments and the Bible provided a firm foundation for Brenda, thus she was committed to following this guide even when her parents were absent.

Brenda's non-involvement in drug use was also attributed to external religious dynamics. She was actively involved in church, which helped her to build character, to spend her time wisely, and stay close to God. Though her attendance and involvement in church was mandatory, "church became a joy" (Vol. 1, p. 139).

Brenda lived up to the religious beliefs and expectations of her church. Her beliefs positively influenced her to make conscious and cautious decisions. She explained that because she saw her body as "a temple of God" (Vol. 1, p. 137) she avoided drugs and its harms.

### **Summary**

In conclusion, there are many themes that seemed to have influenced Brenda's drug avoidance. These included internal and external family dynamics. Brenda was seemingly loved by her parents along with a level of trust and communication that gave them an open and honest relationship. Kay educated her children in areas of responsibility and life satisfaction which may have given Brenda guidance to make positive choices. This case revealed that Kay, through her supervision and discipline, provided Brenda with a sense of care, protection, and direction, hence keeping her from drug use.

Some members of Brenda's external family, namely her grandfather and uncles, were involved in alcohol and drug use. As Brenda observed their life pattern, she apparently decided that this was not a life she would want for herself. Therefore, their lifestyles seemed to have deterred her from using drugs. Other external influences that positively aided Brenda in her non-drug use included her choice of good friends and

involvement in meaningful, wholesome activities.

Finally, Brenda's Christian lifestyle, based on her religious beliefs, her trust in God, her family and personal devotion, and a prayerful life all seemed to have played major roles in her decision to avoid drugs. Chapter 6 focuses on the story of a single-parent family and their reasons why the youth in this family did not become involved in drugs.

## CHAPTER SIX

### FAMILY III

#### **Introduction**

The first interview opened the gateway to data collection from both mother and daughter of family III. Family III lived in a developed and populated residential community. As stated by the family, the community developed over the years and with the development came the increase in such as crime, immorality, and drugs. Despite these changes, the members of family III were able to live and survive, untainted, amidst the societal ills. The interview sessions were conducted at family III's home.

Family III consists of five children and their mother. The children range in age from 15 to 29 years. To protect the family's anonymity, both the mother's and the daughter's names are changed. The mother, Lea, became a single parent by divorce. At the time of her separation from her husband, her eldest daughter, Maria, was approximately 9 years old.

Maria's experience was no different from some of the other children and youth of St. Martin. She was confronted with a broken family at an early age. Maria is presently in her late 20s and is employed as an elementary school teacher.

## Relational Dynamics

The interview protocol revealed themes relevant to the selected relational dynamics chosen from the literature. These themes, internal relational dynamics and external relational dynamics, seemingly helped to provide an understanding about Maria's drug avoidance.

### Internal Family Dynamics

A number of internal family themes emerged from the interview sessions with Maria and her mother. These themes served as possible inhibitions of drug involvement by Maria. The first of these internal family dynamics is the sub-theme, intimate relations.

#### **Intimate Relations: "Like Best Friends"**

The close relational bond that existed in family III between the mother and daughter appeared to be very strong. Maria likened her relationship with her mother to a friendship.

My mom is like my best friend. I love her very much. I always look out for her. So we have a good relationship. She's like a sister. I know growing up my mom was always like a sister. I remember telling her since the separation [parental separation] we grew up like sisters helping one another. Mom was not like a dominant parent, do this, do that, but we had a sharing relationship. We care for each other. (Vol. 1, p. 152)

During childhood, Maria stated that her love for her mother developed when her parents separated and later divorced. She perceived her mother as a strong person. This she said helped her to develop into a good person.

The relationship between my mom and I has helped me a lot in the sense that I have seen my mom go through a lot during the separation, *a lot*, and when I



say a lot, it caused me to say *wow* I admire this person. Look at how she can stand up like that. I want to be like that. Despite the relationship, she can go on and not allow anything or circumstances to deter her from reaching her goal. . . . My mother's strength and persevering spirit prompted me to love her more. It encouraged me to be all the good I could be and to shun wrong things. (Vol. 1, pp. 152, 154)

Her mother also shared similar sentiments and confirmed that their relationship was special and meaningful.

My children are like my friends to me. Really they are my good friends. We are very close. They care for me and respect me very much. I love them and they love me. . . . There was a strong friendship between me and my children. Sometimes I forget that I am their mother. (Vol. 1, pp. 174, 176)

Maria's expressed that her family is very warm and affectionate. Her mother would often hug and kiss Maria and her siblings. I personally witnessed this expression of love among family III. Lea shared the appreciation she has for her children:

I show love to my children by hugging and kissing them. I let them know how much I appreciate them. Whenever we go out and come in we embrace each other. This is a family custom. It is habitual but very meaningful as we express our feelings and affection for each other. (Vol. 1, p. 175)

Maria reflected on an experience which illustrated her mother's love and care for her.

My mom is very caring. . . . I remember in my early experience in college my mom wrote a lot. She sent a postcard. I think it was my birthday. The postcard had a girl with long hair. She was sitting while looking at the horizon. This was the way I pictured myself looking out at the sea and thinking about the goodness of God. I wrote my mom and expressed my appreciation for the card and what it meant to me. I saw her love for me not only in the words of love expressed in the card but for the selection of the card that seemingly represented me. It was a special moment in my life. (Vol. 1, pp. 154, 163)

Maria reported her mother's involvement in her school and social activities.

Mom always attended meetings that pertained to us. She went to our school

meetings to check with our teachers concerning our progress. Mom even participated in activities that our school sponsored as a means of being there for us. We would go to beach picnics and mom would go with us. She was always involved in whatever we did. Our school life was very important to Mom. (Vol. 1, p. 153)

Lea concurred with Maria's sentiments. She saw herself as teacher and guide to her children. Lea said that she knew how being present for her children was important to them. She also realized how being involved in her children's academic progress encouraged them.

When their class go on excursion trips and the school needed help I will go with them. This made the children happy because when other children's parents didn't show up, I did for my children and it made them feel good and important. I went with them for their library assignments. I didn't leave everything for the teachers to do. I had to be teacher for my children. I helped with and checked their homework. . . but I encouraged them to do their best in their school and homework. . . . Some of my most rewarding times I shared with my children were when they brought home their school report card with high grades of excellence and when they were promoted. This made me feel good so I always encouraged them and did something special for them. (Vol. 1, pp. 178, 174)

In addition to encouraging her children in their academic journey, Maria said that her mother was rather affirming. Lea's affirmation and involvement in Maria's life appeared to have aided her in shunning drugs' allurements. Both Maria and her mother agreed that affirmation and involvement were important ingredients in their relationship. Lea said that being involved with her children and encouraging them "made them feel good about themselves and helped to keep my children from immoral behavior including drug involvement" (Vol. 1, p. 178).

Mom would reward us when we did well. She did not hesitate to congratulate us or even to say thank you. At times she would buy us inexpensive gifts just to show us that she appreciated our good performance in school or in anything we did. A hug, a tap on the back from mom meant a whole lot to us. We

know that we were appreciated and it encouraged us to do what was right. (Vol. 1, p. 156)

Support appeared to be a major factor in the home of family III. Both Maria and her mother agreed that the family members were supportive of each other. This is, in essence, another expression of love and care in the family.

We learn to depend upon each other and support one another. We go places together. As a parent I try to be there for my children when they need me as when they are sick or if they had any difficulties at school. I took them shopping and bought them some special things, not expensive, just to say I appreciate you. They in turn will give me postcards and flowers. (Vol. 1, p. 175)

Her mother's strength appeared to have inspired Maria positively. She saw her mother's love for her as caring and trustworthy. When Maria considered what her mother had done for her, she saw it as "from the heart and truly sacrificial" (Vol. 1, p. 157). Maria did not hesitate to leave college to care for her mother.

My mom loves me and I love her very much. . . . We make sacrifices for each other. I remember when my mom got ill and I thought it nothing to stop school to care for mom. By our care for her we show that we love her. Mom deserves the very best and so we try to do this for her. Mom did everything possible to make us comfortable emotionally, physically, socially, and spiritually. So I did things considering my love for my mom. I will go out of my way for my mom. She deserves the very best. I did what was right because I love my mom dearly. We try our best to make her happy. (Vol. 1, p. 157)

The intimate parent-child bond between Maria and her mother was seemingly unconditional, supportive, caring, and loving. Maria appeared to have bonded well with her mother. As an involved and supportive mother, Lea's close relationship with her children she considered as a friendship. Another theme that emerged in family III's interview is the relation between Maria and her siblings.

### **Sibling Relations**

The love these siblings had for each other caused them to look out for one another. As the eldest child, Maria was at times responsible for the younger siblings.

Well, growing up we had a regular sibling type of relationship. We love one another. Being the oldest, I always try to look out for them and when they behaving their regular siblingish ways I would always overlook certain things in the sense that they are younger and will have their differences. I try to set the example . . . but we had a loving relationship, caring, cooperating to a certain extent. (Vol. 1, pp. 161, 162)

Maria elaborated on her relationship with her siblings. She talked about a general practice with Caribbean families where it was the responsibility of the oldest to make sure that the others did their chores. Hence, when Maria spoke of her siblings “cooperating to a certain extent” (Vol. 1, p. 162), she referred to their delayed response to her directing. For example, she related a situation when she told her siblings to wash the dishes and they were apparently reluctant. She stated that “they washed them later on” (Vol. 1, p. 162).

She conveyed another incident which demonstrated the kind of love and support that existed among her siblings.

I remember one point in time my sister got into an accident, a little accident. This hurt the others of us. Mom would always say that we always bickering among each other. But when she saw us crying and I mean crying, crying as if it was the end of the world, I remember hearing my mom say, ‘Oh I really thought you all never cared or supported one another but now I see.’ Through experience such as these it really show that even though we behaved with one another as normal children did, we were supportive and loving of each other. Deep within our hearts we love one another. (Vol. 1, p. 162)

Lea supported this belief as she expressed her deep appreciation of her children’s attitude and feelings towards one another. She thought it was loving and supporting. “My children were very sympathetic with each other. They will come

together in support of each other when there is a hurt or problem. My children care and love each other” (Vol. 1, p. 177).

She related an experience that she had with her son. She told of her son refusing to give her money from his little paying job. He had promised that he would get his sister something for her birthday. In keeping his promise he chose to save his money in order to keep his word. When the time came Maria’s brother bought his sister a beautifully decorated birthday cake. The mother said she had no problem with this act of love and kindness. It showed that her family loved and supported each other. This means of support provided, as Maria said, “a safe haven from evil including alcohol and drug problems” (Vol. 1, p. 162).

The nurturing, supportive, and caring relationship which Maria experienced with her family, primarily her mother, encouraged her to seemingly do what was right including to abstain from alcohol and drugs. This close parent-child attachment served as a motivator for them to spend special times together.

### **Social Relations: “Family Time Together”**

Family III seemed to have appreciated the family time they spent together. The times spent together were very sociable and relaxing. Lea described these times as meaningful, purposeful, and memorable occasions.

Sundays were special times for our family. We came together to talk and read books about values and principles of right and wrong. Those who could read were allowed to read. We would also read life stories about other people who we were able to learn important lessons from. Discussions would take place as we enjoyed each other’s company. At times we stayed as long as we wanted. These were special family times together. (Vol. 1, p. 175)

According to Lea, the time she spent with her children “provided a hedge around them. It helped them to be involved in meaningful experiences” (Vol. 1, p. 179). Lea further shared other events of family time together. “I took them walking in the hills and spent a lot of time with them. We had a piano and played and sing and even dance among ourselves just having clean family fun” (Vol. 1, p. 176).

Maria strongly asserted that even though they did not even own a television, they had games such as Monopoly to play with and they had each other and that her family is a close-knit family, which may have played an important role in her “overall lifestyle and positive choices including to be drug free” (Vol. 1, p. 164).

Maria further recalled that later in their teen years they got a T.V. and family times were fun.

I could remember there were times growing up where we would sit around in the home either watching T.V. or whatever. But as a family just maybe talking and joking and kicking [having fun at each other’s expense] on one another. Just sitting and talking and laughing and sharing jokes. These were special times when I was growing up. (Vol. 1, pp. 163, 164)

Another way Lea sought to spend time with her children was to visit nearby islands and to attend campouts. Maria expressed that these occasions were great experiences.

We looked forward to these special times together. Mom would go with us on excursion trips sponsored by the school. This made us feel good because it gave her the opportunity to be with us and we appreciated it very much. Playing together and just being with each other was fun. (Vol. 1, p. 178)

Other family times together were spent around the piano with the mother playing and everybody singing songs. Lea expressed joy seeing her children play different professional roles as they played with each other.

I enjoyed seeing my children play with each other. Sometimes they played the bank scene, the hospital scene or the executive office scene. One would act the part of the doctor, the other the nurse, and one the patient. It was a delight observing them acting out their assigned or chosen role. You should see them. [She smiled.] And they would be serious in what they were doing. It was fun and it made me feel happy and good to see them having a good time together. (Vol. 1, p. 177)

Lea also talked about the times when her children played “rounders” (Vol. 1, p. 177) (similar to softball but in a less organized manner). She saw how they were enjoying themselves and she would join and play ball with them. To see her children enjoying themselves together brought a sense of satisfaction to Lea in that she remarked, “Family time acted as a hedge around my children. It helped them to be involved in meaningful activities and experiences away from bad influences and things like drugs” (Vol. 1, p. 179). Maria added, “I had better things to do than drugs” (Vol. 1, p. 179).

Family times were special and meaningful. Maria and her family played together, attended activities, ate, fellowshiped, and talked with each other. Both Maria and Lea agreed that these were enjoyable times which may have assisted Maria from becoming involved in drug use.

### **Communication**

There appeared to have been open communication in family III. Maria explained that the communication between her and her mother progressed after the divorce. During the separation, her mother was preoccupied with the problems concerning the separation from her father. Maria tried not to burden her mother with what she referred to as “my own petty problems” (Vol. 1, p. 152). However, when the

household adjusted to the separation, Maria felt comfortable speaking to her mother.

My mother was always there for us. We talked a whole lot about spiritual things, social and school issues and life in itself. Mom was always ready to listen. As I said she has been my best friend so I talked to her about anything. I felt comfortable and still do sharing with my mom. (Vol. 1, pp. 152, 153)

Lea agreed that good communication existed between her and her children. She relayed that communication is “one of the reasons why we were close” because she was open to her children’s call (Vol. 1, p. 175).

My children always came to me if they had a problem. I was everything to them: judge, teacher, and guide. I fitted myself by reading a lot so that I can be prepared to relate and deal with them at any time. (Vol. 1, p. 175)

At times, it seemed that the children were somewhat reluctant to share with their mother. However, Lea encouraged them to share everything, whether it was good or bad. Being sensitive to their needs and their pains, Lea was often attuned to her children’s emotions even when they did not verbally express themselves.

By the expression my children show on their face, I knew that things weren’t all right. I know they needed to talk. So I would approach them and I told them to tell me every time something was wrong with them or bothered them . . . . Even if they didn’t want to tell me I reminded them that I will know even if I’m the last to know. They knew that this was a fact so they would chose to or at times reluctantly tell me. (Vol. 1, pp. 176, 177)

Maria remarked that her mom’s willingness to talk and listen to them helped her to know what the children were thinking and experiencing. This positive guidance and open discussion may have protected them from “evil communication and involvement such as drugs. I can go to her and get good advice and good feedback” (Vol. 1, pp. 152, 153).

Maria’s privilege to share openly with her mother encouraged her to seek her mother’s advice, hence, serving as a possible protection from drugs and providing



Maria a means of parental supervision.

### **Supervision**

Lea's supervision played another important role in providing her children with a safe atmosphere from the ills of society. She recounted that:

I kept a schedule concerning their daily activities. All that they were involved in were under my scrutiny. They went to school, came home and rested. Then I took the two older ones to go with me at my job. This provided something responsible for them to do and so I was able to keep an eye on them, thus keeping them from trouble and bad influences such as bad friends and drug use. I did not allow them to go any place that I did not know about or didn't approve. (Vol. 1, p. 176)

Also Lea attended her children when they needed to go to the public library which she said provided them "a means of security and supervision" (Vol. 1, p. 178).

Amidst the economic strain, Lea worked part-time in order to be at home with her children.

I spend a lot of time with them. I held more than one job working on different days so that I was able to be at home with the children. We went walking in the hills and my being home provided them proper supervision. (Vol. 1, p. 176)

When it came to Lea's children's friends, she insisted and encouraged that they bring them home. In so doing, Lea monitored their behavior and properly governed their activities.

I tried my best to keep my children off the road. I never wanted them to feel free to go and come, to attend parties with friends where there'll be dancing and doing other bad things. By allowing their friends to come home I can observe them closely and if I saw something that I did not like, I would give them warning to avoid such kind of company. (Vol. 1, p. 176)

Maria's concept of her mother's supervision was that her mother was doing her best to keep them safe and to prevent them from getting into trouble. "My mother did

not want any of us to fall prey to evil. She taught us through her love for us to look out for each other” (Vol. 1, p. 161).

She further stated that whenever her mom would send them out, whether to the grocery, or any other activity, she would send them out in pairs. In this way each became responsible for the other. According to both Maria and Lea, “This was another means of supervision” (Vol. 1, p. 161). Maria said, “It showed us that our mother cared for us and wanted to protect us from any possible destruction such as immorality and drinking and smoking” (Vol. 1, p. 161).

In the act of properly supervising her children, Lea not only did her best to “keep them off the road” (Vol. 1, p. 176) and monitor their activities, but she also scheduled her work around them. This afforded her the opportunity to be with them, hence, shielding her children from any possible drug allurements. Maria saw her mother’s process of supervision as an act of care and love.

#### **Discipline: “No Difference With Age”**

Another theme deriving from the data was the aspect of discipline. Lea saw discipline as an important tool that was needed in the training of her children.

In family III, discipline apparently played an active role in the nurturing and care of the children. The act of discipline as depicted by Lea followed a process. This process included an oral warning in which the expectations of the mother were clearly defined to her children.

I used to warn them by telling them what my expectations of them were. I taught them right from wrong. My children were forewarned about the dangers in society and what to avoid or stay away from. So when they went contrary to my expectation, they were disciplined accordingly. (Vol. 1, p. 174)

Lea seemingly understood that though discipline was a necessity, “tain [not] every punishment could work” (Vol. 1, p. 174). She further stated that this made her wonder how she was going to deal with her children. In addition to warning, Lea at times used time-out as she put her children in the corner of the house to face the wall for a reasonable period of time. Other times, particularly when none of the above seemed to have worked, Lea gave way to spanking, “I will give them stripes as a last resort” (Vol. 1, p. 174). Maria added that her mother, in punishing them, “never deprived us of religious activities and experiences” (Vol. 1, p. 157). She confirmed that her mother “kept them from attending social events, or put us in the corner to stand when necessary. She administered ‘licks’ [spanking]” (Vol. 1, p. 157). In agreement with this Lea said, “I also deprived them of going to places or events that they were promised, as a means of punishment” (Vol. 1, p. 174).

Maria saw her mother as being strict but tempered with love and patience.

Mom got extremely strict. I guess it was because she had 3 girls to look out for. And we know the world is not girl-friendly, but she got very strict. Yet in her strictness, she showed love, understanding, and aah, patience. (Vol. 1, p. 154)

The mother’s response to her children’s misbehavior was not always immediate. According to Maria, some offenses were met with rapid discipline whereas other offenses were repeated before punishment was administered. Lea supported this statement, replying that she disciplined with a purpose.

My purpose for punishing my children was for them to take heed and to consciously learn and practice obedience. I wanted them to cease to be deceptive or trying to fool me. Punishment was for their correction and age was not an issue for me when it came to punishment. If they behaved they are rewarded—a means of recreation. I made time for them and went out with them. If they misbehave they are punished. (Vol. 1, p. 174)

Maria recalled a poignant incident which demonstrated her mother's power of discipline and the impact it had on her.

I remember many times I had one particular friend who used to chat a lot. One day, during a church service, I was sitting by my friend and surely she was chatting and I was listening. Then I felt somebody watching me. (Vol. 1, p. 155)

Maria paused for a moment and then she continued.

Something told me it was my mom. So reluctantly, I peered over in her direction and just as I thought, it was my mother. By the look in her eyes, that look I knew I had no other choice but to change my position. (Vol. 1, p. 155)

This look, Maria described, was the "warning look" (Vol. 1, p. 155). The "warning look" (Vol. 1, p. 155) meant that her mother was not approving of her conduct during church.

Maria concluded that the discipline she received "helped me to shun bad company, shun illegal things including drug use" (Vol. 1, p. 154), and apparently enabled her to become a responsible individual.

In summary, the discipline process in family III included oral and visual warning, deprivation of social privileges, time out, and, when necessary, spanking. Lea saw discipline as a needed asset. Maria claimed that her mother was strict; however, she disciplined in love for their best interest, including shunning drug use.

### **Responsibility**

I discovered not too long into the interview process that Maria has been a serious and focused young lady from her childhood. This was demonstrated in her mature and responsible behavior and overall lifestyle.

All right, I'm a young lady, determined, goal-oriented, focused, calm, cool, and

spiritually-minded. . . I am focused in the sense that when I plan to do something, I set my mind towards completing the job. [Maria paused and sighed.] I know at times a lot of circumstances and situations come along to deter you from your goal, but I always try to keep my mind on that goal. No matter what, I'm going to finish it. (Vol. 1, p. 151)

According to Maria, she took on responsibilities at an early age. "From a Caribbean cultural perspective, it was the custom in families that the oldest child bear the responsibility of monitoring and helping out with the care of the younger siblings" (Vol. 1, pp. 161, 162). In Maria's case this was magnified particularly when her family turned from an intact, traditional family to a single-parent family.

Thinking back from that experience, I would say I matured early. From then on I saw life from a different point of view. I became sympathetic to others who were in similar situations. I realize that my mom needed my utmost support and my younger siblings will be looking up to me for example and even guidance. I was only in my early junior years of life. (Vol. 1, pp. 158, 159)

The transition from a traditional to a single-parent family brought its challenges and its benefits. Lea shared her dilemma.

We became a single-parent family when my children were very young in age. It was at the time when they were most vulnerable, primary and junior years of life. The family began to experience single-parent syndrome from 1979 and in 1982 I became single at age 31 with five children from a 2-years-old son to an 11-years-old daughter. (Vol. 1, pp. 179, 180)

Maria agreed that before the actual divorce or separation of her parents she saw hints that in "the future things would never have worked out" (Vol. 1, p. 158). This occurred during her prepubescent years. Maria shared her experience as she reflected:

It was a vulnerable moment in my life. At that time I was attending high school [mid-school]. This for me was a big transition. Moving from elementary to secondary. So here I was getting adjusted to high-school life and at the same time this sort of experience going on at home. And you know I was going into puberty coming out of childhood. So here I was going through different

experiences--physically, mentally, socially. So I guess I was at a vulnerable stage. (Vol. 1, p. 159)

Maria further expressed that "it was a traumatic experience" (Vol. 1, p. 159) because her father was no longer at home. This change, according to Maria, was surprising and strange. It aided in her rapid development.

As I look back, I was a young child. It seemed to me as though I had developed earlier. I matured more than the average child--8 years or even 10 years old child. . . . I saw things happening in our home. . . . I didn't really expect my father to leave but some how deep within I know a break-up was coming. This left me with many questions and needs. So when the separation came about I was angry, annoyed, you know, confused. But later on in life I realized well, there's nothing I can do about this. And having accepted that, I moved on from there. (Vol. 1, pp. 158, 159)

In conclusion, Maria believed that she was forced to mature early in life due to her parents' separation. She became responsible for overseeing her younger siblings and she became an example for them. Lea agreed that her marital separation occurred at a vulnerable time period in Maria's and her other children's life. This, however, appeared not to have driven Maria into drug use.

### **Life's Satisfaction**

Another theme that emanated from the data was life's satisfaction. This section theme provides an understanding of Maria's experience as her family struggled to provide for her needs in the face of an absent father. Home without a providing and caring father proved to be financially challenging for the family. Maria shared this experience from her perspective.

Our home life was not an easy one. Well, I would say physically, we didn't have much growing up. Our home was unfurnished. Since the separation things were hard on us economically and financially money-wise. But emotionally because of my mother's relationship with Christ she displayed a lot

of love, a lot of care, a lot of appreciation to us. So although we didn't have much . . . we had a lot of care. That is what helped us and kept us together as a family. (Vol. 1, p. 165)

Once the father left, her mother had the responsibility of being both mother and father. There was a great need for the family to work together. Lea revealed the struggle to make the family come together. Maria stated that "we came together and helped in whatever we can to try and make the family work, this relationship among us work" (Vol. 1, p. 161). Maria's mom was the primary caretaker in making the family come together.

Life was very tiring. I used to have to hustle to get things done. I had to be both mother and father. For sometime we had no furniture. At times I held three part-time jobs to keep things together. We had no public water system. We prayed for rain in order to have water for use in the home. It was very tiring and difficult. Things were rough, but I had to make ends meet. (Vol. 1, pp. 179, 180)

The mother referred to an experience her daughter had at school. The teacher gave the class an assignment for each student to draw a picture of his or her house. As they finished drawing the kind of house they lived in, the students gave their teacher the drawings. When Maria's sister showed her picture to the teacher, another student said to the teacher, "Teacher, her house doesn't look like that. They have an unfurnished building" (Vol. 1, p. 181). These were some of the difficult times that family III experienced. According to Lea,

Difficult times brought us even closer as a family and help us to appreciate the little that we had. This gave me more reason to do all I can to make them comfortable and protect them from wrong including drugs. (Vol. 1, p. 181)

Work for Lea was not easy to obtain. She stayed at home to care for her children when she was married. All this changed when her husband left. Lea was now

trying to balance caring for the children at home and working to financially provide for her family.

She took the little money she had and invested it in a driving school so that she could learn how to drive. As a result, Lea interacted more with people outside of the home. One occasion when Lea was on her way to driving lessons, she was notified of a job by one of her children's teachers. When the teacher confirmed that Lea needed the job, she secured it for her. Lea stated:

Little money, but some help. The more they grow the greater their need. This made my children depressed and even embarrassed. Some would even cry because they needed as much as any other children, but could not get because things were tight. We were faced with the challenge of making what we had do. It was not an easy thing to do but we did. (Vol. 1, p. 180)

There were times in Maria's life when she wanted to look like others. This was evident in her statement: "Because of the way I dressed, I never had much fancy clothes like my friends, so I always stood by myself. I felt embarrassed at times" (Vol. 1, p. 165). She wished she could have more things, but she knew her family was not in a financial position to satisfy these desires. Maria stated:

I never really envied, but just wished that, you know [expression to convey understanding] that I had more up-to-date styles. . . . Mom had left herself undone so that we got what we needed. This taught us to be satisfied. Mom provided for us and taught us to be happy with what we had. So we did what was right so mom would know that we appreciated her. (Vol. 1, pp. 165, 157)

Lea concurred.

I provided to meet their needs and taught them to be content and happy with what they had so they would not have to feel left out. I didn't want them to have any reason to become involved with wrong people in order to get things and turn to doing wrong including drugs. (Vol. 1, p. 176)

As a result of Lea's displayed attitude and overall lifestyle, Maria learned to be



appreciative and content with what her mother did to make her comfortable and happy. This helped Maria to “make do” with what she had and not to become involved in drug-related “alluring” activities. The internal dynamics which existed in family III, though positive and negative, possibly helped Maria to avoid drug. In addition to these internal dynamics, there were external family dynamics that evolved from the interview conversations.

### External Family Dynamics

The external family dynamics were both negative and positive in nature. On one hand, Maria was faced with her father’s alcoholic lifestyle and, on the other, her grandmother’s positive influence.

#### **Negative Influence**

##### **My father’s lifestyle**

A major factor or dynamic that emerged from the interview conversation with Maria and Lea is Maria’s father’s alcoholic lifestyle. Both mother and daughter believed that this may have played a major role in deterring Maria from drug use.

Alcohol was a part of my father’s lifestyle. As a little child, I recall him coming home with the alcohol in him. His drunken behavior would disturb the peace at home. It had a traumatic impact ‘cause he would cause “ruction,” cause fight, noise-all sort of noise. He would look to mash up things and just behave crazy when things didn’t go his way. He was controlled by the alcohol. (Vol. 1, p. 160)

Maria said that her father’s alcohol involvement made her angry, annoyed, and very confused. “I cannot understand how my father succumbed to peer pressure and alcohol and allowed so-called friends to destroy him” (Vol. 1, p. 159). Maria regretted

not having a father whom she could respect and admire.

Maria realized that her father was determined to maintain his alcoholic lifestyle.

She decided at a tender age to move on and pray for a life worth living.

My father's alcoholic lifestyle frightened me. I was turned off by it. I don't like it at all. It made a stupor of him. I saw what damage alcohol did to my father and my family. My father's alcoholic lifestyle affected me negatively. So I was determined not to be like my father. I consciously chose to avoid alcohol and drugs. (Vol. 1, pp. 160, 172)

Lea said that the father's influence was not good for the children. She saw it as a detriment and was determined to protect her children from this negative influence.

I believe that even though my children love and respect their father as long as he behaves himself. If he had stayed at home he would have influenced my children in wrong. . . . I learned that my son was offered beer by his father outside of the home as he visited him. He tasted it but didn't like it. My son told me that he had no mind for that. And he did not want to behave like his father. (Vol. 1, pp. 177, 180)

### **Positive Influence**

My children's grandmother

Lea and Maria both gave credit to the grandmother, Lea's mother, for their moral development. During Maria's early years of life, her grandmother lived with them as a caretaker and moral support to the family. The grandmother appeared to positively influence and affect the lives of family III.

My children's grandmother was a catalyst for good. She taught my children right from wrong. She was a good counsellor to me and gave advice in the proper training of my children. She cared for them as her own. In my absence, at times, she would be with them. (Vol. 1, p. 179)

Lea took keen interest in her mother's advice and her children experienced the benefits of a caring grandmother's guidance. "My mother [grandmother of children]

would always say, 'Train the first one and the rest of the children will follow in the footsteps of the first', so said, so done" (Vol. 1, p. 176). Lea acknowledged that the first one who, is Maria, "became a guide and a positive role model" (Vol. 1, p. 176).

Maria discussed her grandmother's influence on her life.

Granny helped me to be what I am today. She spent a lot of time with us when we were growing up. She would come to our home and care for us. We learned how to behave and act as good children. My grandmother was very spiritual and she had interest in our spiritual development. Granny taught us right from wrong and she punished us when we did wrong. She was very encouraging and expected the best behavior from us. Granny had a positive influence on us from small. (Vol. 1, p. 173)

She further stated how she enjoyed visiting her grandmother and spending time with her. Her grandmother, she commented, "helped me to do what was right and avoid the wrong including doing drugs and alcohol" (Vol. 1, p. 173).

Both of the external family dynamics, though one was negative and the other was positive, appeared to have influenced Maria to avoid drugs.

### **Environmental Dynamics**

A number of environmental dynamics emanated from the interview sessions. The data provided three that may have helped Maria to shun drug involvement, namely neighborhood, school, and friends.

#### **Neighborhood**

Lea was conscious of the type of neighborhood to which her children were exposed. She described how the neighborhood children behaved to explain her reason for preventing her children's involvement with them. "My neighbors' children didn't have the knowlege as my children. They were rude and disrespectful. Their behavior

and conduct was different and unbecoming. My children were not always in a protective environment. . . . I tried to shield my children from peer pressure” (Vol. 1, pp. 180, 181, 179).

Maria described her childhood perception of the neighborhood. Maria recalled her neighborhood being relatively safe during her early childhood.

In my childhood days, my neighborhood was a friendly one. But we still had to be selective with whom we associated. There were certain neighbors we could sit and speak with. We gave fruits and they in turn did the same. It was a friendly neighborhood. (Vol. 1, p. 162)

The neighborhood, however, did not remain as safe and friendly. With age, Maria apparently perceived the neighborhood differently. “As a child I could not see the infiltration of different things, but as I got older I saw bad stuff here and there coming into our neighborhood” (Vol. 1, p. 162). Maria’s mother agreed that the neighborhood was indeed caring. However, “with the increase of homes came the increase of problems” (Vol. 1, p. 179).

Maria further stated that some of the people she saw involved in these devious behaviors were once people she admired and regarded as role models.

Around my mid-teens I saw individuals who I looked up to, when they were in high school and I was in elementary school, turning to Rasta [Rastafarians--a religious group commonly known by their dreadlocks and marijuana]. I observed them cursing, using drugs, smoking, and drinking beer. They were doing all sorts of illegal things and getting in trouble with the law. (Vol. 1, pp. 162, 163)

This changed neighborhood and environment came about as other youth were apparently getting involved in criminal activities such as stealing, car theft, robbery, and even smoking marijuana.

I did not like the way these youth were going. You would see them hiding in

different places as they did their wrong including smoking. I just didn't like what they were doing and I had no desire to follow them. (Vol. 1, p. 163)

### School

Two of Lea's children went to public school where Christian values were not upheld, but she was assured that her instruction and guidance would keep them safe even when they were not under her direct supervision.

I worked along with their teachers with them. I didn't leave everything for their teachers to do. As a parent, I tried to be there for them if they had any difficulty at school. However the teacher kept me informed about my children's behavior and performance in school. . . . Their teachers looked out for them and made sure that they behaved and stayed out of trouble. (Vol. 1, pp. 178, 184)

In conversation with Maria and one of her siblings, I discovered that both sisters baby-sat for the principal of the school. Their personal relationship with their principal served as a protective factor from involvement in deviant activities, such as drugs.

Maria related how her teachers taught her about drugs.

My teachers and others spoke a lot about the drug problems at our school. They would warn us about the dangers of drugs and instructed us to avoid getting involved. Students were bringing drugs to school. At this point I realized that this drug problem is really a problem on the island. I always see individuals who take drugs as those who don't have a purpose in life. (Vol. 1, pp. 164, 165)

Maria was chosen as a school representative along with other students from other schools. Being a school representative served as a motivation for her responsible behavior, including non-drug involvement.

We were role models for good behavior so that others in our school could model after us. The epitome of good behavior, moral standing, and academic achievement were the criteria for our selection. It had helped me to realize that

other students were looking up to me for the right example. As a child . . . I always wanted to do what was right. This motivated me to live right and being a monitor in my school helped to keep me on track. I had to live up to what I enforced by avoiding evil activities like alcohol. (Vol. 1, p. 168)

### Respected by Friends Despite the Odds

Maria's friends and classmates seemed to have respected her. She was a person whom everyone admired. In addition to this, Maria believed that her strong religious convictions promoted the respect she received from her friends and classmates.

I had some friends and still do who are not Seventh-day Adventists. They were nice to me. Some of them were my closest friends who respected me in the sense that they respected my personal religious beliefs. When I'm around them, they did not swear. If they were planning any class function they would go out of their way and wherever possible schedule the event on days or times that were not conflicting with my religious beliefs so that I was able to attend. (Vol. 1, p. 166)

There came a time when some of Maria's friends tried to encourage her to get involved in what her friends called "only we would know" (Vol. 1, p. 166). Maria proceeded to share the experience:

Yes, I remember one incident, just one experience. We were having a Christmas party and there was champagne being poured into glasses and passed around. I recalled when it came around to me, I immediately responded, this drink has alcohol in it. Yes, of course, they said. Then they started to say, 'I'm sure nobody wouldn't find out. I'm sure your pastor wouldn't kill you if you drank a little. Only we would know. And besides, how much alcohol could be in this?' they asked. (Vol. 1, p. 166)

This appeared to be a moment of truth for Maria. She said that she was put in the spotlight. Taking a stand Maria responded, "I don't drink alcohol beverages, and even though it may not have much alcohol in it, I still not drinking it no matter who knows or don't know" (Vol. 1, p. 166).

Maria explained that her friends and classmates teased her after this experience. “Anytime they had any party after that one they would say, ‘Well, Maria, you can’t drink this and Maria you can’t use that. That has pork in it and this has alcohol--it’s not for you’” (Vol. 1, p. 166).

Maria agreed that she felt bad and it made her feel left out at first because she was the only Seventh-day Adventist in the class. She expressed that it was difficult since most of the parties served alcoholic drinks and foods she did not partake of, as she said, “chose not to eat” (Vol. 1, p. 166).

I felt left out I must admit. But after a while, I stood up and most of my friends did not bother or tease me. To think of it, after a while, having stood up against the odds most of my friends later on admired me being able to stand up for what I believed and preached. (Vol. 1, p. 166)

Maria discussed another occasion when she refused to drink champagne.

Even though my friends thought that it was okay to use the champagne since to them it only had a little alcohol and all I had to do was to sip. I thought different ‘cause in the back of my mind there was one voice that said, one thing leads to another. A sip now may lead to a mouthful next and later it might be a bottle or two. I also knew that my father is an alcoholic and I didn’t like the way the use of alcohol made him. (Vol. 1, p. 167)

Lea appeared to sum it well when she stated, “My children were allowed to have friends. I would give them warning to avoid such kind of company that was not good for them. I try my best not to let certain influences dominate our life” (Vol. 1, p. 176).

As a caring and protective parent, Lea sought to shield her children from the negative influences of the neighborhood and friends. The neighborhood, according to Maria, was a friendly and caring one. However, as she grew, it became bad. Maria appeared to have been invited to become involved in drug use by her friends in the

neighborhood and school. However, Maria refused the invitation based on her positive parental upbringing. In addition, Maria's school provided drug awareness education and her teachers also had a positive concern for her.

### **Religious Dynamics**

Furthermore, a number of other themes derived from the data. These themes were couched within the framework of religious dynamics and subdivided into internal religious dynamics and external religious dynamics.

#### **Internal Religious Dynamics**

The category internal relational dynamics refers to the religious and spiritual practices and experiences within the home. These provide an understanding of Maria's drug avoidance. The first of the internal religious dynamics which may have aided in Maria's drug avoidance is family worship.

#### **Family Worship**

The significance of religiosity in family III was portrayed as they reminisced about their spiritual experience and relationship with God. Both parent and child expressed the importance and benefits of having God in their lives, which was fostered in family worship.

Morning worship and devotion appeared to be integral parts of this family. Maria recalled, "It was not a tedious chore but a happy time for the family as we spent time with God" (Vol. 1, p. 168). Maria enjoyed devotion. She enjoyed the singing, reading, and Bible games that were a part of devotion.



I enjoyed devotion. When we were younger, my mom sought to make devotion an important part in our life, even now. She would call us out for devotion by playing the piano. She used to love to play a lot and we would sing and read stories. She shared the lesson study . . . even played games. Mom tried to make devotion a way of life. Worship was real and meaningful. Those were special and rewarding experiences. (Vol. 1, p. 170)

The devotional life of Lea appeared to have served as a positive influence. She did not force her children to be involved in family worship. She remembered and explained what she did at worship when they were children.

We had devotion in the morning and sometimes in the evening. Devotion was for us fun time. We took turns sharing with each other. It was participatory. I allowed them to take an active part in the worship experience. Devotion was like a program among ourselves. Some read, some sang. It was a means of building character. Worship was not forced on my children. . . . I lived it and set the example. This helped them know what God wanted for them. Family worship helped my children to love the Lord. Family worship instilled in my children respect for God. It helped them to shun bad company and to know right from wrong. (Vol. 1, pp. 182, 183, 184)

Family worship was a “significant ritual” conducted in the home of family III. Worship was participatory where both parent and children were involved. Devotional times were meaningful, educational, and fun as the family studied God’s Word, sang songs, and prayed together.

### **Prayer—the Powerful Tool**

As Maria recounted her spiritual life, she identified prayer as a tool that may have kept her from such things, such as drugs and hence kept her close to God. Prayer was used in this family as a connection between themselves and God. Maria indicated that God was the father that she never had and she related to God as her second father. For this reason, prayer was very important to her.

What made prayer important was that seeing the head of the home was no longer there, situations got a bit difficult. Christ became the father--that father that we never had. I mean Christ is always there. Christ became our literal second father, so having to pray for these needs and wants as I mentioned before brought us in the habit of praying. . . . I turned to Christ and depended on Him more, so here is where I developed this attitude of prayer. (Vol. 1, p. 169)

Maria recalled moments when she would see her mother spending much time in prayer. She conveyed that her mom was a praying woman who depended solely on God.

When I saw my mom praying and heard her prayers for guidance in her life and for us I would say I want to be like mom. Mom's prayers touched my life. I always saw mom on her knees and in the Bible. (Vol. 1, p. 153)

Maria believed that her mother's spiritual life impacted her for good.

When I realized how wrapped up my mother was and still is in her spiritual devotion and her commitment to teaching us right principles and values such as respect, honesty, having patience, and trust, I know that I could be no different. . . . And it's the type of person I am. I did not want any other type of lifestyle but to follow the way my mom live. My mom is very spiritual and I admire this very much. (Vol. 1, pp. 168, 153)

Lea stated that she has experienced the power of prayer. This gave her a relationship with God who she believed protected her children from wrong.

Prayer helped to make my children prove God for themselves and therefore they realized the reality of His existence. I experience how prayer works. I prayed with and for my children and I taught them to pray. By doing so they built a living relationship with God who shielded them from wrong including alcohol and drugs influence. We challenge God in our request and He met our need. This helped them to know what God wanted for them. (Vol. 1, pp. 182, 183)

Maria's mother practiced a consistent prayer life which inspired Maria to develop in a similar manner. The aspect of prayer became a positive link between Maria and her God. As a result, both Maria and her mother believe that Maria's prayer

life and her mother's prayers on her behalf motivated her to abstain from drug use.

### **Role Model and Values Transmission**

Another theme that evolved from the interview protocol which may have been instrumental in Maria's drug avoidance is role model and values transmission. The aspect of role model played out importantly in the life of Maria. Her mother gave her a sense of direction and was a good role model. Maria appreciated the way her mother conducted and asserted herself without reservation.

Mom showed us how to live and handle tough times. Her strength inspires me. I know she got her strength from Christ. She was determined to move on and make the best of life. My mom was my role model. And when I look up to her in that way I feel good to have a mother who has enriched my life. Mom worked hard. (Vol. 1, p. 152)

Maria admired her mother's nonalcoholic lifestyle.

My mom is the role model that I look up to. To my knowledge and her lifestyle, I never saw her drinking. Alcohol beverages was not a part of our home. This is one of the things that I admired about my mother. (Vol. 1, p. 153)

Lea seemed to be knowledgeable regarding her positive influence on Maria and the other children. She said, "I focused on the positive in life as I tried to help them grow up right and obedient" (Vol. 1, p. 174). Lea emphasized that her focus on positive things was displayed in her children's lifestyles.

By the way my children live, I know they have observed me carefully. Values are demonstrated by the way they conduct themselves. Their attitude and behavior and being responsible and respectable tell me that my children have adopted the values I have modeled and given to them. (Vol. 1, p. 177)

Lea recalled a time when her parental influence on her children was recognized by her church. It was during a mother's day program when she was honored and

awarded “Mother of the Year” (Vol. 1, p. 177) because of the lifestyle and behavior of her children. “To the church I was doing a good job by the way I lived and conducted myself and how I trained my children. They were not involved in deviant behavior like partying, cursing, and drugs” (Vol. 1, p. 171). Lea believed that her modeling acted as a guide to her children’s non-drug involvement. “I kept them in the right path which they followed away from evil and drugs” (Vol. 1, p. 179).

Maria attested to the fact that her mother played a major role in keeping alcohol away from their home.

One of the roles my mother played in my decision to not use alcohol or drugs is that she never used it or allowed it in our home. This is what I look up to. . . . Mom was my role model from the time I was growing up. She taught me to be loving. She herself was and still is a loving parent. Mom is respectful and caring. The values that I’ve learned growing up I determined in my mind that I wanted to be the kind of person that my mom was. . . . I’ve never seen my mom hang around any person who displayed bad behavior. She never had friends or keep company with people who drink alcohol, spoke ill languages, who had an ill tongue and from that I’ve always determined that, hey, I want to be someone like that. So I’ve shun bad company, shun illegal things. (Vol. 1, pp. 153, 154, 156)

Other values Maria claimed that her mother displayed were a loving spirit, being understanding, and patience. As a result Maria claimed, “I, myself, have learned to be a patient and understanding person. This has carried me a far way in life. By this I learned how to be responsible and stay away from trouble including alcohol” (Vol. 1, p. 154). Maria reiterated, “This was displayed by Mom” (Vol. 1, p. 154).

Lea modeled and taught Maria values as a guide to rightful living. These values played an important role in Maria’s life and they seemingly aided in her drug avoidance and it also set the tone for her commitment to religiosity.

### **Religious Commitment: Love for Christ**

The religious commitment theme which unfolded from the data portrayed Maria's love for Christ. Maria claimed that she started to do what was right because she wanted to please her mother. However, as she grew, her relationship with Christ became the motivating factor for her right decisions. Hence, Maria stated that she did not use drugs or alcohol because she did not want to mar this relationship. Seemingly, the foundation that influenced Maria's positive actions was based on a commitment and love for Christ. Maria revealed that her choice to do right followed a progressive process.

I think as a young child, I started out by doing things to please my mom. I didn't like it that when I do bad things I was gonna get licks. You know licks coming. So you try to do good, you know to please. But then as I got older like in my early teens, I realized that I couldn't always try to please Mom. Either I'm a good child or I am bad. So from the relationship with Christ, I think this relationship had a lot to do with my growing up. Yes, and the type of person that I am. So I did right cause it was the right thing to do. I chose to stay away from alcohol and drugs cause it was the right thing to do. (Vol. 1, p. 173)

Maria developed her relationship with Christ at a young age. Her religious convictions deterred her from the use of alcohol. She did not want to "destroy" (Vol. 1, p. 172) what she and God had built.

I guess it is because of the relationship I was developing with Christ. I really didn't want to do anything wrong. Using alcohol or any other drugs is wrong and could mess up my relationship with Christ. As a child growing up I, ugh, was told that anything you do wrong-when you're going to pray you've got to ask for forgiveness, right, so I felt like it was something wrong. Doing drugs is a sin, big sin and I didn't want to. (Vol. 1, pp. 170, 171)

Maria made it clear that she did have an opportunity to use alcohol and drugs but chose not to. She had attended a school function and alcoholic beverages were

provided. "I attended a school function for the ambassador of the Netherlands. They passed around alcoholic beverages . . . and I was like 'nah'. It wasn't no problem to me . . . seeing I had overcome the first one" (Vol. 1, p. 171).

Maria stated that her mother's religious life not only kept her close to God but impacted her.

Growing up as a child my mom taught us to love the Lord. She taught us to take time out for Him. Mom modeled this before us. Mom displayed a spiritual attitude even when she had reason to be upset like when my father was at home and his behavior was not approved, she still displayed a calm, peaceful, spiritual attitude. By her living and connection to Christ we saw and learned how to live spiritually. Mom helped me grow spiritually. (Vol. 1, p. 172)

Lea's love for God gave her motivation to provide a shelter for them and a wall of protection from the ills of society.

My love for Christ motivated me to do all I can in providing a safe haven for my children. . . . My lifestyle was adapted by that of Christ. This I gave to my children. It involves living clean, pure, and holy-taking care of themselves in all things. (Vol. 1, p. 182)

The themes with the internal religious dynamics provided an understanding about how Maria was religiously influenced. It was within these themes that Maria developed a personal devotional and prayer life. The ritual of worship exposed Maria to teachings which were taught and modeled by her mother, Lea. As a result, Maria committed to a religious lifestyle and a personal relationship to God which apparently worked in her drug avoidance. The emerging internal religious dynamics appeared to have been augmented by other themes grouped with the external religious dynamics.

### External Religious Dynamics

The second group of the religious dynamics is the external religious dynamics. These are the themes relevant to church life, the first of which is church involvement and attendance. Both Maria and her mother had an attachment to their church. This religious attachment inspired them to become involved in religious and other church activities.

#### Church Involvement and Attendance

Family devotion and the power of prayer were major influences that may have shielded Maria from the ills of society. Maria, however, stated that church involvement and attendance also added meaning to her existing spiritual life. She was involved in various church activities and organizations.

I was involved. I took part in all activities--Pathfinder, A.Y. [Adventist Youth-societies that provide spiritual, educational and social programs and activities for children from ages 10-30], Sabbath School Secretary, and choir. This has helped me to maintain my focus, strengthen me spiritually. This involvement kept me occupied--kept my mind off the things of the world. Doing these things . . . I didn't have time to think about doing the negative such as drugs and drinking. (Vol. 1, p. 173)

From a young age, Maria attended church regularly. Her mother's frequent involvement in church life made her feel like she "grew up in church" (Vol. 1, p. 170).

When I was younger my mom was involved in church life a lot. She was a deaconess and pathfinder counselor. I was in church all the time. I remember mentioning to one of my friends that it's like I live in church . . . so I practically grew up in the church. I must give Pathfinder credit. Different activities like Pathfinder kept me away from looking or turning to other things to find pleasure. (Vol. 1, p. 170)

As far as church involvement and attendance was concerned, Lea

acknowledged that church-going was a part of her family's lifestyle and that their faithful involvement encouraged them to feel good about themselves. She also believed that this type of involvement and regular attendance helped keep her children from using drugs and stealing.

Church-going was a part of our lifestyle. They were involved in church, singing, choir, Pathfinder, boys' and girls' group. As children they wanted attention, so by providing good church programs for them and by allowing them to be involved in programs like this encouraged them and made them feel good about themselves, thus helping to keep them out of bad things like using drugs and stealing or anything that was not good. . . . This involvement kept them from being involved wrongfully. This helped them to choose right. (Vol. 1, pp. 183, 179)

Involvement in religious activities and church attendance provided Maria healthy and conventional activities away from societal ills and gave her a supporting network which may have influenced her drug avoidance.

### **Religious Beliefs and Teachings**

The theme religious beliefs emanated from the research data and may have been a tool in Maria's non-drug stance. The religious influence in Maria's life was formulated by the beliefs she received during her early childhood. These beliefs apparently helped her refrain from immorality and deepened her relationship with Christ.

Because of what I believe from a tender age, it has caused me from indulging from wrong behavior and steered me in the right direction. I know it sounds funny to have a 13-, 14-year-old having a growing relationship with Christ. My religious beliefs helped me to refrain from immoral acts. I was taught that my body was the temple of God. It is my responsibility to care for my body. Unpleasant experiences came to me as a youth, but because of my religious beliefs, I was able to withstand. (Vol. 1, pp. 171, 172)



Lea expressed the opinion that her children were different from the neighborhood's children because of the religious convictions, teachings, and relationship she had with God.

Children in my neighborhood did not know spiritual things like my children so they ended up differently. Some fell out of school, others got pregnant out of wedlock and got into other kinds of trouble. I pray to the Lord to help and guide the mind of my children. Church taught them about the dangers and effects of drugs. Church and home had a major hold from an early age. (Vol. 1, p. 182)

Lea's faith in God was displayed as she spoke about the Bible and faith in Him as elements that kept her children away from engaging in deviant behaviors.

The Bible, the Word of God, and faith in Christ acted as a deterrent from evil and even drugs by my children. Our religious beliefs helped to keep them from wrong. Our body is the temple of God. This is our belief. I also send them to church boarding school. It acted as a wall of protection for my children in their adolescent years. (Vol. 1, p. 182)

Lea's strong religious beliefs were imbedded in her children.

By the religious teaching my children received from home, it helped them to chose to be spiritually-minded and to have faith in Christ. In my absence my children would come together for prayer and singing. I think if I used to force them, they would become rebellious . . . but I had to lead and guide them in the right path. This made them develop a personal relationship with God. I had a positive hold on them when they were small so now they are big they are still walking in the right path. (Vol. 1, p. 183)

Both Lea and her daughter Maria believed that the religious beliefs and teaching she received from church and home may have steered her from drug use. Maria was taught the belief that her body is the temple of God, hence she chose not to do anything that would destroy it. Church also taught them about the dangers of drugs and encouraged them to refrain from such.

### Summary

The themes within these religious dynamics appeared to have worked concurrently with the themes within the relational and environmental dynamics as they may have surrounded Maria with a hedge that shut out drug use as is presented in the following analysis.

#### **Analysis: Through a Photographic Telescope**

Photographically, a picture does paint a thousand words. As I analyzed this case, I viewed the data through a mental photographic telescope, hence, trying to focus on the themes which were exposed. In family III mother and daughter, Lea and Maria respectively, relayed how the three major themes led to Maria's non-drug involvement. Maria and Lea expressed how the internal relational dynamics played out in their relationship. Maria considered her mother a friend or better yet "like a sister," (Vol. 1, p. 152) and someone with whom she could share, depend on, and one from whom she drew her strength. She appreciated her mother's love and encouragement and this motivated her to do right. Maria especially considered her mother's strength during and after her parents' divorce pertinent to the developing relationship between Maria and her mother. Lea also expressed her feeling for Maria as special. She described their relationship as close, like friends, in that at times she forgot she was the mother. She expressed her love outwardly through hugs, kisses, small gifts, and caring words. She was directly involved in her child's life.

Lea and Maria shared that the other family members loved and supported each other. Maria nurtured her younger siblings. At times her siblings would not respond

to Maria's requests, but they eventually complied with them. Lea perceived her children as sympathetic towards each other. She saw signs of their open expression of love and kindness. This exemplified the care and support of the family.

Socially the family enjoyed their time together. They talked, read books, sang, laughed, and found the time to share and play with each other. Lea even joined her children on school outings. Without television, her children made their play time together special. Their family time acted as a protective hedge, a time for learning important lessons in life.

Lea and Maria openly expressed their concerns and feelings with each other, although, during her mother's divorce, Maria did not bother her mother with her "own petty problems" (Vol. 1, p. 152). Her mother, nevertheless, was always there for her. They comfortably talked about everything which included the spiritual, the social, school activities, and other life issues. If Lea saw that the children were reluctant to talk, she reassured them and encouraged them to share everything. Maria depended on her mother for good solid advice.

Lea's supervision guided her children in making good choices. She knew their schedules and followed their activities. Keeping them "off the road" (Vol. 1, p. 176) and observing their friends allowed her to give warnings when necessary. Maria attested that her mother's guidance was best for her and she knew that her mother was only showing her love and protection.

Lea helped to nurture Maria through discipline, "age was not an issue" (Vol. 1, p. 174). Lea gave a warning and let Maria know her expectations; the "warning look" (Vol. 1, p. 155) was well understood. If Maria went contrary, she would discipline

with time-outs, and if necessary “stripes as a last resort” (Vol. 1, p. 174). Maria perceived her mother’s discipline as extremely strict, yet she could not overlook her mother’s love, understanding, patience, and reasoning for discipline.

Maria was reared to be a very responsible person due to her position as eldest child. Maria’s responsibilities magnified when her mom divorced. She described herself as an example to her siblings. She also did her best to give her mother support. The divorce was a trying time for both Lea and Maria, but an experience in which Maria matured.

Throughout everything Maria said she was grateful for her family and the little she had. Lea, the only primary caregiver, made every effort to support and provide for her family. She also taught Maria to be content and happy with her life. Maria admitted to feeling embarrassed at times because she did not have some of the material possessions her friends had, but her mother’s sacrifices taught her to be satisfied.

When it came to the external family dynamics Maria saw her father’s lifestyle as a negative influence which contributed to her avoidance of drugs. She felt her father’s drunken behavior disturbed her peaceful home and destroyed his life. For this reason she vowed not to be like her father. Lea in turn shielded her children from his bad influences.

On the other hand, Maria saw her grandmother (Lea’s mother) as a positive influence, one who taught her right from wrong. Her grandmother’s spiritual lifestyle helped Maria to be what she is today. Lea believed that her mother’s parenting style influenced how Lea raised Maria. Both Lea and her mother believed the first child sets the model for the other siblings. Lea’s parenting style was, therefore, stern for Maria,

her first child.

Lea was aware of the environmental dynamics that influenced Maria, particularly the children in their neighborhood. Consequently, she tried to shield them from negative peer pressure. Maria, as a result, learned to carefully select her friends who would respect her religious convictions. Later Maria observed the infestation of drugs in her neighborhood, but she chose not to allow drugs to influence her.

The dynamics that school played were notable in deterring Maria's drug involvement. Her teachers ensured she stayed out of trouble and kept her mother informed. They warned her regarding the dangers of drugs. In addition, she tried to live up to her position as a school representative and monitor. Although Maria felt left out and was frequently teased by her classmates for her choices, she was also respected by her classmates for her strong spiritual stand and her choice not to drink alcohol. Her friends respected her beliefs and when they associated with Maria they acted appropriately.

A number of internal religious dynamics impacted Maria's drug avoidance. For her, family worship was a way of life and became real and meaningful in her everyday choices. Lea made worship fun and participatory. She set the example so that Maria would follow.

Prayer was a tool in directing Maria from harm's way. Prayer to God was her way of developing a father figure. She modeled her mother's prayer life because these prayers touched her life. Lea used prayer as an opportunity to prove God real to her children, therefore she taught them to pray and to build a relationship with God who could shield her from bad influences.

Lea credited her children's avoidance of drugs to the spiritual teachings and influences she imbedded in them when they were young. Maria acknowledged that the religious beliefs she received in her youth kept her from becoming involved with drugs.

Maria attributed her spirituality partly to her mom, but even more so as a personal choice to grow in Christ. In the beginning Maria chose to do right to please her mother and avoid punishment, but as she matured, her connection with Christ also matured.

The external religious dynamics also shielded Maria from negative activities. Such things as church involvement and attendance kept her schedule filled with positive engagements. Lea carried Maria to church at a young age to provide attention and to keep her away from bad things. Maria continued to find pleasure within the church and maintained her focus on church activities.

Along with Maria's church activities, the religious beliefs taught by her church served as a restraint from deviant acts. She learned to care for her body and followed the Word of God. She also attended church boarding school, which acted as a wall of protection against drug use.

### **Summary**

The interview with Maria and her mother provided an understanding about Maria's drug avoidance. Their story is coined in a number of themes which functioned in an interrelated manner as a wall of protection against drug use and attraction. These emerging themes have been summarized within three selected dynamics, namely relational, environmental, and religious. Both Maria and her mother, Lea, believed that

the emerging themes worked in preventing Maria from drug use.

The themes within relational dynamics referred to how Maria related to and functioned with her immediate and extended families and how this may have helped to keep her from drug involvement.

The environmental themes showed how Maria was able to withstand the pressures of drug-related friends and neighborhood and become actively involved in conventional activities as a school monitor. All these played an important role in her non-drug stance. These themes also demonstrated how Maria's school, through drug education and parent-teacher relation, may have shielded her from drugs.

Finally, other themes couched within the religious dynamics provided an understanding of how Maria was taught values, spiritual lessons through family worship, and church beliefs, thus developing a committed Christian lifestyle which possibly enabled Maria to avoid drugs.

This case presentation regarding Maria's drug avoidance will be compared and contrasted with the stories of John and Brenda's non-drug involvement in chapters 7 and 8.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS–PART I

#### **Family Focus Under the Lens**

The themes of each family's story are viewed through the lenses of the other two families to understand why these youth from St. Martin did not use drugs. In the cross-case analysis, "processes and outcomes that occur across each case will be sought in order to understand how such processes are bent by specific local contextual variables" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 151). "[Similar to] the overlaying of one transparency on another, this method highlights both the uniqueness and the commonality of the participants' experiences [stories]" (West & Oldfather, 1995, p. 453).

The emerging themes across the family cases will be described in this section as similar or different. There are three major themes, relational, environmental, and religious dynamics, which were subdivided into five sub-themes: internal relational dynamics, external relational dynamics, environmental dynamics, internal religious dynamics, and external religious dynamics. This chapter focuses on the category relational dynamics. The themes within this category were divided into two areas, internal and external relational dynamics. The following text and tables were detail insights within each theme



as they relate to the youths' drug avoidance. Within the tables, the parents' statements are italicized whereas the youths' statements maintain the regular font style.

### **Relational Dynamics**

The relational dynamics category refers to the themes relevant to the family's relationship between the youth and their immediate and extended families. This category is subdivided into two groups, namely internal and external relational dynamics.

#### **Internal Relational Dynamics**

The internal relational dynamics which emanated from the data have been previously described in chapter 3. These dynamics consist of the following sub-themes: intimate relations; social relations; communication; supervision; discipline; responsibility; and life's satisfaction.

#### **Intimate Relations**

A number of influences for non-drug use among the youth of St. Martin emerged from the data. One of these influences was a strong relational bond between each youth and his/her parent(s). As stated by Minty (1988), Rutter (1987), and Werner (1986), a positive relationship with at least one caring parent was an asset in the prevention of drug involvement. Children who are securely attached to their parents, according to Brook et al. (1993), avoid drug use.

The intimate relations theme depicts the positive parent-child attachment between John and his parents. Both parents and youth described their relationship as close, meaningful, special, and loving. John depicted his relationship with his parents, particularly his mother, as “loving, buddy-like, and supporting” (Vol. 2, p. 3). Both Brenda and Maria expressed that they shared an intimate and caring relationship with their parents, particularly their mothers. They perceived their mothers as “a friend” (Vol, 2, p. 37), in the case of Brenda, and “a sister” (Vol. 2, p. 58) in Maria’s perspective. All three mothers expressed that they had a good bond with their children which aided in their children’s non-drug involvement.

Table 1 elaborates these intimate relations. In the words of Lea, “Making them feel good about themselves helped to keep my children from immoral behavior including drug involvement” (Vol. 2, p. 60).

TABLE 1  
INTIMATE RELATIONS

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p><i>When your children love you, anything that they know will hurt you they will never do it</i> (Vol. 2, p. 6).</p>	<p><i>I expressed my love to my children by playing with them, hugging a lot, spend a lot of time talking. We related and played together like sisters</i> (Vol. 2, p. 35).</p>	<p><i>My children are like my friends. We are very close. We have a strong relationship. Sometimes I forget that I am their mother. I show love to my children by hugging and kissing them</i> (Vol. 2, p. 59).</p>
<p>My mom is very sensitive and in touch with me (Vol. 2, p. 3).</p>	<p>I believe I did not use drugs because I wanted to make Mom happy (Vol. 2, p. 36).</p>	<p>We were appreciated and it encouraged us to do what was right (Vol. 2, p. 60).</p>

### **Social Relations**

Social relations within the families were considered by both parents and youth as special times of family fellowship and recreation. "Under the Tamarind tree" (Vol. 2, p. 4) for John's family was "like our next house" (Vol. 2, p. 4), which allowed for periods of reflection and family entertainment. Some family times were spent playing ball with each other, taking nature walks, and enjoying leisure times with the family. Newcomb (1995) indicated that close, supportive, involved families may possibly protect children from drug allurements. According to Whitehead (1996), families that spend time together are more likely to avoid social ills. Family times together, according to Maria, provided "better things to do than drugs" (Vol. 2, p. 64). The mothers of each youth all agreed that family times were enjoyable, special, and protective. Table 2 illustrates more information on the social relations within the families.

### **Sibling Relations**

Both the youth and the parents conveyed that sibling relations were pertinent to the families. According to both the parents and youth, the siblings were supportive of each other. Brenda stated, "My sister and I are very close. . . . We are supportive of each other" (Vol. 2, p. 132). Lea said that the family members "support each other . . . which provided a safe haven from evil including alcohol and drug problems" (Vol. 2, p. 62).

(See Table 3.)

TABLE 2  
SOCIAL RELATIONS

Family I	Family II	Family III
<p>We would listen to stories from dad, discuss occurrences of the day, and eat under the tamarind tree. The tamarind tree is like our next house (Vol. 2, p. 4).</p> <p>Other times together included going swimming or sailing in the pond with our dad. Going to the hills and playing and bring in the goat and cattle and even ride the donkey (Vol. 2, p. 4).</p>	<p>As a family we sat and talked and laughed and played together. Meal times were special (Vol. 2, p. 38).</p> <p>My mom and I are close did things together. . . . We go driving, watch TV and go shopping in town together. I enjoyed these times we spent together (Vol. 2, p. 37).</p>	<p>We came together to talk and read books about values and principles of right and wrong. These were special family times. We studied together, eating and playing together and just had clean fun (Vol. 2, pp. 62, 63).</p> <p>Around the piano with Mom playing and everybody singing songs and dancing among ourselves just having clean family fun (Vol. 2, p. 63).</p>

TABLE 3

## SIBLING RELATIONS

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p>My relationship with my siblings was excellent. They respect me, I respect them. They look up to me to a certain extent, being the second one in the family. One person's problem is everybody's problem. We share everything. My sister's problem is my problem. My joy is my sister's joy (Vol. 1, pp. 26, 36).</p> <p><i>My children love one another. They play together and will do anything for each other. My children were normal. They fight. They play and had fun. They were very happy (Vol. 1, pp. 113, 190).</i></p>	<p>My sister and I are very close. We see things eye to eye. We enjoy different things. We are supportive of each other. We enjoy each other's company (Vol. 1, p. 132).</p> <p><i>They [sisters] keep one head (Vol. 1, p. 144).</i></p>	<p>Being the oldest, I always try to look out for them, I try to set the example (Vol. 2, p. 61).</p> <p><i>They support each other when there is a hurt or problem which provided a safe haven from evil including alcohol and drug problems (Vol. 2, p. 62).</i></p>

### Communication

Open communication, the third theme, proved to have had a positive effect in all three families between the parent(s) and youth. Durkheim (1950) emphasized that frequent communication between the youth and their parents resulted in less drug and alcohol involvement than the converse. John saw his mother as his buddy, thus he was able to "tell her anything" (Vol. 2, p. 5). Caroleen strongly supported this notion and stated, "I had them brainwashed so they hide nothing from me" (Vol. 2, p. 9). On the other hand, John said, "My father . . . he is not as open as my mother . . . I can tell him

certain things” (Vol. 2, p. 5).

Communication between Brenda and her parents progressed from a slightly closed to a more open experience, especially with her mother. “As a child I didn’t feel free to talk with mother. I only shared some things” (Vol. 2, p. 38). However, as Brenda grew she became more open to her mother. “Mom and I spent a lot of time talking with each other. We talked about life and about everything. I enjoyed the times we spent together” (Vol. 2, p. 39).

Maria conveyed similar sentiments, “My mother was always there for us. We talked a whole lot about spiritual things, social, and school issues and life in itself” (Vol. 2, p. 64). Kay mentioned that her children were free to discuss their concerns, while Lea encouraged her children to share anything with them as parents. Maria remarked that the positive guidance and open discussion may have protected them from “evil communication and involvement such as drugs. I go and get good advice and good feedback” (Vol. 2, p. 65). (See Table 4.)

### **Supervision**

Close parental supervision, where parents consistently monitor their children’s activities and interactions with others, according to Thornberry (1996), decreases the probability of a child using drugs. Table 5 exhibits the positive role that parental supervision played in protecting the youths from drug involvement. Caroleen’s husband dictated that she should not take the children to any cultural festivities. According to Caroleen, having lost a child after birth, her husband became very protective of the other

TABLE 4

## COMMUNICATION

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p>My father he would observe, he's not as open as my mother . . . firm but very caring. My father, I can tell him certain things (Vol. 2, p. 5).</p> <p>My mother is my friend my buddy, I can tell her anything (Vol. 2, p. 5).</p> <p>I don't hide nothing from my parents (Vol. 2, p. 5).</p> <p><i>John hide nothing at all from me. I gave them counsel but if I had anything they asked me. Then we would sit down and talk. . . . I had them brain washed so they hide nothing from me (Vol. 1, pp. 87, 89).</i></p>	<p>I was more comfortable communicating with my mom because my father was too busy. Mom was always there for us. Daddy spoke through Mom to us (Vol. 2, p. 39).</p> <p><i>My children spend more time with me than their father. . . . We talked and they were free enough to come to me with their concerns (Vol. 2, p. 38).</i></p> <p>Mom and I frequently talked about the issues of life . . . relationships, lifestyle, sex, the issue of drugs. . . . Mom spoke openly about it and its dangers (Vol. 2, p. 39).</p> <p>As a child I didn't feel free to talk with mother. I only shared things. . . . It doesn't make sense to hide cause Mom always find out (Vol. 2, pp. 38, 39).</p> <p>Distrust made me feel bad and was hurting my relationship with my parents especially my mother. This motivated me to try to gain parental trust and cease lying to get out of trouble. My parents trusted me as I grew up (Vol. 2, p. 38).</p>	<p>Well, when I was growing up it was sort of difficult. I was reserved because Mom was occupied with the circumstances surrounding the separation and divorce. So I always held back. I didn't want to burden her anymore with my own little petty problems. But after things settled I was able to share with her anything (Vol. 1, pp. 152, 153).</p> <p>We talked about spiritual things, social and school issues and life in itself. I can go to her and get good advice and good feedback (Vol. 2, pp. 64, 65).</p> <p><i>By the expressions my children show I knew things weren't right. . . . I told them to tell me every time something was wrong with them or bothered them. . . . I reminded them that I will know even if I'm the last to know. . . . They knew that this was a fact so they would choose to or at times reluctantly tell me (Vol. 2, p. 65).</i></p>

TABLE 5  
SUPERVISION

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p><i>Children should always be monitored under the eye of an adult. They played, but I keep an eye on them. I always watched and see what they are doing (Vol. 2, pp. 6, 8).</i></p> <p><i>I never let them go from door to door. I will not let them go on the street when they don't have any school. They have to stay on the porch. (Vol. 2, p. 8).</i></p> <p><i>We were instructed to stay off the streets and away from the bars and bad company (Vol. 2, p. 8).</i></p> <p><i>I never worked, I took care of them (Vol. 2, p. 3).</i></p> <p><i>My husband said, "I don't want you to carry the children driving." I was such an obedient wife that I didn't carry his children no where (Vol. 2, p. 6).</i></p>	<p><i>My children were allowed to play with the neighbor's children under my supervision (Vol. 2, p. 41).</i></p> <p><i>I wanted my children to be influenced positively. I know friends can be very influential. As children they were not allowed to go to their friends' home (Vol. 2, p. 41).</i></p> <p><i>My mother kept us or did not allow me to go certain places. At times you can't live with it then you realize you can't live without it. It was mom's way of keeping us from wrong including drug use (Vol. 2, p. 40).</i></p> <p><i>After my second child was born I stayed at home until she was ready for school. The older child had a responsible caretaker at an early age. I held a half-day job for a long time which allowed me the privilege to be home for my children . . . when they got home from school (Vol. 2, p. 40).</i></p> <p><i>I did stop check in the children's room and bags. . . . We did this to protect them from wrong such as drug use (Vol. 2, p. 41).</i></p>	<p><i>I kept a schedule concerning their daily activities. All they were involved in was under my scrutiny (Vol. 2, p. 65).</i></p> <p><i>I did not allow them to go any place that I did not know about or approve. I tried my best to keep my children off the road (Vol. 2, p. 65).</i></p> <p><i>My mother did not want any of us to fall prey to evil. She would send us out in pairs. This was another means of supervision (Vol. 2, p. 66).</i></p> <p><i>I spent a lot of time with them. I held more than one job working on different days so that I was able to be at home with the children. (Vol. 2, p. 65).</i></p>



children. Therefore, to grant her husband's wishes, Caroleen's supervision of her children was very strict. "Children should always be monitored and under the eye of an adult" (Vol. 2, p. 6). Similar to Kay and Lea, Caroleen used a metaphor in describing their ongoing supervision of their children. Children, according to the parents, "should not be left to wander on the road, and stay off the streets or off the road" (Vol. 2, p. 6).

According to Brenda, parental supervision was not always a comforting experience, but in her words, "It was Mom's way of keeping us from wrong including drug use" (Vol. 2, p. 40). John also noted that they were instructed to stay off the streets and away from the bars and bad company. Interestingly, all parents maintained a supervisory eye over their children even when they allowed them to play with their friends. Maria said, "It showed us that our mother cared for us and wanted to protect us from any possible destruction such as immorality and drinking and smoking" (Vol. 2, p. 66).

An interesting factor that was displayed in the families was that all three mothers spent a significant amount of time at home. This, they agreed, allowed them the opportunity to properly care for and supervise their children. Contrary to parents II and III, who scheduled their employment around their children's activities, parent I did not work outside the home.

### **Discipline**

Another internal theme that emerged from the data was discipline. Discipline is a common need of every individual. In both its preventive and corrective aspects, discipline is very important for character development (Habenicht & Murdoch, 1993). In a broad

sense, discipline refers to correcting, shaping, or refining the mental faculties or moral character of an individual (Carey, 1994). Discipline within the families was administered through a process which included instruction, warning, time out, deprivation, and when necessary, spanking. John, Brenda, and Maria perceived their mothers as the primary disciplinarians. For example, John expressed, "My parents taught us right from wrong. They did not hesitate to correct us and to warn us. I never enjoyed getting a whipping" (Vol. 2, p. 8). Beccaria (1967) argued that individuals will not violate social norms if doing so would cause pain. Brenda supported, "Mom was too strict. I was very much afraid of consequences--meaning punishment by my mother" (Vol. 2, p. 41). Maria shared a similar notion, "Mom never deprived us of religious activities and experiences. She kept us from attending social events or put us in the corner to stand when necessary. Mom got extremely strict" (Vol. 2, pp. 66, 67). Table 6 displays the parental styles of discipline.

According to Caroleen, discipline was her responsibility. "I didn't wait on the school to do it. I did not wait on the church. . . . I did it myself and they grow with it" (Vol. 2, p. 9). Lea, on the other hand, conveyed, "My children were forewarned about the dangers in society and what to avoid or stay away from. I will give them stripes as a last resort" (Vol. 2, p. 66). Kay argued that "Brenda saw me as being strict and that's what Brenda needed" (Vol. 2, p. 42).

TABLE 6

## DISCIPLINE

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p><i>I didn't wait on the school to do it. I didn't wait on the church to give them catechism. I did it myself and they grow with it (Vol. 2, p. 9).</i></p> <p>My mother was the primary caretaker. Her first method was to tell you right from wrong, follow-up was to speak to you and next put a tamarind whip on your butt (Vol. 2, p. 8).</p> <p>I remember my father spanking me twice with one blow each time and I never forgot it (Vol. 2, p. 9).</p>	<p><i>Brenda saw me as being strict. . . . That's what Brenda needed (Vol. 2, p. 42).</i></p> <p>Mom was too strict. Sometimes I saw her as an enemy. Spanking was it, but first she talked and warned us. When spanking did not work we were put in a corner to stand and face the wall. Mom deprived us from certain things such as TV (Vol. 2, p. 42).</p> <p>Dad did not believe in over-punishing his children. He used reasoning over spanking (Vol. 2, p. 42).</p> <p>As I look back I can say it was for my good. It kept me from doing wrong and getting involved in drug allurements. I was very much afraid of consequences-meaning punishment by my mother (Vol. 2, pp. 41, 43).</p>	<p><i>Punishment was for correction and age was not an issue for me (Vol. 2, p. 67).</i></p> <p><i>My children were forewarned about the dangers in society and what to avoid. . . . When they went contrary they were disciplined. I would give them stripes as a last resort. I deprived them of going places or events (Vol. 2, pp. 66, 67).</i></p> <p>Mom got extremely strict, yet in her strictness, she showed love, understanding, and, aah, patience (Vol. 2, p. 67).</p> <p>Discipline helped me to shun bad company, shun illegal things including drug use including drug use (Vol. 2, p. 68).</p>

## **Responsibility**

Emanating from the data of the families was the theme responsibility. According to Lickona (1992), responsibility is the orienting of oneself toward others. It emphasizes the commitment to care for individuals, fulfilling our assigned duties to make our community and world a better place. It is the active side of morality.

This theme reflected how the parents empowered their youth to take care of themselves and others in the home and the community. Habenicht and Murdoch (1993) suggest that an important way to aid children to develop morally is to have them learn responsibility. Such responsibility inculcates contributing to the welfare of others and being involved in activities that are not entirely self-directed. The children need to know that they are needed and that their contributions to the family and community are important. Each youth was allowed to be involved in meaningful and productive activities, which according to Durkheim (1950) and Hirschi (1969), contributed to the youths avoiding deviant behavior.

John credited his father for teaching him how to be responsible. This he asserted was accomplished through modeling and instruction. "My father knows how to work. . . . That has been a very great influence in my life, teaching me early responsibility" (Vol. 2, p. 11).

This notion of teaching responsibility at an early age was clearly displayed by Brenda's mother, Kay. "From an early age my children were given responsibilities" (Vol. 2, p. 43). Kay further stated that she provided her children "with a time line and made

them accountable” (Vol. 2, p. 43). Brenda and her sister did home chores like washing and hanging the clothes out to dry. Table 7 displays more information on the theme, responsibility.

TABLE 7  
RESPONSIBILITY

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p>My father knows how to work. . . . That has been a very great influence in my life, teaching me early responsibility (Vol. 2, p. 11).</p> <p>My father was a good role model for me. My father had all his children by my mother. If I wanted children and I love the person, I must marry. This for me is being responsible. He showed me how to work. He taught me to sacrifice today for tomorrow (Vol. 2, pp. 10, 11).</p>	<p><i>From an early age my children were given responsibilities. I gave them a time line and made them accountable (Vol. 2, p. 43).</i></p> <p><i>They shared chores in the home. One washed, the other hang the clothes out to dry. Doing so helped them to become productive and busy (Vol. 2, p. 68).</i></p>	<p>As I look back, I was a young child. It seemed to me as though I had developed earlier. I matured more than the average child (Vol. 2, p. 69).</p> <p>I realize that my mom needed my utmost support and my younger siblings will be looking up to me for example and even guidance (Vol. 2, p. 68).</p>

Compared to John and Brenda, who were given specific tasks and chores, Maria had added responsibilities. She was responsible for guiding and at times caring for her younger siblings. This she contended caused her to “mature earlier--and more than the average child” (Vol. 2, pp. 68, 69). The youth’s acceptance and demonstration of responsibility, according to Lea, “helped them to become productive and busy.”

### **Life's Satisfaction**

The theme life's satisfaction which emerged from the data refers to being satisfied with one's own possessions and belongings which were gained appropriately. It also meant not coveting what others had or acquired, which at times could lead to greed and compromising behavior. Durkheim (1950) insisted that the reason why people behave the way they do is a result of the way society is structured. If people are allowed to become an integral part of their community by earning an honest pay while working and contributing to society they would likely live by societal norms (Durkheim, 1950).

As a result of the decline in economic opportunities, drug trafficking has become an optional activity for minority youth to increase their wealth or social status (Bartollas, 1993). Mills (1990) highlighted that youth whose parents taught them appropriate attitudes that lead to success were less likely to become involved in drug use. Each family saw this as an important theme to teach their youth. The data revealed that the youths were satisfied with their possessions and were willing to work for their assets. In contrast to Brenda and Maria, John was the only youth who faced the temptation to receive material possessions and sex if he agreed to become involved with drug use and sales.

Caroleen counseled John to "make do with what he had and to live within his financial limitations. Don't look for no big mansion or car. You will get it in due time" (Vol. 2, p. 13). This lesson was learned by John at an early age and he was able to exercise it when he was confronted with the offer of a brand-new car. In actuality, the car was an invitation to use cocaine. "The fact that she used drugs kept me from becoming

involved with her. . . . When I refused the car and cocaine, she told me, “You are from the island and you are narrow-minded, but stupid with it” (Vol. 2, p. 12).

Kay unequivocally stated that she instructed her children to be content in order to keep them from craving “other things which could have led to drug involvement” (Vol. 2, p. 43). Brenda agreed stating that, “We learned to be satisfied with the little that we had” (Vol. 2, p. 43). See Table 8. Not being satisfied with one’s possessions appeared to be the downfall for many youth in St. Martin, as reflected in John’s statement, “This is one way why young men get involved in drug use” (Vol. 2, p. 13).

Lea “provided to meet their [her children] needs and taught them to be content and happy” (Vol. 2, p. 71) and she “didn’t want them to become involved with wrong people . . . doing wrong including drugs” (Vol. 2, p. 71). In support, Maria agreed stating, “Mom has left herself undone. . . . We did what was right so Mom would know we appreciate her” (Vol. 2, p. 71).

### External Relational Dynamics

The external relational dynamics related to the influences, associations, attachment, and impact the extended family members had on these youths’ non-drug involvement. Hirschi (1969) theorized that adolescents who form a positive bond with at least one person outside the family decreased the chances of drug use. This theme seemed to divide itself naturally into two subgroups, the negative and positive influences.

### **Negative Influences**

All families were exposed to negative influences of alcohol and drugs by either the grandparents, father, uncles, and/or cousin. Though these influences were negative in nature, their impact had a positive effect on the youths' decision to avoid drug use. Interestingly, however, the grandfather of family I and both grandparents of family II were alcoholics. Bernard (1993a, 1993b, 1993c) explained that some children who live in adverse circumstances such as parental alcoholism and criminality still grow up to lead successful and meaningful adult lives.

In John's case, the story of his grandfather's defeat under the influence of alcohol "was indeed sufficient" (Vol. 2, p. 18) to avoid the use of alcohol. John also witnessed his cousin's behavior under the influence of drugs. Brenda expressed that she was frightened by her grandparents' and uncles' behavior when they were under the influence of drugs and alcohol. She explained that her grandparents' behavior was "weird" (Vol. 2, p. 45) and that her uncles were always in conflict with the law. Maria's parents divorced as a result of her father's alcohol use. Her position seemed to have summed up the sentiment of each youth: "I was turned off by it. . . . I consciously chose to avoid alcohol and drugs" (Vol. 2, p. 72). Table 9 exhibits the negative influences surrounding each of the youth.



TABLE 8

## LIFE'S SATISFACTION

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p>When you get things, new car and money and things without working for it you can also get in trouble. This is one way why young men get involved in drug use (Vol. 2, p. 13).</p> <p><i>So what you have, make it do. God bless you with a decent job. Just take it little by little and you will make it. Don't look for no big mansion or car. You would get it in God's own time (Vol. 2, p. 13).</i></p> <p>When people need money and become desperate, they will sometimes resolve to drugs, by selling and using drugs to get money (Vol. 2, p. 11).</p> <p>Drugs was never appealing. It was always a turn off, I'll tell you. I had the opportunity to sell drugs without using it and have money, and I chose not to (Vol. 1, p. 66).</p>	<p>Our family was small, but we made the best of it. We didn't have everything but we made what we had do (Vol. 2, p. 43).</p> <p><i>I taught them to be content with what they have so they'll have no reason to crave other things which could have led to drug involvement (Vol. 2, p. 43).</i></p> <p>We learned to be satisfied with the little we had. For the purpose of being home, we sacrificed economically (Vol. 2, p. 43).</p>	<p>Mom has left herself undone so we got what we needed. This taught us to be satisfied. We did what was right so mom would know that we appreciate her (Vol. 2, p. 71).</p> <p><i>I provided to meet their needs and taught them to be content and happy. I didn't want them to have any reason to become involved with wrong people in order to get things and turn to doing wrong including drugs (Vol. 2, p. 71).</i></p> <p>We were faced with the challenge of making what we had do. It was not an easy thing to do, but we did. Difficult times brought us closer as a family and helped us to appreciate what little we had (Vol. 2, p. 70).</p>

TABLE 9

## NEGATIVE INFLUENCES

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p>Grandfather began drinking alcohol as a result of a cousin of his who also drank rum and alcohol. This was not a good decision 'cause he got in trouble with the law and beaten by men whom he was able to defeat when he was a decent and moral man (Vol. 2, p. 17).</p> <p>My grandmother told me of my grandfather who was defeated under the influence of alcohol. This is it. The fact that if it [alcohol use] did him that, I didn't want to be like my grandfather. Never saw him, but my grandmother told us about him. To hear was indeed sufficient (Vol. 2, p. 18).</p> <p>My cousin T and I were very close. I came home from school . . . and saw him in the state he was. I think that was the day he started using drugs. . . . He felt bad when I saw him. . . . He figured he could stop taking drugs any time. . . . He used to try to convince me. But he didn't stop until he was down to day's toenail. . . . We found him hiding because he was ashamed. This made me strong and determined not to get involved in drugs (Vol. 2, pp. 18, 19).</p>	<p>My grandfather and grandmother were alcoholics. . . . I was afraid. It was scary. They behaved different under the influence of alcohol. I didn't like it (Vol. 2, p. 44).</p> <p>I realized that my grandmother was confused and has no understanding—a motivator to abstain from alcohol (Vol. 2, pp. 44, 45).</p> <p>They [uncles] used drugs and were always in trouble with the law. This influenced me not to even try drugs. I loved my uncles but I didn't like what they did and how they behaved (Vol. 2, p. 45)</p>	<p>Alcohol was part of my father's lifestyle. His drunken behavior would disturb the peace at home. I saw what damage alcohol did and didn't like the way the use of alcohol made him (Vol. 2, pp. 71, 72).</p> <p>I cannot understand how my father succumbed to peer pressure and alcohol and allowed so-called friends to destroy him. I was turned off by it. My father's alcoholic lifestyle affected me negatively. So I was determined not to be like my father. I consciously chose to avoid alcohol and drugs (Vol. 2, pp., 71, 72).</p>

### **Positive Influences**

Though there were negative influences exhibited in all of the three families, the portrait was different for the positive influences. Whereas the grandfather of family I and the grandparents of family II were negative influences, the grandmother of family I and the grandmother of family III were positive role models for the youths' drug avoidance.

Youth who establish a positive bond with at least one person outside the immediate family as positive role models, such as grandparents, are more likely to avoid drug involvement (Werner & Smith, 1982). This was portrayed positively by family I and family III. Both Caroleen and Lea concerted that their mothers, the youths' grandmothers, served as "a catalyst for good" (Vol. 2, p. 72) against societal ills. The grandmothers in these two families taught the children right from wrong. John expressed that his grandmother "provided the foundation for my noninvolvement in drugs" (Vol. 2, p. 18). Maria embraced this notion as she declared, "Granny had a positive influence on us from small" (Vol. 2, p.72). This, Maria asserted, helped her "avoid the wrong including doing drugs and alcohol" (Vol. 2, p. 73). See Table 10.

### **Summary**

In summary, this section portrayed how the themes within the relational dynamics category functioned within the immediate families in preventing the youth from becoming involved with drugs. The positive or negative relational dynamics of their external families were also themes which also aided in steering these youth from drug or alcohol use. St. Pierre et al. (1997) supports this finding, suggesting that adolescents who have the

TABLE 10

## POSITIVE INFLUENCES

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p><i>She transmitted her heritage and background to them. My mother influenced my children in a good fashion (Vol. 2, pp. 16. 17).</i></p> <p>All my moral values came from my grandmother. Anything I did as a child and do, I always put first-What will my grandmother say? What would she have done? (Vol. 2, p. 15).</p> <p>My grandmother provided the foundation for my non-involvement in drugs. Grandmother would say, "Cards and dice are the devil's advice and alcohol is the devil's food (Vol. 2, pp. 15, 16).</p> <p>My grandmother has impacted my life positively (Vol. 2, p. 15).</p>		<p><i>My children's grandmother was a catalyst for good. She taught my children right from wrong (Vol. 2, p. 72).</i></p> <p>Granny taught us right from wrong and she punished us when we did wrong. She was very encouraging and expected the best behavior from us. Granny had a positive influence on us from small (Vol. 2, p. 73).</p> <p>She [Granny] helped me to do what was right and avoid the wrong including doing drugs and alcohol (Vol. 2, p. 73).</p> <p>Granny helped me to be what I am today (Vol. 2, p. 72).</p>

following factors-parental bonding, high parental involvement, family history, and disapproval of drug use-tend not to become involved in drugs.

On the contrary, Flewelling and Bauman (1990) believed that youth from family structures such as single-parent were more at-risk for drug use than youth from two-parent families. Hoffman (1995) asserted and this study confirmed that single- or step-parent families are not automatically at risk for drug use. Instead, it is the family dynamics

within a single-, step-, or two-parent family that affects substance use or nonuse. My study revealed that the positive relationship between the youth and their families served as a motivator for non-drug use. Similarly, the negative relationship between the youth and their families discouraged and frightened all three youth from becoming involved with drugs.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS–PART II

#### **Family Focus Under the Lens**

The cross-case analysis continues as focus is placed on the environmental and religious dynamics and how they operated within the families in helping the youth to avoid drug involvement. According to Bernard (1990), when youth know that their home, school personnel, and community members (both social and religious) have high expectations of them, they tend to avoid drug use. Furthermore, McBride et al. (1996) have found that those in the substance abuse prevention and treatment fields have come to realize the role of communities of religious faith in prevention. The following text and tables furnish and elaborate information within each theme.

#### **Environmental Dynamics**

Friends, neighbors, and school are themes within the environmental dynamics. These themes appeared to have made impressions on the youths' non-drug use. Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986) and Garmezy (1985) established that there are external support systems such as peers, school, communities, and neighborhoods that may protect the youth against drug use in addition to the youth's immediate family.

## Friends

The first aspect of the environmental dynamics demonstrated how friends buffered the youth from drug allurements. Interestingly, the youth saw their friends as respecting them and their choice not to use drugs or alcohol. This, however, did not occur without negative peer pressure. This finding is in keeping with Fleming and Manson (1990) who maintained that the ability to make good decisions about personal responsibility and to act independently of others' influences, such as peers, served as deterrents to youth drug involvement.

John mentioned that he was able to warn his friends about the negative effects of drugs. "My friends have me up there because they appreciate you [him] until they become conscious that you are not following the same path they are following. . . . Then they say, he [John] is not that cool" (Vol. 1, p. 6). According to Maria, "My closest friends respected me in the sense that they respected my religious beliefs" (Vol. 2, p. 75). Maria recalled when her friends said, "Well, Maria, you can't do this . . . and this has alcohol in it. It's not for you" (Vol. 2, p. 76). Maria continued, "My friends later on admired me" (Vol. 2, p. 76). Brenda's friends, on the other hand, were important to her. Yet, she stated she was forced to choose "other friends who would not tease or pressure me to drink alcoholic drink, rather made me feel more comfortable around them" (Vol. 2, p. 47). Hardesty and Kirby (1995) agreed that teens seemed to shun selecting friends who use drugs if their families are actively religious.

TABLE 11

## FRIENDS

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p>My friends have me up there because they appreciate you until they become conscious that you are not following the same path they are following . . . Then they say he is not all that cool (Vol. 1, p. 6).</p> <p>I've met girls who say, "How about smoking a joint. It's gonna make you feel good." O.K. smoking a joint. . . . I would be going into something that is wrong so I don't do it. And even if I had done it I would know that I went against my mother's will (Vol. 1, p. 21).</p> <p>Young boys, younger than I am, I would miss them in the bush looking for crab and when I do catch up with them I smell smoke. They try and hide it from me. . . . They would offer it to me. I said, you hid it from me, now your offering it to me. What good do cigarettes do for you? Nothing! I say, 'Hey, cigarette give you cancer; you're going to have a stinking mouth from a young age' (Vol. 2, p. 20).</p>	<p>My peers were important to me. I could relate to them. They understood me. They shared the same concerns and ideas. However, I made decisions without them (Vol. 2, p. 46).</p> <p>They try to encourage me to use things and drink things that I shouldn't, but I didn't because I was fearful of being found out by my mother (Vol. 2, p. 47). My schoolmates made fun of my religious beliefs (Vol. 1, p. 137).</p> <p>I was taught to think and live up to certain standards. I try to avoid friends who did not hold the same view as I do. I chose friends who would not tease or pressure me to drink alcoholic drink, rather made me feel more comfortable around them (Vol. 2, p. 47).</p>	<p>My closest friends respected me in the sense that they respected my religious beliefs. When I'm around them they did not swear. They would go out of their way and wherever possible schedule the event on days that were not conflicting with my religious beliefs so that I was able to attend (Vol. 2, p. 75).</p> <p>I responded, 'I don't drink alcohol beverages and even though it may not have much alcohol in it, I still not drinking it no matter who knows or don't know (Vol. 2, p. 76).</p> <p>I felt left out I must admit; my friends later on admired me being able to stand up for what I believe and preached (Vol. 2, p. 76).</p> <p>Even though my friends it was okay to use the champagne since to them it only had a little alcohol . . . I also knew that my father is alcoholic and I didn't like the use of alcohol made him (Vol. 2, p. 76).</p>



TABLE 11—*Continued.*

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p><i>The different company of children that never listen to their parent, they got children that fool their parents and say they going here and when you look they gone down there. So I feel if I could keep my children close and not let them hang out with all kind of company [friends] they would not pick up the bad behaviors (Vol. 1, p. 100).</i></p>	<p>At school . . . they call me Mommy, mommy girl. This impacted my self-esteem (Vol. 2, p. 46).</p> <p><i>I know friends could be very influential. I did not want friends to mar or destroy what I taught them. So their friends were selected. Well behaved and well mannered (Vol. 1, p. 143).</i></p>	<p>Any time they had any party after that one they say, "Well, Maria, you can't do this and Maria you can't do that . . . and this has alcohol in it, it's not for you (Vol. 2, p. 76).</p> <p><i>I never wanted them to attend parties with friends where there'll be dancing and doing other bad things. . . . If I saw something I did not like, I would give them warning to avoid such kind of company [friends] (Vol. 1, p. 176).</i></p>

When all three youth were confronted by their friends to use alcohol and drugs, they took their parents into consideration. John did not want to go against his mother's will. Brenda was fearful of being discovered by her mother. Maria did not like what her alcoholic father did to her. The portrait of parental concern and friends' influence on their non-drug use is further displayed in Table 11. Mc Bride et al. (1996) support that youth avoid drug use for reasons such as being in control of one's life, unwillingness to disappoint parents, and fear of parental reaction.

### Neighborhood

Surfacing from the data was the theme neighborhood as perceived by the informants. As shown in Table 12, all three youths claimed that their neighborhood was drug-free with no apparent societal problems. John posited that, as a little child,

drug talk was not an issue. Initially, both Brenda and Maria agreed that their community/neighborhood was relatively clean and friendly during their early childhood. As time went on, however, the neighborhood began to deteriorate.

In 1995, Coombs and Ziedonis reported that Blount and Dembo (1984) found that physical environment per se is not the important factor in deciding youth drug or non-drug use, rather, it is how the youth interact with the people in it and how they perceive those people in relation to themselves (p. 412). Across the families, both youth and parents explained that other children were allowed to come to the youths' home to play, primarily in family I and family II. Lea argued, "My children were not always in a protective environment" (Vol. 2, p. 73). Maria agreed, "We had to be selective with whom we associated" (Vol. 2, p. 73) within her neighborhood. Lea's word seemed to echo the sentiments of the other two parents. "The children in our neighborhood were rude and disrespectful. I tried to shield my children from peer pressure" (Vol. 2, p. 73). Table 12 elaborates on the influences from their neighborhoods. In agreement with Lea, Kay confirmed that, "as the children grew, our neighborhood became drug infested. Youth around us," she added, "were involved in drugs before our eyes" (Vol. 1, p. 146). Both John and Maria described similar experiences. According to John, "I became aware of drugs when I was about 9 years old" (Vol. 2, p. 18). This was unequivocally supported by Maria, who said, "As I grew, I observed individuals cursing, using drugs, smoking, and drinking beer" (Vol. 2, p. 74). This study concurs with other research studies in that the parents did not allow the youth to interact freely with the neighborhood. Hence, they were sheltered from the drug influence in their neighborhoods.

TABLE 12

## NEIGHBORHOOD

Family I	Family II	Family III
<p>When I was a little boy we never really spoke of drugs (Vol. 2, p. 18).</p> <p>I became aware of drugs when I was about 9 years old (Vol. 2, p. 18).</p> <p><i>Some of the other children would come to play with my children. Who did not play good, had to go home. . . . They didn't have guidance (Vol. 2, p. 21).</i></p> <p><i>All I did was mind the children. I really didn't care what my neighbors say. The neighbors would watch me and see how I care for my children and some would say I think I proud (Vol. 1, pp. 82, 83).</i></p>	<p>Our community was not very violent, average compared to others. It was a clean environment (Vol. 2, p. 46).</p> <p>As the children grew, our neighborhood became drug infested. Youth around us were involved in drugs before our eyes (Vol. 1, p. 146).</p> <p><i>Neighbors' children were allowed to come to our house to play with my children (Vol. 1, p. 145).</i></p> <p>Our neighbors' children came to our place to play with us. We couldn't go by them (Vol. 2, p. 46).</p> <p><i>News about drug-infested candy began to spread in our neighborhood. I warned my children to be careful (Vol. 1, p. 146).</i></p>	<p>In my childhood days, my neighborhood was a friendly one. . . . We gave fruits and they [neighbors] in turn did the same (Vol. 2, p. 73).</p> <p>As a child I could not see the infiltration of different things, but as I got older I saw bad stuff here and there coming into our neighborhood. As I grew I observed individuals cursing, using drugs, smoking, and drinking beer. I did not like the way these youth were going. I had no desire to follow them (Vol. 2, p. 74).</p> <p>We had to be selective with whom we associated. There were certain neighbors we could sit and speak with (Vol. 2, p. 73).</p> <p><i>The children in our neighborhood were rude and disrespectful. My children were not always in a protective environment. I tried to shield my children from peer pressure (Vol. 2, p. 73).</i></p>

## School

School played a major role in each youth's drug avoidance either from a negative or positive point of view. The parents' investment in their children's academic performance incited the teachers' interest and respect for these students. Consequently, the teachers expected appropriate behavior from these students even when, as in John's case, the teachers themselves were engaging in deviant activities. Thornberry (1996) postulated that youth who have a commitment to school and an attachment to teachers do not become easily involved in drug use.

For example, Caroleen shared, "I go to their school and the teachers are telling me that now he [John] is getting so much high marks in school and the teachers are just proud of him" (Vol. 1, p. 88). Kay added, "I went to their school to check on my children's progress and school programs" (Vol. 1, p. 145). As a result of the relationship Kay established with her children's teachers, she related that "sometimes their teachers who were concerned will inform us of school incidences" (Vol. 1, p. 144). Lea shared similar sentiments regarding her interaction with her children's teachers: "I worked along with their teachers with them. I didn't leave everything for their teachers to do" (Vol. 2, p. 74). Lea's posture encouraged the teachers to keep her informed concerning her children. "The teachers kept me informed about my children's behavior and performance" (Vol. 2, p. 74).

All three youth received drug education either from home, school, church, or a combination of two or three of these sources. Brenda and Maria's school provided programs that educated and warned them about drug use. Table 13 displays how the schools exposed Brenda and Maria to the dangers of drug use.

In contrast, John had a different experience because he was exposed to and surrounded by teachers who were involved in drug use. “Teachers during lunch break would light up a marijuana joint and just share it up with some of the boys in the class” (Vol. 2, p. 22). John declared, however, that “they never asked or offered me marijuana because they respected me and my parents” (Vol. 2, p. 22). In addition, John emphasized that “the powerful knowledge of the negativity that I can be a victim of or enveloped in because of using drugs is what has helped me” (Vol. 1, p. 44).

School also provided the youths opportunities to become involved in meaningful activities. Hirschi (1969) maintained that such involvement takes time that might be otherwise spent in deviant pursuits. One such activity was sports. Brenda capitalized on this opportunity and stated that it was beneficial: “I was involved in sports. Doing this helped to keep my mind and body fit” (Vol. 2, p. 47). Brenda’s mother supported, “Positive involvement keep you from negative activities like using drugs” (Vol. 2, p. 48).

Maria, on the other hand, was not involved in sports but was chosen with other students to be a school monitor and a school representative. Maria’s contribution to her school by providing others with a positive example of rightful living as supported by Hirschi (1969) was also beneficial to her. “Being a monitor in my school helped me to keep on track. I had to live up to what I enforced by avoiding evil activities like alcohol” (Vol. 2, p. 75). Table 13 shows Brenda’s and Maria’s participation in school extracurricular activities.

TABLE 13

## SCHOOL

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p><i>I go to their school and the teachers are telling me that now he [John] is getting so much high marks in school and the teachers are just so proud of him (Vol. 1, p. 88).</i></p> <p><i>They would come home from school in the afternoon time. I show them how important their lesson was to them (Vol. 1, p. 88).</i></p> <p>The teachers invited the students to smoke. . . . They never asked or offered me marijuana because they respected me and my parents (Vol. 2, p. 22).</p> <p><i>They could have been led away by other people, but they had limited opportunity because I would put them on the bus in the morning and in the afternoon I would be in the road waiting (Vol. 1, p. 103).</i></p>	<p><i>I went to their school to check on my children's progress and school programs. Sometime their teachers who were concerned will inform us of school incidences (Vol. 1, pp. 144, 145).</i></p> <p>Mom is my biggest motivation. She always encourages me to do all that I can and to do my best. When Mom came to school I was happy to see how Mom was when she got my report (Vol. 2, p. 48).</p> <p>Our school warned us about the dangers of drugs. Drug education was presented at our school assembly (Vol. 2, p. 47).</p> <p>I was involved in sports. Doing this helped to keep my mind and body fit (Vol. 2, p. 47).</p> <p>I enjoyed myself and saw such positive ways to have clean fun and use my time wisely (Vol. 2, p. 47).</p> <p><i>Positive involvement keep you from negative activities like using drugs. When you don't have things to do the Devil will help you (Vol. 2, p. 47, 48).</i></p>	<p><i>I worked along with their teachers with them. Their teachers made sure that they behaved and stayed out of trouble (Vol. 2, p. 74).</i></p> <p><i>I used to be teacher and guide to my children. I helped them with the home work (Vol.2, p. 74). I didn't leave everything for the teachers to do (Vol. 1, p. 178).</i></p> <p>My teachers spoke a lot about the drug problem at school. They would warn us about the dangers of drugs . . . and to avoid getting involved (Vol. 2, p. 74).</p> <p>We were role models for good behaviors so that others in our school could model after us (Vol. 2, p. 75).</p> <p>Being a monitor in my school helped me to keep on track. I had to live up to what I enforced by avoiding evil activities like alcohol (Vol. 2, p. 75).</p>

TABLE 13—*Continued.*

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
In school they would go as far as to smoke and also in class. Teachers during lunch break would light up a marijuana joint and just share it up with some of the boys in the class (Vol. 2, p. 22).		

In contrast, Caroleen did not allow John to be involved in extracurricular activities in school. Hence, John went straight home after school. He was not involved in school extracurricular activities. Caroleen explained, “They had limited opportunity because I would put them on the bus in the morning and in the afternoon I would be in the road waiting for the bus” (Vol. 1, p. 103). Caroleen’s action is in support of Coombs and Ziedonis (1995) since she restricted her children from becoming involved in after-school activities that may have exposed them to societal ills including drugs.

Parental involvement with the teachers appeared to assist in transmission of the parents’ beliefs and expectations, particularly the parents’ non-drug stance. The youths partaking in school extracurricular activities seemed to provide an additional hedge against deviant activities such as drug and alcohol use.

There were many influences outside the youths’ home which positively or negatively affected all three youths’ decisions to avoid drugs. Each youth recalled being offered licit or illicit drugs by their peers. They all declined the pressure from their peers to use drugs by considering their parents’ reactions. As a result of their non-drug stance, many of their friends respected them.

Another environmental influence was the youths' neighborhood. Each youth described his/her neighborhood as clean and friendly, having no concerns and awareness for drugs. Their parents, on the other hand, perceived the neighborhood as unsafe for their children. The mothers were selective with whom they allowed their children to play and they were only allowed to play with these friends at their own homes. Their mothers explained that the children in the neighborhood were disrespectful and rude. As the children matured, they began to see drug use in their neighborhood. In fact, John, became aware of drugs around the age of 9.

The youths' mothers also monitored their academic progress in school. The relationship the mothers developed with their teachers roused the teachers' interest and respect for their students. In John's case, the teachers' respect for John kept them from offering him drugs. For Brenda, school provided positive activities like sports. For Maria, school allowed her to be a role model to others.

Friends, neighbors, and schools were all themes that affected the youths' decisions to avoid drugs. Other themes that played out in the youth's non-drug use that were relevant both to the environment and the home were the religious influences of the church and home.

### **Religious Dynamics**

The religious dynamics within this study were categorized into two groups. The two subgroups were internal religious dynamics and external religious dynamics. Similar to this study, Burkett and White (1974) found that religiosity had a moderately strong inverse relationship between marijuana and alcohol use.



### Internal Religious Dynamics

The internal religious dynamics group refers to the themes which functioned within the family from a family and personal perspective. These themes include family devotion, prayer, values transmission, and religious commitment.

#### **Family Devotion**

Parents are the primary agents for the children's socialization and for transmitting to them the social norms of moral and religious attitudes. Simmons (1983) asserted that the religious symbols, traditions, and practices of parental beliefs were learned in the most enduring way through normal religious practices within the home, such as family worship.

The first aspect of the internal religious dynamics described the families' worships, commonly known as devotions. In a research study conducted by Dudley et al. (1987) on a Protestant denomination, non-alcohol use was mostly found to be connected to family worship and personal devotion. This spiritual exercise or activity was an integral part in all three families. John expressed, "Our home always had prayer and God. We would sing and pray every day" (Vol. 2, p. 22). Caroleen shared, "First thing I do every night before I go to sleep is make all of us sit down and say our prayers to the Lord" (Vol. 2, p. 22). Maria asserted that family worship was "a way of life . . . real and meaningful" (Vol. 2, p. 78). Brenda stated, "We learn to take care of our bodies, to live right, and to avoid evil, including drugs" (Vol. 1, p. 139). Table 14 exhibits the experiences and other benefits of family worship.

TABLE 14

## FAMILY DEVOTION

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p>Our home always had prayer and God. We would sing and pray every day. First thing I do every night before I go to sleep, I make all of us sit down and say our prayers to the Lord (Vol. 2, p. 22).</p> <p><i>At least once a week we had prayer meeting under the tamarind tree, singing and praying together (Vol. 2, p. 22).</i></p> <p>We grow strong in the Lord and learn to do the right and leave the wrong (Vol. 2, p. 22).</p> <p><i>When we want to live right, I tell them from small we have to follow God's commandments (Vol. 2, p. 24).</i></p>	<p>Our family worship was regular. Family worship has impacted me positively. We discussed about God, life, we pray together. Family unity was a key factor in family worship (Vol. 2, p. 50).</p> <p><i>At times I didn't have to call them for worship. They came habitually (Vol. 2, p. 51).</i></p> <p>In worship we learn to take care of our bodies, to live right, and to avoid evil, including drugs (Vol. 2, p. 50).</p> <p><i>We taught them the Ten Commandments—provided them a level of guidance and security in the right paths (Vol. 2, p. 49).</i></p>	<p>We had devotion in the morning and sometimes in the evening. Mom tried to make devotion a way of life. Worship was real and meaningful (Vol. 2, p. 78).</p> <p>These were special and rewarding experiences. Devotion was for us fun time. It was not a tedious chore, but a happy time for the family as we spent time with God (Vol. 2, p. 78).</p> <p><i>It was a means of building character. . . . I lived it and set the example. This helped them know what God wanted for them (Vol. 2, p. 78).</i></p>

### Prayer

A study by Poloma and Pendelton (1989) stated that prayer could be multidimensional, mediative, ritualistic—relying on reciting prayer or using set prayers, petitionary, or colloquial—holding a conversation with the Deity. Prayer experiences as described by Hood, Morris, and Watson (1989) are influenced by an individual's religious orientation. Regardless of a person's cultural background, Brown (1968) found that the appropriateness of prayer did not relate to age but was influenced by

adult attitudes conveyed in religious teachings. Any situation that may cause personal danger was considered to be the most suited for prayer by the adolescents in this study.

Kay echoed the sentiments of the other two parents: "As parents we prayed for our children. Prayer has always been a stabilizer in our family life. It was a shield of protection from bad things like drugs and other sins" (Vol. 2, p. 51).

This study supports these finding regarding prayer. Prayer as portrayed in Table 15 was habitual and personal to each family. The study conducted by Dudley et al. (1987) also attributed that non-alcohol use with personal prayer. In speaking about her children, Caroleen attested, "I will do everything to keep them safe and protect them from destruction and wrong things like stealing and drugs. I committed all my children to God in prayer" (Vol. 2, p. 23).

The psychological origins of prayer are associated with the social and cognitive development of young children (Childs, 1983). Brenda expressed her sentiments of what her parents' prayers meant to her. "My parents' prayer for me reminded me that they care and that God cares for me" (Vol. 2, p. 51). Maria and her mother were no different from the other two families in regard to prayer. "When I saw my mom praying and heard her prayers for guidance in her life and for us, I would say I want to be like Mom. Mom's prayers touched my life" (Vol. 2, p. 79).

Lea further explained, "Prayer helped to make my children prove God for themselves and therefore they realized the reality of His existence. By doing this they built a loving relationship with God who shielded them from wrong including alcohol and drug influence" (Vol. 2, p. 79).

TABLE 15

## PRAYER

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p><i>When this happened to me, the the child was such a gift and I know my prayers was answered because the doctors tell me this only leave to God that I could have a child. . . . I committed all my children to God in prayer (Vol. 2, p. 23).</i></p> <p>Prayer is very important because I know I was being prayed for constantly (Vol. 2, p. 25).</p> <p>Prayer connects us with God. My mother depended on God so I grew up with that consciousness always (Vol. 2, p. 23).</p> <p><i>I will do everything to keep them safe and protect them from destruction and wrong things like stealing and drugs (Vol. 2, p. 23).</i></p>	<p><i>From the time they were small I prayed for them (Vol. 2, p. 51).</i></p> <p>To hear my parents pray for me made me feel connected to God and that He was there for me in time of need (Vol. 2, p. 51).</p> <p>My parents' prayer for me reminded me that they care and that God cares for me (Vol. 2, p. 51).</p> <p><i>As parents we prayed for our children. Prayer has always been a stabilizer in our family life. It was a shield of protection from bad things like drugs and other sins (Vol. 2, p. 51).</i></p>	<p>When I saw my mom praying and heard her prayers for guidance in her life and for us I would say I want to be like mom. Mom's prayers touched my life (Vol. 2, p. 79).</p> <p>Her strength inspires me. I know she got her strength from Christ. My mom was my role model (Vol. 2, p. 79).</p> <p><i>Prayer helped to make my children prove God for themselves and therefore they realized the reality of His existence. By doing so they built a loving relationship with God who shielded them from wrong including alcohol and drug influence (Vol. 2, p. 79).</i></p>

### Values Transmission

Piaget (1965) stated that “the home continues to be the base from which values are strengthened or weakened throughout the child’s life, even as other influences take over from time to time as the child grows and matures” (p. 314).

The next feature of internal religious dynamics is the values the youth adapted and received from their parents through instruction and modeling. White (1948) noted that

children imitate their parents; hence great care should be taken to give them correct models. Parents who are kind and polite at home, while at the same time they are firm and decided, will see the same traits manifested in their children. If they are upright, honest, and honorable, their children will be quite likely to resemble them in these particulars. (pp. 319-320)

In support of this view, Garner and Stein (1998) conducted a study on the influence of families’ values—primarily mothers as the primary caretaker—and adolescent behaviors provides support to this study. They found positive and significant correlations between the values of mothers and their teenage children, which suggested an intergenerational transmission of values rather than evidence of a generation gap in values. The study also found that the greatest risk factor for problem behaviors by adolescents was the lack of commitment to meaningful values.

Each parent sought to teach their youth morals and values that would enable them to take a positive stand against societal ills. The importance of parental religious traditions and degrees of religiosity as found by Perkins (1985) largely determines the traditions and commitments of their youth, hence influencing their decision not to use drugs.

John not only said that his parents educated him about the difference between right and wrong, as presented in Table 16, but that they demonstrated a positive lifestyle. "My parents modeled spiritual living so I learn to live God's way and stay away from things like drugs" (Vol. 2, p. 25). Caroleen confirmed without reservation, "I don't keep no kind of alcohol in this house because I don't want ar' you grow up drinking. . . . To be truthful, I have no problem with the two boys where alcohol is concerned. . . . They are decent and respectful" (Vol. 1, pp. 97, 98).

Brenda also claimed that her mother positively influenced her to live appropriately, saying, "I consciously and naturally adopted the same or similar pattern of lifestyle" (Vol. 2, p. 48). Even though Brenda credited both her parents to have been involved spiritually in her life, she pronounced, "My mother influenced my moral life to be respectful no matter what" (Vol. 2, p. 48).

Kay agreed, "My children are respectful, honest, caring, and loving" (Vol. 2, p. 48). She recalled an experience which demonstrated that her children had internalized the values she had given them. The children went to work with her. Becoming tired and thirsty they asked for something to quench their thirst. She responded, "I tell them there is only coke or alcoholic drink. They knew that they didn't use coke and alcohol, hence they stayed away from the refrigerator" (Vol. 2, p. 50).

Maria's experience was similar to John's and Brenda's concerning the positive influence that her mother Lea had in transmitting values to her. "My mom was my role model. The values that I've learned growing up I determined in my mind that I wanted to be the kind of person that my mom was so I've shunned bad company, shunned illegal things" (Vol. 2, pp. 77, 78). In addition, Burkett (1993) found that youth who

select friends who do not engage in alcohol use had parents who were strongly religious. Table 16 exhibits Lea's statement that her children's "attitude and behavior and being responsible and respectable" demonstrating internalization of values (Vol. 2, p. 77).

This study confirms Lorch and Hughes's (1985) study in which they used six different measures of religiousness in testing a large sample of adolescents from 11 to 16 years of age. Drug use or avoidance appeared to be due to internalized values rather than church ideology or peer pressures.

### **Religious Commitment**

Religious commitment refers to the youths' personal relationship to God. All three youth deemed their relationship with God as important and meaningful. This, to a great extent, was a direct influence from their parents' religiosity. Referring to parents and their religious influence on their youth, White (1948) maintained that if parents modeled a lifestyle of reverence to God and they participated in active worship exercises, their children influenced by this lifestyle will likely do the same. In a research study, Burkett (1993) found that parents' religious commitment helped youth to shun alcohol by helping them develop their own strong religious commitment. Simmons (1993) contended that foundational attitudes toward life and existence were one aspect of religion, and the fundamental attitude of trust and happiness learned in early childhood within the family led in later years to personal religious commitment.

John asserted that his parents "modeled spiritual living, so I learn to live God's way and stay away from things like drugs." John believed that having a relationship

TABLE 16

## VALUES TRANSMISSION

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p>I know how my parents brought me up and . . . they taught me right from wrong . . . and I should keep away from places that would put me in trouble. . . . They knew that their teachings were accepted by me (Vol. 2, p. 15).</p> <p>My father to my knowledge never swear, he never drank rum [liquor] and he never ran women. My parents modeled spiritual living so I learn to live God's way and stay away from things like drugs (Vol. 2, p. 25).</p> <p><i>I don't keep no kind of alcohol in this house because I don't want ar' you to grow up drinking for when you start drinking from small you can never stop</i> (Vol. 2, p. 14).</p> <p><i>To be truthful, I have no problem with the two boys where alcohol is concerned. My family are very obedient children up to now. They are decent and respectful</i> (Vol. 2, p. 14).</p>	<p>Both my parents were very much involved spiritually in my life. They conduct themselves decently and with a high level of pride and dignity. My mother influenced my moral life to be respectful no matter what (Vol. 2, p. 48).</p> <p><i>I taught them to be respect all people. Having manners was key in their moral development. They learn to obey and do what is right</i> (Vol. 2, p. 49).</p> <p>My mother was a very religious person. She positively influenced me. As a result I consciously and naturally adopted the same or similar pattern of lifestyle (Vol. 2, p. 48).</p> <p><i>My children are respectful, honest, caring, and loving. Their behavior in life and their relationship with God and me is evident of this fact</i> (Vol. 2, p. 48).</p>	<p>The values that I've learned growing up I determined in my mind that I wanted to be the kind of person that my mom was. I, myself, have learned to be a patient and understanding person. This has carried me a far way in life. I learned to be responsible and stay away from trouble including alcohol (Vol. 2, pp. 77, 78).</p> <p>To my knowledge and her lifestyle, I never saw her drinking. This is one of the things that I admire about my mother. My mom was my role model (Vol. 2, p. 77).</p> <p><i>By the way my children live, I know they have observed me carefully. Their attitude and behavior and being responsible and respectable tell me that my children have adopted the values I have modeled and given to them</i> (Vol. 2, p. 77).</p>



TABLE 16—*Continued.*

FAMILY 1	FAMILY 2	FAMILY 3
	<i>They will ask for something to drink . . . I tell them there is only coke or alcoholic drink . . . They knew that they don't use coke and alcohol, hence they stay away from the refrigerator (Vol. 2, p. 50).</i>	

with God as the primary focus in his life protected him from deviant activities such as drugs. Hence, his lifestyle displayed this commitment. “I don’t look to do nothing bad I got the greatest man [God] on my side” (Vol. 1, p.25).

Brenda’s religious conviction was coined in similar words to John’s. Table 17 exhibits how Brenda’s parents’ spiritual involvement influenced her religious commitment. She stated that her speech and lifestyle illustrated her religious commitment. “One thing that will show that I am committed spiritually is my conversation. I live according to God and His Word [The Bible]. I didn’t do drugs. I do what is right. I am a Christian by lifestyle” (Vol. 2, p. 49). Kay confirmed Brenda’s religious commitment because “even in my absence, my children would come together for prayer and singing.” Kay also asserted that she “had a hold on them from small,” and consequently, “they are still walking in the right path” (Vol. 2, p. 49).

In comparison to John and Brenda, Maria agreed that “by her [mother’s] living and connection with Christ we saw and learned how to live spiritually” (Vol. 2, p. 80). Lea attested that she encouraged her children in “living clean, pure, and holy--taking care of themselves in all things” (Vol. 2, p. 81). Maria postulated that she did not want to do anything that was wrong “because of the relationship she was developing

TABLE 17

## RELIGIOUS COMMITMENT

FAMILY I	FAMILY II	FAMILY III
<p>God is an important factor in my life. I believe that a God-centered lifestyle has been a wall of protection from evil, people who want to hurt you and even from drugs (Vol. 2, p. 25).</p> <p>I don't look to do nothing bad because I got the greatest man [God] on my side (Vol. 1, p. 72).</p> <p>I must say that not only that the influence, the power that God has in my life . . . prohibits me from being involved or even desiring to use drugs (Vol. 1, p. 53).</p>	<p><i>In my absence my children would come together for prayer and singing</i> (Vol. 2, p. 49).</p> <p>One thing that will show that I am committed spiritually is my conversation. I try as much as possible to speak positive to communicate clean and spiritual, abstaining from curse words and saying bad things to and about people. I live according to God and His Word [the Bible] and live the way He wanted me to live. I am a Christian by lifestyle. Hence I chose to avoid wrong. I didn't use drugs. I do what is right (Vol. 2, p. 49).</p> <p>I learned to appreciate God and my lifestyle was ordered in light of God (Vol. 1, p. 140).</p> <p><i>I had a positive hold on them when they were small so now they are big, they are still walking in the right path</i> (Vol. 1, p. 140).</p>	<p>My Mom helped me grow spiritually. By her living and connection to Christ we saw and learned how to live spiritually (Vol. 2, pp. 80, 81).</p> <p>Using alcohol or any other drugs is wrong and could mess up my relationship with Christ. From the relationship with Christ . . . I chose to stay away from alcohol and drugs cause it was the right thing to do (Vol. 2, pp. 80, 91).</p> <p><i>My lifestyle was adapted by that of Christ. This I gave to my children. It involves living clean, pure, and holy – taking care of themselves in all things</i> (Vol. 2, p. 81).</p>

with Christ” (Vol. 2, p. 80).

### External Religious Dynamics

The external religious dynamics embody those themes directly relating to the church. These are church attendance and involvement, and religious beliefs.

#### **Church Attendance and Involvement**

Church attendance and involvement were a part of all three families. Youth who are actively religious, meaning they have a personal devotional life, attend religious services and activities and are involved in church life, are less likely to use alcohol and marijuana than adolescents who are not religious (Amoateng & Bahr, 1986). The parental insistence on church attendance encouraged the youths’ involvement in church activities. Kutter and McDermott (1997) postulated that individuals who are very involved in church and place a great deal of importance on the church activities in which they are involved tend to avoid substance use. Caroleen stated that her children went to church every Sunday from the time they were born to this present time. Kay believed that “our children modeled after us going and attending church” (Vol. 2, p. 52). Lea saw attending church as “a part of our lifestyle” (Vol. 1, p. 83).

Hirschi (1969) stated that active participation in conventional activities may possibly leave individuals less time to be involved in deviant behaviors such as drug use. This research confirms his theory that the youth were actively involved in conventional activities such as regular church attendance and involvement in church activities. This provided them a network of support which may have buffered them

from drug allurements. Coombs and Ziedonis's (1995) research supports this finding that involvement in religious activities provides a network of support that may insulate individuals from opportunities to use drugs.

John, Brenda, and Maria seemed to have enjoyed involvement in church activities. They all believed that it kept them busy and "occupied" (Vol. 2, p. 81) (Maria) in "more spiritual things" (Vol. 2, p. 52) (Brenda), and away from "bad company and drugs" (Vol. 2, p. 28) (John). Maria expressed, "I was in church all the time. . . . It's like I live in church" (Vol. 2, p. 81). Table 18 elaborates on the youths' and parents' perception on church attendance and involvement.

### **Religious Beliefs and Teachings**

Finally, the theme of church beliefs displayed and magnified in Table 19 appeared to have prevented each youth from drug involvement. There was a general belief among the families that the body is the temple of God. Thus, they consciously cared for their bodies, refusing to destroy the temple of God. Perceived physical harm, where alcohol and drugs destroy the normal brain and body functions, was related to abstinence in light of the body being the temple of God (DiClemente et al. 1994).

Brenda and Maria stated that their churches taught them about the dangers of drugs and the importance of avoiding their use. Their mothers agreed and said that both church and home provided them with religious teachings and guidance. John, on the other hand, received his religious instruction from his mother. Caroleen affirmed that "the Bible was the best way to provide a strong foundation against evil in society, even drugs. I was raised up in the Catholic Church but I don't boast on religion. I

TABLE 18

## CHURCH ATTENDANCE AND INVOLVEMENT

Family I	Family II	Family III
<p><i>Every Sunday, from the time they were born till now, they go to church (Vol. 2, p. 27).</i></p> <p><i>Church kept them occupied and safe from harm's way. I had to have gone to church in order to have raise the children like how I raised them (Vol. 2, p. 27).</i></p> <p>The spiritual involvement and church-going influenced my non-involvement in drugs because the Lord and His blessings were always on my mind (Vol. 2, p. 27).</p> <p>I used to spend more time at the Methodist church when I was a teenager. The church's activities kept me active, but at the same time away from bad company and drugs (Vol. 2, pp. 27, 28).</p>	<p><i>Our children modeled after us going and attending church (Vol. 2, p. 52).</i></p> <p>Church, though it was a must, became a joy (Vol. 2, p. 52).</p> <p><i>Church life guarded them from getting involved in other activities that could be bad for them. Involvement in church kept them in the church and close to God (Vol. 2, p. 52).</i></p> <p>As a child I was very much involved in church activities. This helped to build my character and shifted my mind from worldly [devious] things to more spiritual things (Vol. 2, p. 52).</p>	<p>Church going was a part of my lifestyle. I remember mentioning to one of my friends that it's like I live in the church (Vol. 2, pp. 81, 82).</p> <p>Different activities like Pathfinders kept me away from looking or turning to other things to find pleasure (Vol. 2, p. 81).</p> <p>I was involved. I took part in all activities. . . . This involvement kept me occupied – kept my mind off things of the world. I didn't have time to think about doing the negative such as drugs and drinking. (Vol. 2, p. 81).</p> <p><i>As children they wanted attention, so by providing good church programs for them and by allowing them to be involved...encouraged them, thus helping to keep them out of bad things like using drugs (Vol. 2, p. 82).</i></p>

boast on the Word of God” (Vol. 2, pp. 23, 24). Incorporating the religious beliefs the youths received as children seemed to protect them from using drugs and alcohol.

The youth in the study participated in family devotions; developed a prayer life adhered to the values and morals they learned in their youth; committed themselves to a religious lifestyle; attended and became involved in church; and developed their own

TABLE 19

## RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND TEACHINGS

Family I	Family II	Family III
<p><i>They can't do drugs or drink alcohol cause God didn't make them for that. God made them to live right (Vol. 2, p. 24).</i></p> <p>The Bible, it was the best way to provide a strong foundation against evil in society, even drugs (Vol. 2, p. 24).</p> <p>As far as I'm concerned, my mother could not function without contact with God. My mother got her attitude and connection with God from her mother. This is what I got from her. The impact of having God was always brought forward (Vol. 2, p. 28).</p> <p>My grandmother always reminded us of the Ten Commandments. She said the commandments are for us to live right and stay out of trouble (Vol. 2, p. 28).</p> <p>My grandmother lived close to God and I always wanted to live like that (Vol. 2, p. 28).</p> <p>My grandmother said, "Whatever a man sows he reaps." This has been inspiration for me (Vol. 2, p. 28).</p>	<p>Our church through programs and activities, taught me about the dangers of drugs and its harmful to the body, the temple of God. You also learn right from wrong and chose the right and stay away from the wrong like drugs and other things (Vol. 2, p. 53).</p> <p>The church taught me to be respectful, obedient, and to be moral, to think and live up to certain standards and beliefs (Vol. 2, p. 53).</p> <p><i>A relational knowledge of God helped deter my children from wrong behavior and lifestyle (Vol. 2, p. 52).</i></p> <p><i>By the teaching my children received from home, it helped them to chose to be spiritually-minded and to have faith in Christ (Vol. 2, p. 49).</i></p>	<p>The Bible and faith in Christ acted as a deterrent from evil and even drugs. Our body is the temple of God. This is our religious belief helped to keep them from wrong (Vol. 2, p. 82).</p> <p><i>Church taught them about the dangers and effects of drugs (Vol. 2, p. 82).</i></p> <p>My religious beliefs helped me to refrain from immoral acts. It is my responsibility to care for my body (Vol. 2, p. 82).</p> <p><i>By the religious teachings my children received from home, it helped them to chose to be spiritually-minded and to have faith in Christ. Church and home had a major hold on them from an early age (Vol. 2, pp. 82, 83).</i></p>

religious beliefs.

Both their families and churches aided in the development of the themes presented in religious dynamics. John, however, did not receive as much guidance from his church. He obtained his religious lessons from his mother and grandmother.

All three families had daily devotions as a family unit. They learned how to pray to God for themselves and observed and heard their parents pray for them. Through instruction and modeling the parents taught the youth to be upright, honest, and respectful. Hence, all three youth developed a commitment to their parents' religious beliefs, and teachings.

### **Summary**

The themes within these religious dynamics seemed to have worked concurrently with the environmental and relational dynamics to prevent these youth of St. Martin from drug involvement. The themes have provided us with an understanding of the selected familial dynamics and their relationship to drug avoidance. The interaction of the familial dynamics will be elaborated on in chapter 9.

## CHAPTER NINE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This qualitative case study was conducted to gain an understanding on how selected familial dynamics functioned within three St. Martin families in deterring their youth from becoming involved in drugs. In chapters 4 to 6, I presented three individual cases relating to the youths' non-drug use from both the youths' and parents' perspectives. I listened to and recorded the families' stories as perceived by the youth and their mothers. Their stories were revealing and rich in information as the themes and metaphors emerged.

Chapters 7 and 8 contained the interpretations of the families' shared stories in a cross-case analysis format. The families' responses to the researcher's quest were presented in context to exemplify the reasons for the youths' avoidance of drugs. These responses were compared and contrasted in order to capture the bigger picture in understanding why they had not become involved in drug use. As Eisner (1991) penned, "To interpret is to place in context, to explain, to unwrap, to explicate" (p. 97). It was from this premise that, as the researcher, I delved into the reservoir of the families'



experiences and discovered meaning and understanding about why these youth have not succumbed to their surrounding drug culture.

My findings provided an understanding of the youths' drug avoidance as themes emerged from the interview process. Each youth, though exposed to the drug culture in St. Martin, was shielded within the walls of strong relational, environmental, and religious dynamics. The data within each of these dynamics revealed themes which are either positive or negative. However, these themes positively influenced the youths' decision to avoid drugs.

The relational dynamics category referred to the relationships between the youth and their immediate and extended families. Within each family, the youth experienced an intimate relationship which was loving, caring, supporting, and nurturing, and also a social relationship where the family spent special times together to fellowship and interact socially with each other. Communication between the youths and their parents was open, particularly with their mothers. Each youth had mothers who greatly valued supervision and discipline of their own children, not diverting these responsibilities to others. The mothers were strongly involved emotionally, socially, and spiritually in their youths' lives. The fathers in families I and II, though not verbally expressive, were saliently involved by providing guidance, financial support, and care for their families. These themes worked together to steer the youth from drug allurements.

An important issue surfacing from the data is the theme life's satisfaction. The allurements of drugs is often tied with material possessions in St. Martin. As a result,

many individuals, including youth, become enticed by the fast track to an apparent better life and therefore trapped by drug use, peddling, and trafficking. Drug trafficking has become an optional activity for minority youth in the U.S. to increase their wealth or social status, especially with the decline of economic opportunities (Bartollas, 1993). However, the parents of these families provided their children with a sense of worth and appreciation for what they acquired appropriately which enabled the youth not to desire material possessions that may lead to drug involvement. Their mothers taught them the importance of life satisfaction, "Make do with what you have," and responsibility, which enabled each youth to develop into a contented, accountable, and productive individual.

Additionally, the youth had both positive and negative influences from relatives which deterred them from drug involvement. Akers (1977) and Bandura (1986) maintained that children and adolescents procure their beliefs and involvement in problem behaviors from role models, through observation and imitation, social reinforcement, and positive expectations of future involvement in such behaviors. The grandmothers in families I and III provided the youth with encouragement, spiritual guidance, nurturing, and positive living, thus discouraging and preventing them from societal ills, such as drugs. The negative influences of the legacy of the grandfather and a cousin in family I and the grandparents and uncles in family II's alcohol and drug involvement discouraged, embarrassed, and even hurt the youth, hence served as a positive motivation to avoid drug use.

The youth were also confronted with the positive as well as negative influences from friends, neighbors, and schools. These themes which emerged were grouped within the environmental dynamics. The positive influences the youth received were primarily from their schools. For instance, all youth had parents who were actively involved in their academic performance and parents who developed a relationship with their children's teachers. An important theme that emerged was the ability of the youth to stand firmly in the face of the negative influences of drug allurements offered by friends, neighbors, and even teachers. Yet, the youth maintained or won the respect and acceptance of their peers, neighbors, and teachers.

The category religious dynamics displayed the youths' spiritual foundation. The research revealed that the parents taught their youth from a tender age about God and moral and spiritual values from the Bible. All three families instructed their children from the Ten Commandments. In their early childhood, all three youth developed a personal devotional lifestyle. They also attended church and became involved in church activities. The youth followed and lived up to the beliefs, teachings, and expectations of their homes and churches. This aided in helping them to take a positive stand against drug use.

## **Conclusions**

### **Relational**

The families in this study exhibited a close relationship which aided in all three youths' drug avoidance. When youth are supported, affirmed, supervised, cared for, and

nurtured, as was the case for all three youth in this study, the youth will feel safe and loved. The study also revealed that the closer the youth were to their parents, the more they confided in them. Hence, youth who are attached to their parents will treat their parents as confidants. A strong parent-child attachment is therefore pertinent to the youths' drug avoidance.

Family times were also important according to this study to enhance the parent-child attachment and to counteract societal ills such as drug use. Parents who take time to interact with their children and participate in their children's leisure and social activities will demonstrate to their children that they value them. This helped the youth in this study to engage in positive and healthy activities instead of drugs.

Open communication as disclosed in this study was important because it allowed all three parents and their youth to discuss issues that were pertinent to the youth. This study revealed that when parents exhibit an attitude of care, reach out to their children in a decidedly judgmental manner, and are willing to listen to their children, the youth will share their concerns and curiosities. They will also seek advice and guidance from their parents. The study showed that open communication between all three parents and youth proved to be a deterrent to drug use.

According to this study, parental supervision will enable the youth to function and develop within boundaries set by their parents. This will protect the youth, like the youth in this study, from themselves and from societal ills including drugs. The parents in this study monitored their youth even in their late teens. Though the youth believed they did

not need to be monitored at all times, they all expressed appreciation for the parental supervision they received as children. Proper and consistent supervision of children and youth is important to steer youth from drug use. All three parents were cognizant of their youths' whereabouts and they attended their youths' activities.

This study also found that mothers who prioritized child care over employment closely monitored their children and became involved in their academic and social activities. The study revealed that the mothers scheduled their work around their children's activities, and at times they took their children on the job with them. Unemployed mothers, asserted Hirschi (1969), spend more time supervising their children. Children with employed mothers, on the other hand, tended to have higher incidences of delinquency (Hirschi, 1969). Based on this study, parents who strongly consider the importance of child care and proper supervision of their children and youth will provide a buffer against drugs.

This study found that all three families exercised consistent discipline to encourage the youth to do what is right even in the face of peer pressure. The parents and youth described discipline as instruction and warning, time-out, deprivation of social but not spiritual activities, and spanking. Discipline, as revealed in this study, will provide boundaries for the children's well-being. It will be a means for correction and character building. Though at times the youth in this study thought their parents were overly strict, they expressed the benefits they received from their parents' discipline. When discipline is implemented by parents and understood by youth, deviant behaviors such as drug use will

be deterred.

According to this study, teaching responsibility will provide the youth with a positive tool in life. All three youth were taught not only to be responsible but accountable. Providing youth with a time line enabled them to have worked within specific schedules and boundaries. This also helped them to learn how to prioritize. Based on this study, youth who learn responsibility at home will most likely practice it outside the home. The youth remained drug-free and became productive and skillful as they matured.

The parents in this study taught their youth by instruction and example the concept of life satisfaction. This empowered the youth to be satisfied with the possessions and belongings they gained appropriately. The need to covet what others had was minimized by the learning of the concept of life's satisfaction. Youth who learn to work honestly for what they need and to appreciate what they have, will most likely not become tempted by drug allurements.

Another theme within the family that helped deter alcohol and drug use was the influence of the children's grandparents. Grandparents who manifest a positive lifestyle will provide additional support for the grandchildren. Through intergenerational transmission of values, they functioned as a liaison between the parent and the grandchildren as they provided and reinforced the transmission of religious and moral values. Hence, children who respect, love, and appreciate their grandparents are likely to exhibit behaviors that met their grandparents' expectations.

The youth were also faced with the negative influences from other external family members such as grandparents', father's, uncles', and a cousin's alcoholic and drug involvement. Their experience with these external family members' drug and alcohol use and its effect helped to discourage the youths' desire to use drugs.

#### Environmental

The parents in this study were consistently and actively involved in the youths' life outside the home, particularly with regard to their friends. They assisted and guided the youth in the selection of their friends from a tender age and were not hesitant to express their disapproval of friends with negative traits. The parents allowed their children's friends to come to their homes under their supervision. The friends of the youth in this study respected the youths' parents. When parents become involved in the lives of their children's friends and with the proper selection of such friends, children and youth were less likely to participate in deviant behavior such as drug use.

Though the neighborhoods in this study were heavily under the influence of drug use and activities, all three youth were shielded from the negative influence. The parents saw this as their responsibility. Not allowing the youth to freely interact with the neighborhood without thorough monitoring, parental supervision, and guidance provided a hedge about the youth. This kept them safe from the influence of drugs. An awareness of societal ills will enable parents to take precautionary measures.

The environment, based on this research, has one of the strongest negative effects on youth drug use. When parents also become involved by escorting and participating in

their children's activities, and by actively becoming involved in their children's academic lives, such as connecting with the teachers, extracurricular activities, and schoolwork, the chances of drug involvement was less. Parent-teacher relationship is important according to this study. When the teachers were aware of the parents' interest and support of their children, the teachers extended themselves beyond the call of duty. In the words of Thornberry (1996), based on a study that he conducted, a positive environment can safely and firmly help to raise drug-free youth.

### Religious

Family worship and the Ten Commandments were used as a guide in fostering spiritual values and character building. Family worship was habitually and intentionally practiced within the homes. Piaget (1965) posited that the home remains the platform from which values are strengthened or weakened throughout the life of the child, even when other influences take over from time to time as the child grows and becomes mature. Based on this study, homes that have regular family worship will foster spiritual growth as the children and youth learn how to conduct themselves and to build and maintain a personal relationship with God.

All three youth heard their parents pray for them (intercessory prayer); it reinforced their awareness of God and His will for their lives. All three youth claimed that this also kept them conscious of their parents' desires and expectations for them and inspired them to live according to God's will, thus they avoided using drugs. Intercessory prayer and a personal devotional life act to divert the negative effects of society.



Values transmission through parental relationship, instruction, and modeling was internalized by the youth as they shared their experiences on how they practiced and lived according to the values received. Youth will more likely avoid deviant behaviors such as drug use when family values are internalized. When this happens it will provide them with mental, spiritual, social, and emotional resistance against drug enticement and use.

The church augmented the home in providing biblical instructions, lessons concerning positive and healthful living, and wholesome activities both spiritual and social for the moral development of the youth. Westerhoff (1976) believes that when the Christian church becomes significantly involved with the community's children, the children will develop a faith relationship with the God of that community and the church itself. Hence, this may provide the youth with protection against societal ills including drug use.

All three parents and youth stated that the home provided the platform for the youth's initial decision against drug use. The likelihood of youth drug avoidance is contingent upon positive parental involvement in the lives of the children (NCADI, 1998). A study conducted by NCADI (1998) revealed that neither the schools, the community groups, nor the government can make as great an impact in the children's attitudes and values as parents can.

Though the home sets the foundation, it may not be sufficient. Thus, it is necessary that there be a network between a positive home life, a supporting environment, and a caring church in order to safeguard the youth from societal ills. According to this

study, and supported by the Valuegenesis: Faith in the Balance Report (Dudley & Gillespie, 1992), the home, environment, and church need to intentionally and actively complement each other.

This study confirms Hirschi (1969) who stated that when individuals have affective ties to parents, other family members, school, friends, the church, and the people they associate with at church, they may be less likely to use drugs. Second, the study further confirms that the youth who avoided drug attraction and experimentation spent time with their families, such as playing and eating together, and participated in school activities such as sports and homework, and church activities such as youth programs and church worship. Finally, all three youth respected the guidelines, religious beliefs, and teachings of their homes, schools, and churches. This helped to reinforce their personal beliefs against drug use.

### Summary

It is evident from this research that the home, the environment, and the church need to embrace the youth. Thornberry (1996) supports this research study in that he posited that it is a combined force of protective factors present within multiple domains that can steer adolescents from drug use. He further suggested that factors that can steer adolescents from becoming involved in drugs are family, school, peers, neighborhoods, and the church.

This study confirms Thornberry's assertions that it is not just a single factor that inhibits youth drug use. Instead, a number of interrelated factors or dynamics functioning

within the family and the environment protected the youth from drug use. The family, the church, and the environment are all parts of an interrelated community. If we agree to the concept that these segments are integral parts within the larger community, then all three segments, the relational, environmental, and the religious dynamics, are pertinent in steering the youth from drug involvement. Indeed, it takes a whole community to raise a drug-free youth. The next section will discuss recommendations in aiding youth in St. Martin to avoid drug use and involvement.

### **Recommendations**

The knowledge and insights obtained from this research confirm the importance of teaching and preparing parents, other family members, pastors, church leaders, church community coordinators, and teachers how to raise drug-free youth. Therefore, based on my analysis of the data, the following recommendations are provided. Though the recommendations are specific to St. Martin, they may be applicable to youth drug avoidance in other locations.

#### **Families**

1. St. Martin families need, through modelling, family worship, and instruction, to teach their children moral and spiritual values early in their children's childhood years to help them stand against the ills of society including drug use.
2. Parents should initiate involvement and supervision of their children in order to guide the proper selection of peers and to observe their children's activities.

3. Parents should become aware of the negative influences in their families, immediate or extended, and actively shield their children from these negative influences by not allowing their children to freely associate with them without proper supervision.

4. Parents should capitalize on the positive influences of other family members, like the grandparents in this study, to assist by modeling and teaching in the reinforcing of values, support, and nurturing of the children.

5. Parents should become actively involved in their children's academic life and life outside the home by familiarizing themselves with schoolwork, academic progress, and other activities that their children are involved in.

6. Parents should establish and implement proper discipline guidelines and methods within the home so as to correct and guide their children.

7. Family worship should become an integral spiritual exercise in the home. It also needs to become regular, enjoyable, educational, and meaningful. This may be accomplished as parents and youth actively participate by reading, singing, and praying together.

8. Parents should encourage youth to develop a personal devotional and prayer life through modeling and daily practice.

9. Parents should take time to play and interact with their children on a regular basis by scheduling and implementing special family activities and fun times.

10. Parents should model and practice church attendance to encourage children from a young age to make this a lifelong practice.

### School

1. School personnel of the St. Martin school system should provide drug education.
2. School personnel need to be drug-free in order to model a drug-free lifestyle for their students.
3. Parents and teachers should develop and support a parent-teacher alliance to provide a hedge for their children.

### Church

1. Churches should teach their religious beliefs to youth through seminars, lectures, and youth activities.
2. Churches should provide drug prevention and intervention programs and activities for the children in their community to the home, school, and community to raise drug-free children and to buffer the onslaught of drug use.
3. The government and religious organizations need to invest in building youth centers and providing needed training for those who work and influence the children in their community in order to help youth to be drug-free.
4. The churches in St. Martin and the Turning Point Drug Rehabilitation Center should incorporate themes found in the study for seminars and training sessions to prevent youth drug use.

### Networking With Organizations

1. All three communities; the home, school, and church, need to network to sponsor, organize, and support meaningful and relevant activities such as youth camps and skill-development and mentoring programs for the youth to counteract the allurements of drugs.
2. To prevent drug experimentation, the negative effects of licit and illicit drug education should become an integral part of church, school, community-based social organizations' curriculum.
3. Parents, other family members, and church and school leaders should foster the children and adolescents' development and use of abilities and talents in a positive manner. This may be done by allowing the youth to become involved in extracurricular activities such as sports, school mentoring and monitoring programs, camps, and skills development programs.
4. Serve as a guide to conduct further research dealing with families, youth, and drug issues.

### **Suggestions for Further Study**

In 1995 Wolcott said that it is not necessary to push a canoe into the sunset at the end of every paper. This has been a challenging experience, as I sought to understand from the families why these youth did not use drugs. I was overwhelmed by the vast sea of information before me as I was tempted to sail in many directions and come to a conclusive end. However, I kept focused and accepted the reality that one cannot uncover

everything beneath the sea because of its unreachable depth and breath. I, therefore, suggest that future research be conducted in order to capture other themes hidden or unnoticed by me.

This study used three families from different family structures to examine why St. Martin youth did not become involved in drugs. The study revealed that the different family structures were not a factor in these youths' avoidance of drugs. The structure of the family, however, was not the focus of this study. Future research, therefore, could explore what effect family structure has on non-drug involvement.

The premise of my study was not to focus on religion, though each of the families in the research had a strong religious background. Thus, future researchers could explore other themes that may be imbedded in nonreligious families or a combination of religious and nonreligious families.

Although my intention was not to be selective between male and female youth, only one male youth was included in this study. Future researchers could, therefore, focus on possible reasons for male or female non-drug use from a familial perspective.

Further research may include youth from varying social background or youth who are presently drug-free in their adolescent years. Still, other research could be conducted to discover the level of drug use among youth and the primary age of onset in drug involvement. Another study may include male versus female drug avoidance and male versus female drug use in general.

It may have been helpful from a family structure perspective, to find one type of family structure whether single-parent, stepparent, adoptive-parent or two biological parent families to interview, and thus establish, a stronger basis for comparisons and contrasts.

Because I chose only one child within each family, a further recommendation in the sample selection would be to interview more than one or all the children within the same family and assess their perceptions on their drug-free lifestyle within the family structure.

Where there were two parents in the family, only the mother consented to actively participate in the study as an informant. Future studies can seek to find families where both parents consent to participate in the study.

A future study could be conducted to examine why some siblings within the same family used drugs and others did not.

Another study may consider comparisons and contrasts between siblings, primarily male and female within each family, so as to seek understanding from the siblings' perspective about their avoidance of drugs. Still other research may be conducted to discover drug prevalence on St. Martin.

A final suggestion is that this study be used as a guide in conducting research in another island's subculture to see how different or similar drug avoidance by youth is, from a family perspective.

As I take my journey beyond this exciting, revealing, and rewarding experience, I encourage future researchers to keep searching until the experience becomes a reality, that



the canoe can be finally pushed to its shore. In reality, no one researcher will know it all. The reasons for youth drug avoidance is non-conclusive at least from a qualitative perspective. According to Glesne (1997), qualitative research seldom leads to a conclusion. "Conclusions," she argued, "suggest an ending, a linear progression that can be resolved in some way" (p. 218).

## APPENDIX

APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

**YOUTHS' QUESTIONS**

- Let's begin as you tell me about yourself. Who are you?
- Would you kindly take a few moments and describe your neighborhood?
- How would you describe your relationship with your parents/family?
- How has your relationship with your parents helped you to avoid drugs?
- How were your parents and other family members involved in your school and social life?
- Could you share the special moments in your life that you shared with your parents that made you feel good about yourself and them?
- How free were you in sharing your concerns with your parents?
- Why do you think you never got involved in drugs?
- Why do you think your parents insisted on the kind of friends you had?
- What family member had/has the greatest influence in your life?
- Could you share some of the values that you have learned from your parents that may have helped you to choose what was right?
- How would you describe your family home life and environment: physical, economical, emotional?
- How would you describe St. Martin in light of the drug issue?
- Describe the way church/school/neighborhood and family has influenced your understanding of the dangers of drugs.
- How would you describe the spiritual life of your family and its impact on your non drug involvement?
- Could you share with me the way (s) you were disciplined in the home and the impact it has had on you?
- How has church played an important part in your life choices and behavior?
- What special spiritual/religious moments did you spend with your family? Describe them please.
- Let's talk about a wide range of relationships; family, community, church, peers, God, etc. Explain.

**PARENTS' QUESTIONS**

- How would you say that you have encouraged or shown appreciation to your children?
- How important is prayer in your family?
- How would you explain that prayer played an important part in keeping your children from trouble and from using drugs?
- How involved did you allow your children to be in church life?
- Could you share with me the role Christian values played in your children's life?
- In what ways were your children different to other children of your neighborhood? Describe for me.
- How were family time spent together?
- In what ways would you say that family times assisted in keeping your children from drug use?
- How free were your children in sharing their concerns with you?
- Could you tell me of anything else you did to influence your children's non involvement in drug use?
- How have you tried to pass on good values to your children in helping them to develop good moral habits?
- What role, if any did the church play in helping your child from using drugs?
- Let's talk about a wide range of relationships. Family, community, church, peers, God, etc. Describe how these have helped your children from avoiding drug use.
- Why do you think you insisted that your children have certain kinds of friends?
- Could you share some activities that you provided for your children to help keep them from the ills of society?
- Why do you think your child was never involved in drug?

APPENDIX B

LETTER AND CONSENT FORM TO INFORMANTS

Vincent A. David I  
600 Beechwood CT. Apt. G-48  
Berrien Springs, MI 49103  
(616) 471-6479

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June, 1998

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

As the executive director of Turning Point Drug Rehabilitation Center on St. Martin, I am also presently pursuing my Ph.D in Religious Education at Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan. To fulfill the requirements for this degree, I am conducting a research project. The topic is: An Understanding of Selected Familial Dynamics as they Relate to the Prevention of Substance Use Among Youth from St. Martin.

Because your story is important and relevant in putting together an overall picture, I will need to conduct and record interviews. These interviews will help me to understand why you never used drugs. I anticipate that the interviews will be 1 hour in length, with no more than 4-6 sessions, which will be recorded on audio cassette.

I want to thank you for your willingness to be involved in the this research study. It is important that I emphasize that strict and absolute confidentiality will be maintained in regards to your name and personal identification. Therefore, there is no need to feel threatened or afraid of the process. It is essential and very much appreciated that you are honest and reflective.

It is not my intention or decision to make any comments, but simply act as a recorder of reality as you perceive and share it. I would therefore need you to complete and return the section on the following sheet and then mail it back to me as soon as possible in the stamped, self-addressed envelope. This will enable me to create an interview schedule so that we can plan on using your time wisely. Your immediate and prompt response is greatly and sincerely appreciated.

Sincerely,

Vincent A. David I

Project Title: An Understanding of Selected Familial Dynamics as they Relate to the Prevention of Substance Use Among Youth from St. Martin

Andrews University - School of Education

Vincent A. David  
600 Beechwood Ct. G-48  
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Advisor: Dr. William H. Green  
Andrews University  
School of Education  
Berrien Springs, MI 49103  
(616) 471-3577

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: M \_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_ Y \_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: (    ) \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of this qualitative research study is to discover and gain an understanding of why youth never used drugs. The information that you will share with me may hold within it means and strategies that will enable others to avoid or escape the drug culture. The results of this study could have significant bearings on the families of St. Martin as a point of reference regarding drug-related research. Thus, common and unique factors can be developed into programs, strategies, and preventive modes relevant to St. Martin's culture. The data information received will be used and published.

Interviews conducted by Mr. Vincent A. David with you will be 1 hour in length, with no more than 4-6 sessions, which will be recorded on audio cassette. These audio tapes will be stored in a secured place and the information obtained will be erased after it has been transcribed. The interview will use semi-structured open-ended questions that will focus on parent-child relations, environment, and religion as they relate to the avoidance of substance use. The place and time of each session will be agreed upon. If you have any questions please feel free to contact myself or my advisor at the above mentioned address.

I have read carefully the letter and have been given sufficient information concerning the research project and understand fully what is involved and expected of me.

Therefore, I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree  and maintain the rights to withdraw from this project at any time, without penalty /do not agree  to be interviewed as an informant in your research project. I understand that the interviews will be strictly confidential and the names will be anonymous and at no stage will my real name be used in the reporting. I also understand that what I share will not be passed on to the other members of the dissertation interview procedure.

I will be available for interview July: early  mid  late

I will be available for interview August: early  mid  late



The best time of day would be:      morning       afternoon       evening

I am unavailable during the following dates: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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### PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND:

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St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles
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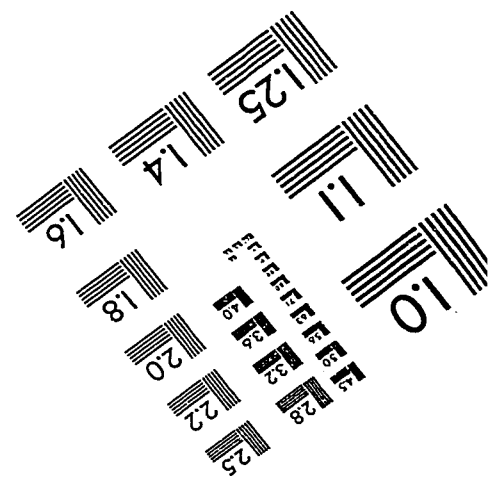
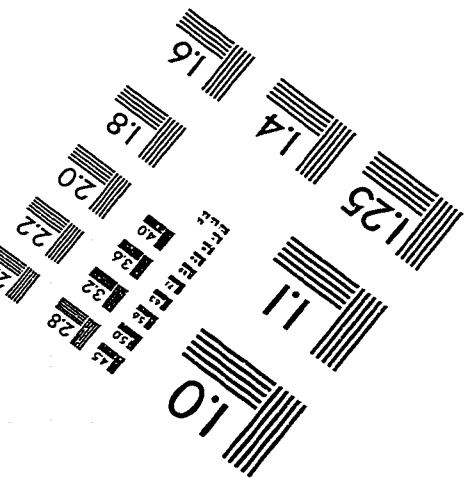
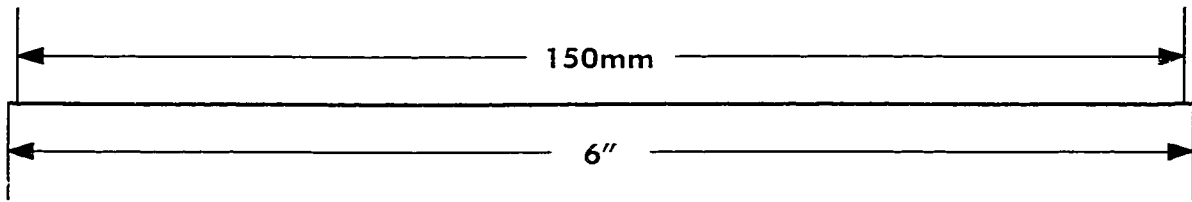
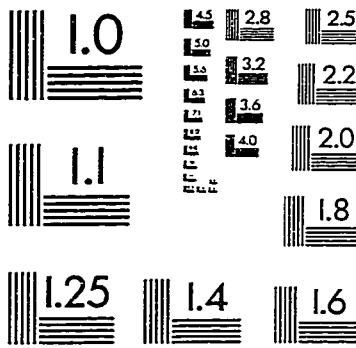
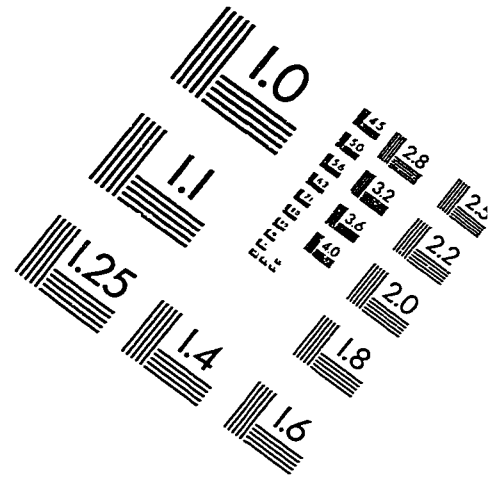
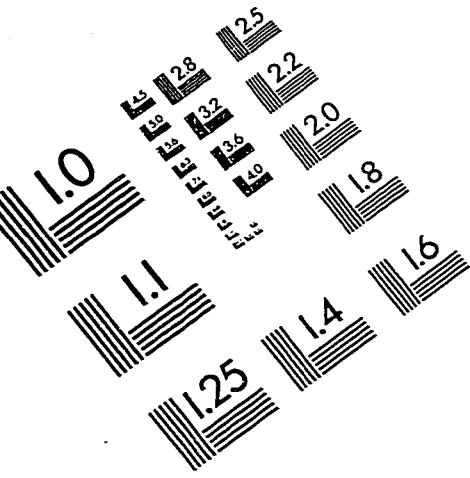
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