The Making of a Volunteer: A Qualitative Study

By

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I declare that the Making of a Volunteer is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references

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(Miss R.Govender)   Date: 7 April 2015

Abstract

This social constructionist study originated from the researcher's exposure to the counselling volunteers environment. The study aimed to document the voices of three people, constructed as counselling volunteers.

The three semi-structured interviews are with individuals who constructed themselves, or accepted the constructions of their role, as volunteers. The "case study approach" was chosen as the most suitable method to gather the information. "Thematic content analysis" was the method of analysis.

The case studies of participants were reconstructed in terms of themes. Recurring themes in these case studies were expounded and linked within the literature.

This study allowed valuable and rich information about the volunteerism to emerge. Amongst the themes that emerged, the need to help, being a good counsellor and resilience were identified as particularly important areas for future research.

Keywords: Case Study, Counselling, Empathy, Helping behaviour, Social Constructionism, Resilence, Qualitative research, Volunteerism, Volunteer Motivations

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LifeLine Pledge

I commit myself, as a member a LifeLine,

And in accordance with the God of my understanding

To be an instrument of His purpose.

I will seek to grow in faith,

Allowing this understanding

And power to work through me

And to deepen my compassion for all.

I accept the place and service to which I may be appointed and will take pride in honouring my commitments.

I agree to abide by the LifeLine rules

And to observe the obligation of Strict confidentiality.

Chapter One

Introduction

Reber & Reber (2001) indicate that helping behaviour is the provision of distinct support to another person or persons. Helping behaviours are differentiated from altruism in that altruism is a prosocial behaviour without the deliberate anticipation of a psychic or peripheral incentive, such as a material, societal or personal reward (Hinde & Groebel, 1991). It therefore appears to be essential to consider this philanthropic quality that underlies the helping behaviour.

The focus of the study is to describe themes that emerge from the helping behaviour of older counselling volunteers.

Volunteering is any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or cause. Volunteering is part of a cluster of helping behaviours, entailing more commitment than spontaneous assistance, but narrower in scope than the care provided to family and friends, (Wilson & Musiek, 2000).

Helping behaviour is described as providing direct assistance to someone in need, in which the behaviour involves no sacrifices, real or potential, on the part of the helper (Reber, 2001).

According to Baron and Byrne (2003), people volunteer on a long term basis as a function of various selfish and selfless motives and specific dispositional variables. Much more research is needed to identify what criteria to use for selecting the right volunteer (Fischer, 1993). In the United States, one hundred million adults volunteer 20.5 billion hours each year, averaging 4.2 hours of prosocial activity (Baron & Byrne, 2003).

Volunteerism is a well researched phenomenon in the United States, with both President Obama and the first lady giving the issue top priority (Dietlin, 2010).

During the 1940s, the role of the volunteer was mainly restricted to that of committee member and fundraiser (Flisher, 2007). During the last fifteen years, there has been an awareness that volunteers can make a valuable contribution to service delivery in South Africa Flisher, 2007).

According to findings by the Mental Health Council, people who volunteer have the following characteristics:

- They believe in the cause for which they volunteer.
- They have a definite interest in the area of their involvement.
- Time is available that they want to utilise meaningfully.
- They possess knowledge and expertise which can benefit the individual, organisation or community in which they are interested.
- They have a need to serve fellow persons and the community.
- They derive satisfaction from their volunteer involvement.

Counselling is largely a private activity, conducted in conditions of confidentiality (McLeod, 2011).

Telephone counselling, which comprises the largest source of counselling help to members of the public, has received little research attention (Rogers et al , 1993 as cited in McLeod, 1994).

According to McLeod (2011), research studies allow counsellors to learn about and from the work of others in the field, and give the profession a means of pooling knowledge and experience on an international scale.

Rationale

A substantial proportional of non-profit groups rely on volunteers in pursing their objectives (Williams, 2001). There is considerable evidence of the efforts of volunteers, mainly from surveys of counsellors and psychotherapists in the USA (McLeod, 2011).

The researcher has an interest in exploring the efforts made by the small subset represented by LifeLine telephone counselling volunteers in comparison to the large population base of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

Wilson (1999) takes an essential stance by stating that two perspectives on volunteering predominate. The first perspective is dominated by the search for the motives behind volunteering and the second perspective states that the decision to volunteer is based largely on a weighing of costs and benefits in the context of varying amounts of individual and social resources (Wilson & Musiek, 2000).

Social scientists have documented the existence of certain social norms that are in favour of helping action (Dovidio, 1991). Psychologists have been unable to agree on a single definition of altruism, but do agree that it can involve the relative emphasis on two factors, namely intentions and the amount of benefit or cost to the actor (Krebs 1987 as cited in Piliavin and Charng, 1990).

A number of studies cite altruistic reasons among primary motivations to volunteer (Piliavin & Charng, 1990). Altruism as a construct can play an important role in contemporary human behaviour and in our understandings of that behaviour (Wilson & Musiek, 2000).

According to Dovidio (1991), a vicarious emotional response to another's suffering that manifests into the determinants of helping is empathy. Empathy comprises of both affective and cognitive components (Duan 2000 as cited in Baron and Byrne, 2004).

Dovidio (1991) argues that the motivational nature of empathy is seen as altruistic. Being altruistic is defined as being oriented to the interests of another, whereas being egoistic is defined as being related to self- interest (Dovidio, 1991).

According to Dovidio (1991), the empathy-altruism hypothesis is "tentatively true". Batson and his colleagues state that some prosocial acts are motivated solely by an unselfish desire to help someone in need (Batson & Olson, 1991 as cited in Baron & Byrne, 2004). According to Sober (1991), Batson's experiments on egoistic motivations remain inconclusive. Sober (1991), define psychological altruism as a scientific hypothesis in terms of people's desires, what people think and what they care about. Sober (1991) further describe psychological altruism in terms of action. "The act of helping others does not count as psychologically altruistic unless the actor thinks of the welfare of others as an ultimate goal" (Sober, 1991).

According to Dovidio (1991), to offer the strongest evidence for the altruistic mediation of helping under a certain set of conditions, it seems necessary to conduct studies with designs that eliminate, simultaneously, the explanatory power of each of the egoistic alternatives. Furthermore, Dovidio (1991) agrees that interpretive action remains appropriate in researching altruism and that much more is likely to be discovered and written on this vital issue of human nature.

Research has also led to an enhanced understanding of perceived altruism, but this is not matched by sufficient knowledge concerning the experience of lay persons counselling diverse populations. Increased knowledge in this area could result in better service to clients and lessened distress for counsellors.

Problem Statement

If counselling is to maintain its good public image, and continue to attract funding from government agencies, health providers and employers, then effective, research-based systems of accountability are essential, (McLeod, 2011).

The study will provide a dense description of why older individuals choose to volunteer.

The findings from this research could be recommended to be included in the current training programme.

Objective

The objective of this research is to explore literature and obtain descriptions of volunteering within the counselling context from volunteers.

Questions that will be guiding this study include the following:

- How do individuals portray volunteers in the relevant literature?
- How do volunteers talk about and construe volunteering?

Paradigmatic Perspective

Meta-theoretical perspective

The philosophical paradigm applicable to this study is social constructionism. In this worldview, according to Creswell (2007), individuals seek understanding and develop subjective meanings of experiences. The meanings lead the researcher to look for the complexity of views, rather than focusing on one category or a few ideas. The goal then, says Creswell (2007), is to focus on research participants' attitudes and opinions of a certain situation. Questions are stated broadly to enable the participants to construct their own meanings.

Theoretical definitions

The term older volunteer is used in this study as a reference to those volunteers who have been a part of the organisation for more than 15 years.

Research Methodology

Research design

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) define a research design as "a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research. Research designs are plans that guide the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure."

In this study, a qualitative research design will be adopted. Qualitative research design differs inherently from the quantitative research design, in that it does not provide the investigator with a step by step plan or fixed recipe to follow (De Vos et al. 2002).

The aim of the study is to provide "an in-depth description of a small number of cases" (Mouton, 2001, p. 149), thus a qualitative, exploratory and descriptive approach has been chosen. Qualitative research, according to Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey (2010), collects evidence, and can produce findings that were not necessarily determined in advance. The appropriateness of a qualitative approach is justified due to the nature of my study, where I am more interested in what the research participants have to say than the questions I ask.

The application I have chosen for the qualitative method is a case study approach. Case studies, according to Neuman (2000), do not test a hypothesis; the focus is more on experiences and meanings.

Both the qualitative and case study approach ties in with Mouton's (2001, p. 150) notion of an inductive, a-theoretical approach, where no "hypothesis is formulated" and the research will be

predominantly guided by the research objectives as well as the questions raised during interviews.

Research setting

The semi-structured interviews conducted with three volunteers will take place in a South African counselling context. The principle language medium will be English. An appointment time will be established. The participants will be interviewed in a natural setting where they feel comfortable and not threatened, such as their work or home environment.

Entree and establishing researcher roles

I have always been interested in volunteering. Neuman (2000) encourages researchers to display a genuine interest in the topic being investigated when interviewing participants.

With this involvement comes the potential that my input may have an effect on what the participants say or bias the results. Greeff's (2002) suggestion that one should work on communication and interpersonal skills may lessen the effect I have on the outcome of the interview. For this to be successful, I will acknowledge and remain aware of my preconceived ideas and attitudes when conducting interviews.

Research participants

The research participants will include the following: Three volunteers. I will also be analysing literature on volunteers.

Sampling

For this study, purposive sampling will be used. Purposive sampling, according to Strydom and Delport (2002, p. 335), "will provide rich detail to maximise the range of specific information that can be obtained from and about [the] context." In purposive sampling, a particular case is chosen because of what that case can provide for the study.

Data collection method

Data from the research participants will be collected through recorded, semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview starts with more general questions and allows for focused, two-way communication (Mouton, 2001). Most of the questions are created during the interviews, says Mouton (2001), which makes this a very flexible and conversational style of interviewing.

The use of a digital voice recorder will assist me in this process, and field and observational notes which I will be taking during the interview will consist of non-verbal cues such as facial expressions and my own thoughts and feelings. Neuman (2000) explains that jotted notes consist of words, phrases and drawings that are then incorporated into the direct observational notes, which are more thorough and comprehensive.

Data analysis

After transcribing the field and observational notes, and the recorded interviews, data will be analysed via Thematic Content- Analysis. Thematic Content Analysis portrays common themes that arise out of the qualitative text (Anderson, 2007).

Themes from the literature will be summarised and grouped together with related and parallel themes.

Ethical Considerations

Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006) highlight the following aspects to be taken into consideration:

Informed Consent

The aims and purposes of the study will be verbally explained, in detail, to the participants when they are first approached. All volunteers will be asked to sign an informed consent form immediately before being interviewed. This form will relate to issues of confidentiality, non-maleficence and beneficence, and also about the dissemination of research.

Confidentiality

The data from the study will only be available to the researcher and the supervisor. The data will be stored by the researcher. Anonymity can be guaranteed.

Dissemination of Research

Research results will be made available to the participants. There is also potential for results to be published in popular and academic press.

Strategies Employed to Ensure Data Quality

Reliability and validity in qualitative research is ensured via measures of trustworthiness. Stiles (1993, p. 9) notes that "reliability refers to the trustworthiness of observations or data, [and] validity refers to the trustworthiness of interpretations or conclusions." Guba (cited in Krefting, 1990) mentions four aspects that are applicable to qualitative *and quantitative* studies to ensure trustworthiness and increase rigor. These aspects are truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality.

Truth value refers to the confidence the researcher has established that the findings of the study are truthful, based on the research design, informants and context (Lincoln & Guba, cited in Krefting, 1990). Sandelowski (cited in Krefting, 1990) explains that truth value is subject-oriented, and it is obtained from the lived and perceived experiences of humans.

Even though applicability refers to the ability to generalise the findings to other contexts, Krefting (1990) says that to be able to generalise the findings of a study is not always relevant to qualitative research.

Consistency considers whether the findings of the study can be replicated when using the same subject in the same context (Krefting, 1990). However, as Duffy (cited in Krefting, 1990) explains, unexpected variables (such as fatigue) can have an effect on the research, but because qualitative research seeks to investigate the uniqueness of each experience, variation rather than repetition is sought.

Neutrality refers to the issue of bias in the research procedures and results (Sandelowski, cited in Krefting, 1990), and whether the findings or the informants were influenced in any way by the researcher. In order to decrease any possible influence from the qualitative researcher, Krefting (1990) suggests that prolonged contact be kept to a minimum with the research participants. Thus, from a practical perspective, I will keep my interviews to a maximum of one hour, and if I have to meet with any of the participants for a second interview, I will schedule it at least three weeks after the first interview.

Limitations

Qualitative research can be subjective. The collection and analysis of the data is time consuming. In addition, qualitative research can be physically, emotionally and intellectually demanding. Moreover, a small sample size can affect the generalisability of the findings.

Significant contribution of the research

The findings from this study will be helpful to therapists, directors within the voluntary sector, and volunteers, in the sense that they will better understand volunteering and what the most important features of volunteers are.

The findings from this research could be recommended to be included in the current training programme.

This study will also contribute a new and modern perspective to the literature on volunteers. Ultimately, I hope that the research I will be conducting will ignite more interest and more research on South African volunteers, which is a growing phenomenon with the potential for social support and development.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Epistemology

Chapter 4: Methodology

Chapter 5: Story of Emily

Chapter 6: Story of Sophia

Chapter 7: Story of Tom

Chapter 8: Analysis, Discussion, Recommendation and Conclusion

Chapter 9: Bibliography

Appendix

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Volunteerism falls under the umbrella of fields associated with the global service sector. The contribution of volunteers appears to be applicable to most spheres indicative of the professional - client liaison, service provision, awareness edification and information and research development (Routh, 1972; McSweeny & Alexander 1996). There is a plethora of literature that describes the constructive contribution made by this populace, of which only one sector will by highlighted in this study. The aim of this chapter is to converge on the significant aspects relating to the subjective realities of volunteer lay counsellors. The intention then is to incorporate the experiences of becoming and being volunteer lay counsellors. This by implication also proposes an inductive process of hypothecation and substantiation in terms of the motivations surrounding the decision to initiate and continue to participate in volunteer lay counselling activities. This process can then be utilised as a contrivance when the experiences of the participants of this study are explored further on in the dissertation - either supporting or transforming the syllogisms posited in earlier literature.

Furthermore, this chapter resolves to converge on the literature regarding maintaining factors that indicate the rationale for continuing to work in the voluntary sector. This is placed in the context of personality traits, internal and peripheral reinforcement, as well as obligation-satisfying circumstances. Accordingly, the processes implied in the experiences of becoming and being a volunteer lay counsellor are investigated in the literature and placed into the milieu of this study's emerging themes, such as *the wounded healer*.

Within the context of this study, a focus on personal experience was employed. Certainly, subjective experience as observed by an objective party, such as a researcher or academic audience, is continually subject to the quest for analogous data. Therefore, the literature review

deliberates on aspects which appear to be common in volunteer lay counsellors in terms of personality traits and environmental factors, to name a few.

In order to supply a comprehensive sketch regarding the context of volunteer lay counsellors, this chapter commences with a review of primordial literature - some of which may be regarded as historiography and others of which may be regarded as superannuated - that has merit in the context of this study as it offers one a sense of the temporal understandings of the experiences of volunteers.

Furthermore, my personal experience as a volunteer trauma counsellor at LifeLine has tinted my perceptions in terms of volunteerism. My subjective experience of volunteering, together with my interaction with volunteer lay counsellors, has fostered an interest and appreciation for those who engage in the voluntary sector.

The literary context

Exploring early literature is not unfounded. It creates the framework which serves as an underpinning for the current investigation. Certainly, an alternative researcher may have constructed a dissimilar literature review, yet this has some significance in terms of this particular study. The literature review is a personal interpretation of existing literature. While it says something about the topic at hand, it also suggests something about the researcher. Hence, this chapter is a reflection of the interplay between the literature, the researcher, and the participants' lived experiences. Accordingly, and subjectively, imagery may be utilised to depict the function of this particular literature review in order to facilitate the audience's insight into the researcher's standpoint.

The literature review forms the exoskeleton of the current investigation. Should one consider the research process, including its associated stakeholders, as the organism of the study, then the literature review provides the support for such an organism. Hence, it protects the integrity of the research by providing it with a structure or context, within which the current investigation may be positioned. With time, any exoskeleton develops a greater degree of strength. This too appears

to be valid in terms of research, since later literature appears to be appended by former studies. To then explore existing literature as a researcher becomes a natural process, although the limitations as to how far back one should explore becomes a matter of opinion, as well as a matter of preference. It is therefore proposed that a diachronic analysis of the literature be conveyed in order to provide the tracing of the context of the lived experiences and volunteerism from historical perspectives to current perspectives. Consequently, the subsequent segment is entitled quondam perspectives. This is supplied in order to satisfy the position of tracking the progression of becoming and being a volunteer lay counsellor.

Quondam perspectives

In resolving a point of departure, the question of which research to include arose. From its depths, issues surrounding an analysis of contemporary literature versus classic literature evolved. Any researcher may have come to a different decision as to which sphere to centre on. Yet, some may have settled on combining the two spheres – as is evident in this chapter. Nonetheless, even in selecting which spheres to address each researcher opts for that which s/he deems appropriate. Thus, this literature review may deviate significantly from another researcher's literature review based on availability of literature, personal preference, and the context of subjective and inter-subjective experiences thereof. Furthermore, this process suggests a trajectory of the researcher's frame of reference, having an influence on what this literature review is and on what it could be. From a personal perspective, to commence from an historical perspectives merged with related constituents of the lived experience of volunteerism, appeared to be a valuable exercise in contextualising the researcher's subjective perception of the study at hand. A quondam perspective therefore moves from past to present and suggests ideas from which current data stems.

The attempt to understand experiences and human relatedness can be traced to studies on the philosophy of the mind. McLeish (1999) is of the view that Aristotle's ideas regarding dualism suggested that the connection between the body and mind implied the connection between behaviours, for example, and thoughts and feelings. These ideas then developed with 17th century rationalist philosophy, presupposing the interplay in connectedness of both the body and

mind. Garret (1995) indicates that Baruch Spinoza's notion on the operation of necessity illustrates the possibility of humans appreciating their modes of functioning, specifically in terms of behaviours. Thus, a significant emphasis had begun to be placed on personal discernment. Contemporary sources (Assiter, 1984; Barry, 2002; Holyoak & Morrison, 2005) are of the view that the philosophical and empirical advances in areas such as structuralism and inductive reasoning, including developing methods of statistical syllogisms, fostered a process whereby subjects were investigated as objects. At this juncture, one may query whether objective analysis fleeces subjective experience. This does not appear to have been the occurrence, as subsequent literature (Jaspers, 1969; Keen, 1970) evidences an embryonic literary focus on subjective experience, stemming from objective investigation. This caenogenesis from a philosophical system to a scientific system has promoted a phenomenon whereby researchers may investigate subjective experiences such as becoming and being a volunteer lay counsellor - traits of which can be retraced to Aristotelian philosophy.

In modern times, the supply of voluntary employment has been appreciated as a noble facility, proffered to people by persons who have a fundamental sensitivity and conviction regarding the needs of people. As such, volunteers are disposed to discharge duties in order to gratify these needs. Nonetheless, the validation and acknowledgement often required by volunteers led some to enquire into the core function of voluntary work.

Early researchers often marvelled at speculation about whether the ambition of volunteer workers was to satisfy the needs of the clients, or the needs of the volunteers (Routh, 1972). Subsequently, numerous hypotheses surfaced regarding the basis of volunteering (Lauffer & Gorodezky, 1977). It seems appropriate to introduce some of the early hypotheses posited. The architects of these hypotheses are termed hypothetists, the literary proper for the customary term hypothesist.

Early hypothestists, including Cull & Hardy (1974), posited that volunteers are quixotically stimulated and are paid in psychogenic revenue, with the knowledge that s/he is trading an ethereal service which cannot be financially remunerated. One ought to observe, however, that

the majority of literary opuses focused on the public reward of the voluntary sector, with little attention being paid to the volunteer as a subject. For example, Holme & Maizels (1978) concentrated on volunteers as suppliers of practical tasks who befriended clients, and counselled people. Lauffer & Gorodezky (1977) observed that volunteers impart undeviating support to clients, they execute clerical duties, are engaged in community interactions, raise funds and assist with policy making and advising. Murgatroyd (1985) composed extensive writing regarding counselling as helping, focussing a great deal on counselling skills. Eventually, he begins to explore areas which focus on the helper which he aptly terms helping the helper. Here, one may anticipate reading about the needs of helpers, their experiences, and so forth - yet, he merely suggests devices such as training and supervision. Hence, he too concentrates on counselling as a subject, as opposed to the volunteer as a subject. Certainly, this is not a review of Mutrgatroyd's work, yet it is essential in appreciating the subject material relevant at the time. None of these writers essentially pored over the volunteer, but focussed instead on volunteer services. The applicable literature thus far provides a rudimentary impression of relevant writings at the time, focussing more so on volunteers in general, with an absence of literature regarding volunteer lay counsellors. Nevertheless, subsequent literature evidences an increase in interest in volunteer lay counsellors, as subjects and as a field of study (Sundararaman, 2007; Haines et al., 2007; Kaufman, Mirsky, Avgaret al., 2005; Freeman, 1997). Specific contemporary literature will be addressed comprehensively shortly.

Early notions on the subject of volunteers indicated that these individuals were often seen as socially inclined. In earlier periods, women generally comprised the voluntary sector and were baptised grey ladies. Of late, this term has become archaic due to the influx of males in the voluntary sector. The terms and labels applied to identify volunteer workers then included phrases such as candy stripers, community workers, indigenous workers and aides (Cull & Hardy, 1974). These terms contribute to one's knowledge in terms of the possibilities regarding society's view on the volunteers in earlier periods, namely being society-focused (Shibutani, 1955); helpers (De Boer & Coady, 2007); and possibly limited in their expertise, but willing to learn more (Clary & Snyder, 1998). As a result, one may wonder whether these views continue to function at present. Literature appears to indicate that this remains the current position (Claasens, 2004; Sundararam, 2007; Schneider, Hlope & van Rensburg, 2008; Malchodi et al.,

2003). This suggests that the sociological view of volunteers, on the whole, continues to be an enduring view.

According to Heron (1990), a volunteer may be regarded as a practitioner since s/he offers a skilled service to the client/patient. Furthermore, volunteers conduct interventions in order to assist patients/clients. Since many interpersonal settings in the volunteer's personal sphere are similar to experiences in the client/patient's personal sphere, the volunteer feels able to relate to the client/patient. However, certain features foster the conditions which make every interpersonal situation unique. Hence, comparable interventions may be applied to similar interactions, but each intervention requires an idiosyncratic choice of articulation, syntax, scheduling and manner of speech. This indicates the variable infrastructure to which the volunteer needs to adapt, which does not ordinarily become a matter of mere instruction, but more of a developmental process - a phenomenon which appears to remain stable temporarily.

Topical perspectives

This section of the chapter aims to centre on specific aspects relating to volunteer lay counsellors. While it may have been respectable to simply supply aspects relating to volunteer lay counsellors, it appeared valuable to focus on dynamics relating to these aspects, as such a differentiation is made between typical perspectives as opposed to topical perspectives. Typical perspectives would certainly provide one with the qualities necessary to contextualise the research. However, topical perspectives indicate the localisation of those qualities in terms of context. This is necessary, especially in consideration of converging on an explorative subject such as the lived experience of volunteer lay counsellors. As a result, delving into the etymology of both topical and typical become appropriate to selecting the title for this section.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (2003), more than 300 million volunteers supplied their communities with labour in excess of US$15 billion. In countries where empirical research was conducted, the supply of voluntary labour was estimated to be between 8 and 14% of the Gross Domestic Product. This created a significant economic influence on a fiscal level, but additionally adds to capacity building on an individual level. Hence, a volunteer

cultivates marketable skills and boosts his/her self confidence. On a social level, volunteers have assisted in fortifying a sense of civic reliability and membership; they have associated distinct interest groups; and they have promoted understanding and increased forbearance of diversity.

This, then, has some significance which influences governments and communities, ordinarily anticipated to be beneficial to governance and society at large. However, in the microcosm of volunteer significance lies the vision of empowerment. Since volunteers stem from within communities, "empowerment begins with a rediscovery that the seeds of a solution lie within" (Lewin et al., 2008, p.3). Consequently, volunteers within a community act as a catalyst for communities to reconcile their specific injuries. These findings are greatly supported by no less than forty other research studies (Lewin, et al., 2008).

Heretofore, one may query the rational motive as to why some volunteers choose counselling above other voluntary pursuits such as fund raising. For research purposes, there appears to be limited literature on counselling as a volunteer preference. An interesting study (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992) focussing on themes in therapist and counsellor maturity and highlighted a worthy subject which strikes one as being pertinent to volunteer lay counsellors. Skovholt & Ronnestad (1992) established that persons who were engaged in counsellor activities, before specialised education often operated in what they term *the conventional mode*. Evidently, during this phase, the individual functions as an aide and helps other individuals or groups in accordance with the lay counsellor's established and accepted tenets which dominate the lay counsellor's behaviour in typical relations. Here, the "counsellor's" sphere and the "everyday" sphere are analogous in terms of the lay counsellor's performance as counsellor. The aforesaid research therefore implies that the volunteer lay counsellor invests a large component of his/her personal identity into his/her counsellor identity. It is consequently perceptible, in respect of inductive reasoning (Holyoak & Morrison, 2005), to an exploration of the subjective experience-as-individual. Furthermore, the preference to counsel may suggest the volunteer's need to relate to, and interact with, other individuals (Bond, 1993).

Clarkson (1994) indicates that counselling-orientated individuals are predominately the progeny of a somewhat maladaptive familial unit. Early exposure to unbalanced or disconcerting environments may fashion an inclination to nurture injury, albeit something of an emotional excoriation. This process indicates that the individual develops into a visceral rescuer, placing him/her in a superlative position to be of assistance to others. However, this observation cannot be generalised and is contested by the work of Ferenczi (1980) who believed that children, in general, covet the notion of nursing their families. Clarkson (1994) devotes a large portion of her views to the idea of the wounded healer. This concept will be further explored later in this chapter, in the section entitled convergent perspectives. However, ideas proximate to the wounded healer, the innate curative facets of children, and the equilibrium or disequilibrium of early systemic functioning should be borne in the mind during the interpretative/analysis phase of this particular study.

Comparing the motivations to counsel (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992) with the motivations to volunteer by and large (Clary & Snyder, 1998), it appears that the help-giving, service providing functions (De Boer & Coady, 2007) do not vary in terms of volunteerism (Cull & Hardy, 1974). Therefore, a distinction between the motivations to be a volunteer lay counsellor and the motivations to volunteer in general have little bearing on exploring the experience and becoming and being a volunteer lay counsellor.

Volunteers are frequently engaged in an assortment of activities, all of which have help-providing actions as a substrate. Many volunteers spend an average of three hours per week on their endeavours, and the persons most likely to volunteer are non-retired individuals who are currently employed in the open-market (McSweeney & Alexander, 1996). These statistics are British-specific cultivations which may or may not relate to the South African voluntary labour force. As an annotation, the United Nations Development Programme (2003) indicates that volunteers constitute 47% of the non-profit labour force; therefore further investigation regarding this subject may well inform convoluted studies in the future.

In spite of this, McSweeney & Alexander (1996) provide a constructive view of the motives to volunteer - all of which may possibly pertain to the South African volunteers. The motives include a desire for companionship; governmental reasons, such as confronting a social concern, employment redundancy and a desire to utilise time proactively; religious and sacred grounds; a need to gain experience in order to acquire remunerated employment; having the skills and/or ability to provide specific help; a longing for communal contact; an inclination to be of assistance; and/or having time available. These findings seem to be consistent and therefore suggest dependability, with other literature (Clary & Snyder, 1999), regarding the needs of volunteers.

The reasons discussed formerly will be considered in terms of the research participants of this study during the interpretative process. In addition, it may be useful to consider a suggestion formulated by Martin Knapp (in McSweeney & Alexander, 1996), who is of the view that volunteers may be attempting to satisfy a certain social anticipation of conduct in order to obtain esteem or societal endorsement for involvement in the conduct (i.e. volunteering). He further indicates that volunteering may be a restorative/ remedial process whereby the volunteer generates an atmosphere to aid in the management of internal anxiety and insecurity regarding self-esteem (i.e. a need to be needed).

Auxiliary literature supporting the work of McSweeny & Alexander (1996) and Clary & Snyder (1999) includes the investigations by Richard B. Freeman. Freeman (1997) indicates that even though some might consider the voluntary workforce to encompass a bevy of mature ladies, the voluntary sector essentially comprises persons who are employed, with a towering efficiency rate, and who have been significantly educated. The research conducted by Freeman (1997) indicates that volunteers receive utility superior than that which can be ordinarily quantified in terms of financial remuneration. A further observation includes the phenomenon that not all persons are willing to volunteer if requested to do so. Accordingly, he too questions the essence underpinning volunteerism.

Hackl, Halla & Pruckner (2007) view volunteering as either a consumption or an investment. Within the consumption approach, certain constraints (such as lack of income) serve as an impetus to volunteer. Therefore, the lack of recompensed employment permits certain individuals to volunteer their time. Conversely, the investment hypothesis suggests that engagement in the voluntary sector serves as an investment conducive to augmenting financial revenue in the salaried labour market. Hence participation in voluntary activity (e.g. serving in a soup kitchen) allows one to increase his/her financial income in the paid sector (e.g. investors purchase commodities from the volunteer's company).

There appear to be subcomponents regarding the motivational reasons underlying volunteering. These are specifically based on intrinsic motivators, and include: the volunteer's concern for the beneficiary's gain; simultaneous pleasure in volunteering and an intrinsic gratification in performing voluntary behaviours; and the act of helping activates warm glow benefits such as the knowledge that the effort expended supports a worthy cause. These intrinsic motivations extend into the consumption approach. Although these ideas may suggest an either-or tactic in terms of motivational reasons (i.e. either the consumption approach, or the investment hypothesis), existing empirical findings appear to be indistinct. These outcomes indicate two prospects: quantitatively, the present research does not indicate lucid numerical validity; and/or qualitatively, motivations to volunteer transform over time, thus indicating an overlapping between consumption and investment motives (Hackl, Halla, & Pruckner, 2007). Having considered a small number of motivational theories may not appear to converge on the core features of the experience of volunteer lay counsellors but, as Clary et al. (1998) indicate, stimulus dynamics, subjective reality and experiences often intersect and cannot, in the main, be motivations as the research process progresses. This is reflected particularly in consideration of the dearth of literature as regards the lived experiences of volunteer lay counsellors (Rath, 2008).

To imply that relevant literature amounts to aught would be fallacious. Rath (2008), for example, indicates that five themes emerged from her research of women's experiences of becoming volunteer rape crisis counsellors. These themes include: a motivation to be involved, such as training; the interaction between complexity and change, such as particular actions centring on individual variation; modification in personal kinship, including the effect on carnal

relationships; personal transformation, including a feeling of self-worth and personal regard, and feminism. Considering the results of the research conducted by Rath (2008), in addition to the scope of the current research study, it is the researcher's proposition that a gender-neutral idiom such as humanitarianism, could replace the rubric of feminism.

The experience of developing into and inhabiting the existence of a volunteer lay counsellor cannot be appreciated without comprehending the motivational functions pertaining to volunteers. Clary et al. (1998) have identified six motivational functions which characterise and explicate the functions of volunteerism. First, the volunteer's value system appears to impact his/her experience. These values may be structured from personal philosophies. Second, volunteers often have a need to understand. There is an attempt on the volunteer's part to discover. This sense of discovery appears to indicate a curiosity about organisational function and includes the desire to enhance his/her personal development, and this may vary amongst volunteers in terms of psychological and sociological development. Fourth, some volunteers engage in voluntary labour in order to acquire and/or augment his/her career-related skills. Furthermore, the volunteer opts to participate in voluntary activity in order to facilitate the development, maintenance and reinforcement of social complexes. Finally, several volunteers experience their voluntary endeavours as an escape from either attending to, or circumventing, personal obstructions (Hassim, 2009). Thus, volunteering serves a shielding function. With these motivational functions in mind, it seems pertinent to introduce the factors culminating in therapeutic commitment.

McLeod (2003) anticipate that a comity between the dynamics regarding role requirements and role security may culminate in the therapeutic commitment of volunteer counsellors. Guidance and education appear to be the underpinning of such a constitution. Accordingly, in being trained, volunteer counsellors necessitate the following in order to execute the phase of role requirements: information, support, practice and self-esteem. Furthermore, the phase of role security is obliged by defining and exploring the adequacy and legitimacy of the volunteer's role. These dynamics facilitate the essence of therapeutic commitment characterised by enthusiasm, fulfilment, and task-specific self-esteem. Although Schneider et al. (2008) focus on the contributions of volunteer lay counsellors in South Africa, they allude to the potentiality that the

dynamics proposed by McLeod (2003) are relatively comparable in terms of South African volunteer lay counsellors.

Schneider et al. (2008) deliberate on the incalculable role of volunteer workers contained by the public care domain in South Africa. They confer the utility of volunteer worker as contributing new services, in preference to performing the role of paraprofessional. The outcomes of this research signifies that volunteer workers and lay counsellors have been principally focused on sanctioning the public, are community-orientated rather than community-based, and have fulfilled identity-related needs. Furthermore, volunteer workers function as a conduit for information between the health care system and patients/communities. The indication of this research is that volunteers serve a functional role in the health care system which may often be discounted, hence the limited data based on volunteer activity. Interesting research, then, would be to explore the views of key players, such as doctors and the public, in order to investigate their perceptions of volunteers (Hassim, 2009). However, this research proposes an investigation further than the norm. In exploring the experience of the volunteer lay counsellor, the objective then becomes a focus on the volunteer. This suggests delving into the core in which one may begin to observe the world of volunteerism from a transposed (inside-out) perspective, rather than from the outside in.

Bellamy (2001) indicates that many volunteers cannot financially afford to contribute as many working hours as they would like to. In her research, Bellamy (2001) articulates that volunteers would contribute more working hours to the voluntary section if they were paid. However, financial incentive does not appear to be the foremost attribute leading to volunteerism. McLeod (2003) address motivational themes in terms of mature adults entering in the volunteer sector. Older persons who engage in formal volunteer work often do so to sustain social engagement, and/or to fill the excessive free time they have subsequent to retirement. Additionally, an older volunteer's augmented aptitude to volunteer informally, such as in assisting neighbours, is counterbalanced by the limited volume of requests they obtain due to a diminishing social system. It is interesting to note that the research conducted by McLeod (2003) is consistent with the research conducted by McSweeny & Alexander (1996). Both sets of authors indicate that individuals in their midlife are more likely to participate in volunteer work. Furthermore,

McLeod (2003) concur with the results contextualised in the continuity theory, in that persons with previous experience in volunteering are more inclined to participate in voluntary work later in life.

According to Bellamy (2001), volunteering increases as a holiday season Zeitgeist, resulting in many volunteer organisations campaigning for members during this period. During a phase where charity and benevolence are valued, it appears that many persons opt to participate in voluntary activities. However, the tendency to volunteer does not appear to be a decision based entirely on seasonal patterns; it appears to be based on a gestalt of habitude based on context and personality (Hassim, 2009).

Based on the needs of society, volunteers mobilise themselves in order to meet these needs. The endowment of time, currency and resources often permits volunteers to experience a sense of service. However, the spin-off of these service-providing behaviours affords volunteers the opportunity to gain knowledge of the experiences, requirements and attitudes of others. This facilitates an operation whereby volunteering inculcates a sense of connection between families and society. To recognise each volunteer's efforts, and the challenges they confront in their voluntary pursuits, is pivotal (Hassim, 2009). Viewing these efforts as an axis, many volunteers indicate that their efforts are rewarded by the gains they earn (Hassim, 2009). These gains are continuously encountered, particularly in terms of the volunteer's altruistic behaviours. Moreover, benefits comprise constructing a sense of community, rupturing difficulties between people and improving quality of life. The overall acuity, established from subjective accounts from volunteers, is that most volunteers bristle the attitude of compassion (Bellamy, 2001).

Research conducted by Wilson & Musiek (2000) prognosticates that the outcome of volunteering generates specific benefits to each individual, the scope of which exceeds the voluntary act itself. These rewards might overtly be objectified as extrinsic variables such as help-catering behaviours, yet are essentially experienced as intrinsic incentives. The act of volunteering is a representation of the volunteer's distinctiveness and/or his/her values. As an addition to these findings, one should note that the advantages of volunteering often prompt other individuals to

volunteer, creating something of an accretion phenomenon (Hassim, 2009). This appears to be remarkably relevant to the older population.

Research into the utilisation of mature volunteers (Erlinghagen & Hank, 2005) indicates that mature Northern European volunteers participate with less restraint when compared to mature Mediterranean volunteers. It would be appealing, and in fact indispensable, to conduct similar studies in South Africa, especially in terms of the diverse demographics (Hassim, 2009). Such research may have supplemented one's knowledge in terms of voluntary engagement in mature adults in South Africa. Erlinghagen & Hank (2005) have established, for example, that expansive systemic, organisational and cultural conditions have an immense effect on one's intention to volunteer.

Holsopple (2001) conducted research based on the influence of political and natural perspectives on the decision to engage in volunteer pursuits. Her research indicates that individuals who have an interest in the political arena have a positive and considerable relationship to volunteering. Her research suggests that individuals who feel dispensed with by national government, often feel phlegmatic and select not to engage in practical politics. Holsopple (2001) therefore assumes that a sense of assiduousness from government mechanically indicates a sense of consideration in the local matrix. These results cannot be legitimate in all contexts and should therefore be researched within the South Africa perspective. Although ostensibly inconsequential, Holsopple (2001) provides the volunteer body of knowledge with a handful of amusing findings. These include findings suggesting that time spent watching television does not enhance one's tendency to volunteer. These findings are not derisory in terms of volunteer interest in the political arena, and they do not illuminate the overall experience of becoming and being a volunteer lay counsellor.

Convergent Perspectives

Some of the literature thus far has centred its attention on what may be termed psychologism, as much of the discussion has been grounded in non-psychological ideas within the domain of psychological understanding (Bustamante, 2002). Nonetheless, one may argue that seceding

logical psychologism (Le Bon, 2001), epistemological psychologism and psychology as a discipline is superfluous. Therefore, demotic literature, buttressed by substantial psychological advocacies may provide a copious body of knowledge. A demotic term most commonly used to illustrate the function of a volunteer lay counsellor is helping.

The operations indicated in the helping process appear to be a pseudopodium of volunteer lay counselling. Reber & Reber (2001) indicate that helping behaviour is the provision of distinct support to another person or persons. These voluntary activities are expected to assist others with some form of incentive, although this latter may or may not be excogitated. This prosocial behaviour (Bringle & Duffy, 1998) is aimed at profiting another person or group by helping, consoling or liberating the other party (Siegler, 2006). Furthermore, helping behaviours are differentiated from altruism in that altruism is a prosocial behaviour, without the deliberate anticipation of a psychic or peripheral incentive, such as a material, societal, or personal reward (Hinde & Groebel , 1991). It therefore appears to be essential to consider this philanthropic quality that underlies helping behaviour.

Altruism

Churchill & Street (2002) are of the view that a volunteer's altruistic acts are indicative of an underlying altruistic personality. One of the foremost attributes of this personality type includes compassion, customarily associated with volunteers. The ideas which then ascend are a consideration of the experiences of altruism. This is not to suggest that "altruism" will be designedly explored, but an awareness of the possibility that this emerges, or does not emerge, should be colligated if and when necessary, as it is a construct that is closely related to volunteerism. Reber &Reber (2001) define altruism as "the elevation of the welfare, happiness, interests or even the survival of others above one's own" (p.25). This is a general designation, essentially employed in the social services fraternity. However, altruism may also be defined as "behaving so as to increase the safety, interests or life of others while simultaneously jeopardising one's own" (Reber & Reber, 2001, p.25).

Reber & Reber (2001) indicate that altruism may be understood as the amplification of the well being, pleasure or endurance of others in lieu of one's individual needs; or it may be understood as actions intended to augment the protection or existence of others whilst endangering one's own protection and/or existence. Although the former definition is used more freely, the latter account delicately introduces an ethological consideration indicating evolutionary and genetic tendencies evident in many species. This, then, permits one to explore altruism in terms of kin-selection altruism and reciprocal altruism. This is not intended to craft an out-of the-ordinary supposition - it is intended to explore the profundity of altruistic behaviours, specifically in volunteer lay counsellors.

Madsen et al. (2007) indicate that the developmental perspective of altruism is marked by a process whereby genera are unselected due to the probability that they may possibly not subsist in an arduous ecosystem. This is due to the notion that continued existence relies on exceptional genetic material to warrant the survival of upcoming generations. The altruist, whether genetically fortified with superior genes or not, then executes specific behaviours in order to amplify the "merit" of a person with a substandard genetic constitution. Research (Madsen et al., 2007; Kitcher, 1993) also indicates that perceived similarities in individuals fosters a process whereby individuals with similar attributes are willing to perform altruistic behaviours for their analogous counterparts, regardless of inconvenience experienced by the altruist. These correspond across both gender and culture. In spite of these observations, the question regarding subjective recompense remains unanswered. Certainly, kin-selection may explicate the purpose of altruism to some extent. However, it fails to investigate the complexities of the effects, and its relative impetuses, constellated within the altruist in the context, the volunteer lay counsellor. One means of exploring this concept further may be a concept termed reciprocal altruism.

Reber & Reber (2001) define reciprocal altruism as a term which is "best summed up by the golden rule" 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you'" (p.25). Trivers (1971) indicates that an individual is enticed to help others since s/he has expectation that s/he may take delivery of a possible receipt in the future. Thus, the opportunity of a possible reward serves as an incentive to help others. However, the person opts to assist specifically when the profit outweighs the sacrifice of the action. Accordingly, the action serves as somewhat of an

investment. Trivers (1971) further indicates a process in operation regarding reciprocal altruism. This process entails reinforcement to and from the altruist in order to maintain the reciprocal process. At this juncture, it may be valuable to contrast reciprocal altruism from generalised reciprocity. Miller (2002) defines generalised reciprocity as having an impression that humanity, in its totality, will profit in some or many respects should people assist each other in particular ways. The conjecture, as defined and explicated by Miller (2002), appears to concern a would be process focussing on broad spectrum human relating, in preference to a focus on subjective experience. It therefore appears to be more appropriate to deliberate on reciprocal altruism in terms of the individual perception of becoming and being a volunteer lay counsellor - although the concept of generalised reciprocity could be attached to applicable experiences.

Kitcher (1993) indicates that there are critical distinctions in examining altruism from an evolutionary perspective in preference to a universal perspective. Dispensing with human altruism may detract one's attention from the moral implications, as well as those characteristics which define humanness. This notion is in line with Rogers (1957) view that man's aggregate moral fibre aims to defend him/herself and his/her genus. It would therefore be obligatory to bear in mind that altruism is an integrative concept (Hackl, Halla & Pruckner, 2007), encompassing universal, biological, psychological, and sociological attributes-subsequently, one may delve into the implications of altruism in term of volunteer lay counsellors.

There is almost no literature that deals specifically with LifeLine volunteers, or with volunteer telephone counsellors. To a large extent, LifeLine branches grew up relatively autonomously and were influenced by different schools of thought. In the early years, however, the thinking of Carl Rogers was very influential throughout the organisations, being superseded later by the Eagan Model.

The approach of Carl Rogers
Carl Rogers developed the person-centred approach to understanding personality and human relationships. This approach was embraced by LifeLine at the start of the organisation's life in South Africa. LifeLine also used Rogers' concept of learner-centred education, insisting that all

training offered by the organisation should be experiential in nature, and his idea of "unconditional positive regard", which he defined as accepting a person "without negative judgement of … [a person's] basic worth".

In his book, "Client-centred therapy: its current practice, implications and Theory" (1951), Rogers based his arguments on nineteen propositions, which were:

1. All individuals (organisms) exist in a continually changing world of experience (phenomenal field) of which they are the centre.
2. The organism reacts to the field as it is experienced and perceived. This perceptual field is "reality" for the individual.
3. The organism reacts as an organised whole to this phenomenal field.
4. A portion of the total perceptual field gradually becomes differentiated as the self.
5. As a result of interaction with the environment, and particularly as a result of evaluational interaction with others, the structure of the self is formed - an organised, fluid but consistent conceptual pattern of perceptions of characteristics and relationships of the "I" or the "me", together with values attached to these concepts.
6. The organism has one basic tendency and striving: to actualise, maintain and enhance the experiencing organism.
7. The best vantage point for understanding behaviour is from the internal frame of reference of the individual.
8. Behaviour is basically the goal-directed attempt of the organism to satisfy its needs as experienced, in the field as perceived.
9. Emotion accompanies, and in general facilitates, such goal directed behaviour, the kind of emotion being related to the perceived significance of the behaviour for the maintenance and enhancement of the organism.
10. The values attached to experiences, and the values that are a part of the self-structure, in some instances, are values experienced directly by the organism, and in some instances are values interjected or taken over from others, but perceived in distorted fashion, as if they had been experienced directly.

11. As experiences occur in the life of the individual, they are either: a) symbolised, perceived and organised into some relation to the self; b) ignored because there is no perceived relationship to the self structure; c) denied symbolisation or given distorted symbolisation because the experience is inconsistent with the structure of the self.

12. Most of the ways of behaving that are adopted by the organism are those that are consistent with the concept of self.

13. In some instances, behaviour may be brought about by organic experiences and needs that have not been symbolised. Such behaviour may be inconsistent with the structure of the self but in such instances the behaviour is not "owned" by the individual.

14. Psychological adjustment exists when the concept of the self is such that all the sensory and visceral experiences of the organism are, or may be, assimilated on a symbolic level into a consistent relationship with the concept of self.

15. Psychological maladjustment exists when the organism denies awareness of significant sensory and visceral experiences, which consequently are not symbolised and organised into the gestalt of the self structure. When this situation exists, there is a basic or potential psychological tension.

16. Any experience which is inconsistent with the organisation of the structure of the self may be perceived as a threat, and the more of these perceptions there are, the more rigidly the self structure is organised to maintain itself.

17. Under certain conditions, involving primarily complete absence of threat to the self structure, experiences which are inconsistent with it may be perceived and examined, and the structure of self revised to assimilate and include such experiences.

18. When the individual perceives and accepts, into one consistent and integrated system, all his sensory and visceral experiences, then he is necessarily more understanding of others and is more accepting of others as separate individuals.

19. As the individual perceives and accepts more of his organic experiences into his self structure, he finds that he is replacing his present value system - based extensively on introjections which have been distortedly symbolised - with a continuing organismic valuing process.

In following Rogers' ideas, the LifeLine counsellor of the early years of the organisation's existence was purely reflective, and the relationship between the counsellor and the client was paramount. It was felt that it was on the basis of a sound relationship that the client could be challenged to look at how his or her behaviour is impacting on their perceived problems.

The approach of Gerard Egan

Many counsellors, however, found the reflective nature of LifeLine counselling unsatisfactory. They felt that they were not really helping as there was not really a clear outcome from a call. The ideas of Garard Egan, outlined in his book "The skilled helper – a problem-management approach to helping" (first published in 1975), were consequently incorporated into the LifeLine methodologies. As a consequence, the reflective relationship that was formed with clients in the early years has tended to be replaced with a more directive one.

The point of using the model is to help people "to manage their problems in living more effectively and develop unused opportunities more fully" and to "help people become better at helping themselves in their everyday lives." (Eagan, 1998). This implies an empowering approach and the model seeks to direct the person towards action that leads to outcomes that the client has chosen and values.

Egan has provided a model rather than a theory, and the model is not based on any particular theory of personality development. It is best suited to working on current issues, or those from the recent past.

Broadly, the model outlines three stages.

The first stage is the **current scenario**. The client is encouraged to **tell the story** – to say what is going on. Since it is often difficult for a person to see their own situation clearly, the next step in the stage is to look at from different angles, to **find the blind spots** and decide what is really going on. This is a more challenging step. Finally, the client is encouraged to focus and to prioritise.

The second stage is to describe the **preferred scenario**. This stage starts with a sort of brain-storming session where the client is encouraged to be imaginative and broaden their horizons, looking for **possibilities**. From this creative session the client is encouraged to formulate goals which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and which have a time frame attached. These are known as **SMART goals**. Finally, the client's **commitment** is reviewed and the realism of the goal is tested.

The third stage is one of **developing action strategies**. A creative process of developing **possible actions** leads into a more focussed process of ascertaining the **best fit strategies**. Finally, an action plan is agreed.

Egan stresses that the key to using the model successfully is to keep the speaker's agenda central. He says that the individual must be kept in the foreground while theory stays in the background and that the model should be used for the person rather than the other way round.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's research focused on ordinary people and his interest was primarily in the improvement of society and the life of the individual within society (Stanton, 2005). Maslow was influenced by Carl Rogers, whose ideas have been outlined above, and Maslow's hierarchy builds on Rogers' idea of a master motive for behaviour and the tendency of people to work towards the actualisation of their inherent potential (Stanton, 2005).

Maslow's famous theory, first outlined in his paper "A Theory of Human Motivation", published in 1943, posits five levels of needs. These needs must be progressively satisfied in order for the individual to self-actualise (Stanton, 2005).
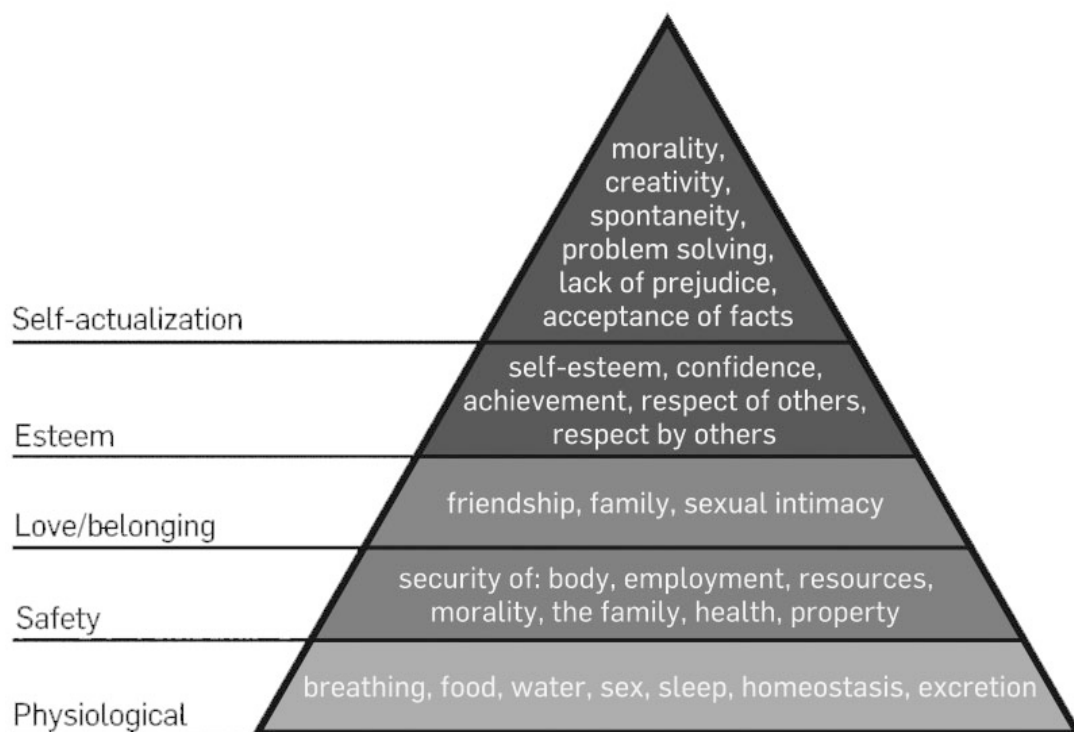
The most basic needs, the **physiological needs**, are literally those required for a person to survive. Should these not be met, the body would, in time, cease to function. Once these have been largely satisfied, an individual begins to be concerned about his or her safety needs. People seek **security** of their physical being, of their livelihoods and of their futures. This search extends to issues like health insurance, protective policies within the work place and funding for retirement.

If the physiological and safety needs have been met, the individual will want to fulfil the need for **belonging**. This covers issues such as friendship and sexual intimacy. Most humans have a strong need to belong to, and be accepted in, a number of groups, including the family group. Beyond this are religious, professional and sporting groups, and even gangs.

Maslow distinguished two versions of **esteem** needs. The first, which he termed a lower one, is the need for respect from others, for status, recognition, prestige and attention. The second, the higher one, is the need for self-respect, competence, independence and freedom.

In order to reach the level of **self-actualisation**, all the preceding needs must be achieved and mastered. This level entails the becoming of everything that one is capable of becoming. While the definition is broad, the actual need will be very specific to each individual.

While it is generally accepted that Maslow's theory describes universal human needs, there has been criticism of the placing of these needs in an hierarchical order. We can, however, posit that an individual is unlikely to be in a position to volunteer his or her services unless at least the most basic of the needs have been met. It has been suggested that a person likely to volunteer is a person who is in the process of self-actualisation, as described by Maslow (Stanton, 2005). In terms of Maslow's theory, however, volunteerism is likely to be of value to any individual who is striving to meet belonging, esteem or self-actualisation needs.

Clary, Snyder & Stukas (1998) argue that prosocial ideals and viewpoints are correlated with egocentrism and personal involvement. As follows, volunteering is a covenant advantageous to both volunteer and recipient. This finding is best understood at the level of the service-learning principle of action-reflection, serving the function of positive reinforcement. It is therefore plausible to deduce that the observation of altruistic behaviours, the participation in volunteering, and the experience of altruistic behaviours, and intrinsically rewarded activities, produce an affirmative stimulant within the individual, thereby initiating the momentum to continue with voluntary activities. It is interesting that Fultz, Schaller & Cialdini (1988) are of the view that helping behaviours are a product of egoism. For this reason, people assist others in order to moderate subjective anguish which cannot be alleviated in any other fashion.

Churchill & Street (2002) contend that there is an ambiguous division regarding abnegation and self-interest since concern for others may support individuation. Subsequently, the notion that there exists an isomorphic link between sovereignty and extensively is a fallacy. An increase in

ethical egoism, defined as the amplification of self (McConnell, 1978), does not necessitate an adulteration of a volunteer's agency or individualism (Chuchill & Street, 2002). It should be noted that egoism has not been the chief hypothesis in literature - empathy has also been linked to altruism.

Dovidio (1991) suggests that altruistic tendencies are activated when a person experiences a sense of empathy for another person. Sober (1991) indicates that altruistic action is executed upon the successful deliberation and resolution of the experience of empathy in conjunction with an analysis of the expenditure and incentive for providing a service.

Thus far, a focus has been placed on individuality. Many authors have also set store by the systemic construction of volunteer behaviour.

Research conducted by Moultrie (2004) suggests that the inclination to assist others if often within a collectivist culture, where communal attachment is of great consequence. This systemic preference, or individualistic antipathy, increases one's resilience with regard to the demands of others. Thus, the volunteer exhibits increased tolerance in terms of the stressors imposed by patients/clients. Levine, Norenzayan & Philbrick (2001) add that economically-deprived countries often yield a bountiful supply of altruists.

With these ideas at hand, it seems vital to consider the idea of caring for the volunteer.

With the intention of providing recipients with altruistic care, volunteer lay counsellors are subject to containing the burdens of experiences outside of themselves. Primo (2007) is of the view that volunteer lay counsellors are positioned to be the beneficiaries of secondary traumatic stress.

Considering the experience of volunteer lay counsellors, one should take into consideration particular experiences which often emerge in volunteer lay counsellors' daily encounters.

Therefore, at this point, specific themes related to the experiences of volunteer lay counsellors should be addressed. Certainly, these themes do not encapsulate the global experiences in becoming and being a volunteer lay counsellor. Yet, according to literature (Porte & Gravett, 2005), as well as in my experience as an intern trauma counsellor, these themes appear to be quiet relevant to volunteer lay counsellors.

Traumatic Stress

The experience of volunteer lay counsellors is defined by the environment within which the counsellor operates. Ortlepp & Friedman's research (2002) focused on secondary traumatic stress and role satisfaction in non-professional trauma counsellors. Dun (in Ortlepp & Friedmann, 2002) indicates that these non-professional trauma counsellors experienced isolation, anger, powerlessness, hopelessness, anxiety and burnout. Due to the high turnout rate of patients in a government hospital, the ratio of lay counsellors to patients is inversely proportional. This observation is drawn from my own experience as a trauma counsellor at a public hospital. If this statement is fair, then the research results by Ortlepp & Friedman (2002) become significant. Accordingly, they indicate that an increase in involvement in trauma counselling cases will indicate an increase in posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms in volunteer lay counsellors.

Moultrie (2004) indicates that many volunteers prepossess traumatic stress, thus granting the volunteer the prospect of relating to clients/patients, the denouncement of which can be beneficial to both the client/patient and the volunteer. A further outcome of the study indicated that a volunteer's participation in a training regimen often dissipated the effects of primary and secondary traumatic stress. This outcome is also supported by other research conducted by Wilkins (1997) and Fischer & Cole (1993). Both authors indicate equivalent findings. In terms of subjective experience, all the participants in the abovementioned studies plainly believed that they were benefactors to society. This belief was reinforced by their religious associations. Compassion fulfilment ranked high in the experiences of these volunteers and therefore suggested an elevated constituent of self-efficacy which, in turn, serves as a defensive operation against compassion fatigue. It is theorised that the participants of this study will possibly share similar experiences, although one must be aware of any dissimilarities which may or may not

transpire. As an annotation, one may acknowledge compassion fatigue as the steady minimisation of empathy over a period of time, often, but not exclusively, amid victims of trauma or persons who may encounter secondary traumatic stress (Figley, 1995).

Converse to the above-mentioned literature, research by Kassam-Adams (1995) and Schauben & Frazier (1995) explores the lay counsellors' experiences of positive consequences. These personal vindications for including positive characteristics is palpable: where subjective truth is fundamental, bona fide research does not necessarily have to focus on the negative in order to be constructive since the negative aspects only have meaning because of the existence of the opposite, the positive.

Resilience

Resilience is defined as the capacity to recuperate, be buoyant, or to return to its original shape (Farlex, 2008). Considering the possibility of direct and or secondary exposure to traumatic stress in volunteer lay counsellors (Ortlepp & Friedman, 2002), it may also be important to explore ideas of resiliency as volunteer lay counsellors often continue with their work regardless of their direct and secondary exposure to traumatic experiences. According to Hall (2006), resilience has become a "valued quality" in the present climate, but specifically to individuals engaged in crisis care. As a coping tool, resilience indicates the development of counsellor confidence in efficiently coping with change, as well as the possibility of reframing negative experiences into positive experiences.

In a study in South Africa (Moultrie, 2004), burnout appeared to be minimal amongst many volunteers. The researcher's rationalisation for this finding was that low levels of burnout were a product of volunteer autonomy (rather than the limitations of an employee) and this aspect appears to shelter the volunteer from engaging in surplus tasks. In addition, their sustainability as helpers has allowed these volunteers to cultivate apposite defensive stratagems. Although this latter feature was insufficiently researched in this study, it would be valuable to consider this aspect in the current investigation.

Social Identity

Baron and Byrne (2003) suggest that social identity is that which defines and guides the self both in self- conceptualisation, as well as self-evaluation. This indicates that a person (in this case, the volunteer lay counsellor) may identify him/herself by his/her perception of the personal and shared attributes, such as age, race and religion. Within this framework of self-identity, it may be useful to explore the participants' perceptions of their self concepts. This seems pivotal to the study purely because actions and experiences are based on how one perceives him/herself. This is evident in Baron and Byrne's (2003) definition of self-concept as "one's self-identity, a basic schema consisting of an organised collection of beliefs and attitudes about oneself" (p.162).

The Wounded Healer

According to Sedgwick (1994), Carl Jung described the wounded healer as an analyst, in this case the volunteer, with conscious or unconscious personal wounds which may be activated due to his/her identification with the patient's wounds. Jung was of the view that the engagement in this type of interface could be potentially perilous as this interaction may allow the counsellor to be vulnerable to contamination by the patient's wounds and/or having the counsellor's wounds revived.

This is significant in the experience of the volunteer lay counsellors as some volunteers may engage in the voluntary counselling process as a means of compensating for his/her grievances. Indeed, my experience with members of the research population bears testimony to this process. Whether this theme does or does not transpire during the research process will become apparent during the analysis phase and should therefore be kept in mind during the research process.

Objectives

Very little research regarding the lived experience of becoming and being a volunteer lay counsellor was unearthed. It is, however, a subject which is imperative to explore since the voluntary sector contributes significantly to the mainstream South African economic sector. This, paralleled with my experience as an intern trauma counsellor, incited an interest and enthrallment in the field - above all for its being closely related to psychology as a discipline. I am consequently of the view that this topic merits further investigation.

Becoming and being a volunteer lay counsellor indicates two distinct but interconnected areas. Psychological constructs such as altruism, social identity, and so forth, appear to relate to both areas, and thereby the overall experiences of this populace.

The theories and studies explored in this body of work stem from a broad-spectrum discernment to a scientific appreciation of the effects of universal understanding.

The scientific value indicated in this study is a derivative of the data acquired in terms of psychological themes obtained via the analysis of themes related to the lived experience of volunteers. This will undoubtedly encourage an appreciation of the connection between the volunteer's experiences and psychological operations which define these experiences. As such, this study may provide premises and direction for further studies - both qualitatively, as well as quantitatively.

The objective of the study is therefore to gain insight into the lived experiences of becoming and being a volunteer lay counsellor, using a case study approach.

Structure of the Dissertation

The research will be conveyed in the form of a dissertation. The results are expounded as recommended in terms of the chosen methodology, as illustrated in the following chapter.

Summary of Chapter 2

This chapter pivoted on placing existing literature within the context of this investigation. An exoskeleton was used as imagery to define the literature review as the supporting structure of the research process.

The content was further supplemented by a review of historical perspectives regarding lived experiences. This related durably with the process of becoming and being a volunteer lay counsellor.

Thereafter, topical perspectives were explored. The topics therein focused on the value of volunteers, as well as the modes of operation within which counsellors operate. These modes were then juxtaposed on the character structure of counselling-orientated individuals.

A critical enquiry of research in Britain and South Africa ensued, effecting a discussion on the probable motivations to counsel. Thereafter, research regarding various approaches to volunteering were explored in terms of the subcomponents of the motivations to volunteer. The interplay between motivations and experience became apparent, suggesting the dynamics which appear to operate with regards to South African volunteer lay counsellors. However, these dynamics do not appear to be exclusive to the South African volunteer populace and a recommendation for further research within the South African volunteer domain was made.

Other topical factors such as age, gender, and politics we examined in terms of volunteerism. This section of the review then unearthed the role of religion and spirituality in the lives of volunteers.

The ideas then converged on helping behaviour. This resulted in a discussion of the idea of an altruistic personality. The discussion of altruism then focussed on the various types of altruism and placed this within the context of humanness. The altruism-egoism hypothesis was examined and united with the empathy-altruism hypothesis. Subsequently, important issues such as culture and collectivism were considered in terms of the experience and motivation of volunteer lay counsellors.

To conclude the section on convergent perspectives, discussions surrounding ideas about traumatic stress; resilience; social identity; the wounded healer; and personality assessment were investigated. This led to a review of the researcher's objectives. To conclude the literature review, the structure of the dissertation was proposed.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Framework

Paradigms are general frameworks through which to see life, they provide a set of assumptions about the nature of reality. A paradigm is what we think about the world but cannot prove (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These paradigms or systems of thinking guide a study by defining its nature along the dimensions of ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology specifies the nature of the reality to be studied. Epistemology specifies the nature of the relationship between the researcher and what can be known. Firstly the term epistemology will be defined. Modernism, as an epistemological stance will be highlighted in order to set the stage for the discussion on the shift away from modernism towards postmodernism in Psychology. The basic principles of the "general systems theory" and "second order cybernetics" will then be referred to in order to provide the reader with a more comprehensive picture of the move towards postmodernism. A brief discussion of the fundamental concepts of postmodernism will follow after which "constructivism" and "social constructionism" as theoretical stances will be highlighted. Finally it will be explained how "social constructionism" will be applied to this study.

The methodology defines the practical way in which the researcher goes about doing the research (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). As such a paradigm's strength is that it allows action to take place, its weakness is that the reasons for the action are hidden in the unquestioned assumptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The assumptions underlying the chosen paradigm determine what questions the researcher asks and how these questions are answered (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

Terre Blanche and Durheim (2006) describe three paradigms: the positivist, interpretive and constructionist. In this chapter, these paradigms will now be described so that the current research can be placed into its theoretical context and its guiding framework described.

The Positivist Paradigm

The positivist paradigm sees reality as stable, external and governed by laws (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). The epistemology defines the researcher as detached from the subject being studied (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). This methodology relies on control and manipulation of reality, it is usually quantitative in nature with experimental designs that involve hypothesis testing. This methodology aims at providing an accurate description of the laws that govern reality (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

The Interpretive Paradigm

The methodologies used are qualitative in nature and acknowledge this subjective relationship between the researcher and subject (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

The researcher's point of view, biases, and personal experiences that impact on the study must be explored and addressed (Creswell, 1997). Methods rely on detailed first-hand accounts. People's reality can be discovered by interacting with them and listening to them (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). The subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind behaviour are explained (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

The Constructionist Paradigm

Last but not least, the constructionist paradigm sees reality as socially constructed. Systems of meaning originate on a social rather than individual level (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). Facts are created through an interactive process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This kind of research looks at how social signs and images have the power to create particular representations of people and objects and these underlie the way people experience them (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). The methods allow the researcher to deconstruct various versions, thereby raising the conscious awareness in people of conditions that restrict behaviour and alienate individuals (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

The Paradigm Guiding the Current Study

The epistemology chosen is a combination of thematic analysis and case study research, which falls under the social constructionist paradigm and uses qualitative methodology.

Defining Epistemology

According to the new Imperial Reference Dictionary (cited in Becvar, 1996), the term "epistemology" is derived from two Greek words, "episteme" meaning knowledge, and "logos" meaning reasoning. Vorster (2003, p. 17) cited in Becvar (1996), states that the concept epistemology was originally a philosophical notion that "referred to a set a analytical and critical techniques that defined boundaries for the process of knowing."

Social constructionism is a contemporary approach within psychology and psychotherapy and falls under the umbrella of postmodernism philosophy. Social constructionism and social constructivism both acknowledge that more than one reality or account of reality exists. However, social constructionism takes the effects of a larger social and cultural contexts into account, and concurs with postmodernism that all accounts of perceptions of reality are not equally valid. Volunteering can therefore be viewed in many different ways, but its meanings are influenced by our social and cultural contexts.

Social constructionist epistemologies aim to "overcome" representationalist epistemologies in a variety a ways.

The research epistemology guides what you can say about your data, and informs how you theorize the meaning. The constructionalist perspective on meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced, rather than inherited within individuals (Burr, 1995). Therefore, thematic analysis conducted within a constructionalist framework cannot and does not seek to focus on motivation or individual psychologies, but instead seeks to theorize the sociocultural contexts, and structural conditions, that are provided.

The Newtonian or Modernistic Epistemology

The modernistic epistemology is also known as the Newtonian epistemology. It rests on the belief that knowledge can be obtained objectively and known universally (Stanton, 2005). It is within this modernistic epistemology that scientists and philosophers such as Aristotle, Descartes and Newton shared a thinking in which they believed that there is a true nature of things out there, a true reality that ought to be investigated and understood (Fourie, 1998). In their quest for understanding and ultimately controlling reality, modernistic thinkers ascribe to three fundamental beliefs, namely reductionism, linear causality and neutral objectivity (Fourie, 1998). These fundamental beliefs link with each other but will be referred to separately.

Reductionism

The assumption points to the Newtonian notion that an observed object or phenomenon needs to be broken up into its constituent parts in order to measure, understand and rebuild it, (Becvar & Becvar, 2006; Schwartzman & Simon, cited in Fourie, 1998). The aim of reductionism, therefore is to ultimately understand the whole (Schwartzman & Simon, cited in Fourie, 1998) and to "uncover the laws according to which the world operates" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006, p.4). The assumption is that this procedure will lead one (researchers and/or observers of phenomena) to those absolute truths about the reality out there that needs to be discovered (Becvar & Becvar, 2006). Once this reality is discovered one is able to make certain inferences and predictions about human behaviour. Therefore, one is then able to exert control over the world in which we live, as well as over its inhabitants.

After these smaller parts have been identified, it is believed that researchers can make conclusions about particular events and sequences of events, the way in which particular events are believed to result in other events and ultimately phenomena about helping behaviour, point to the next modernistic premise termed linear causality and will be referred to next.

Linear Causality

The second assumption underlying modernist thinking implies a cause and effect notion, and holds that a particular "new behaviour" or outside "correction" (cause) will result in a predictable

outcome (effect). In other words, there is the belief that one part or element causes the other (Fourie, 1998). This causes and effect philosophy implies that, should one be able to answer the question, "Why?", then one will be able to solve the problem at hand (Becvar & Becvar, 2006). However, in order to answer the question, "Why?", one often needs to trace the sequences of cause and effect events in history, as is done during the process of reductionism. This is believed to lead to a better understanding of particular outcomes in the present.

For example, researchers can study a population of volunteers and find that, according to the norm of the sample, there have been particular life events leading them toward volunteering. In this way a conclusion can, for example, be made that, should a person experience particular life events such as growing up with charitable parents at a particular age, he or she is destined to become generous. Such findings or conclusions are often measured against a normative standard. This cause and effect reasoning therefore tends to limit alternative possible outcomes of people's reactions to these particular life events. The same cause and effect reasoning is often applied to design studies that search for solutions to eliminate "problems" such as lack of employment in an attempt to make individuals more "functional" and ultimately aim to make the person fit into the norm. Such found "solutions" also tend to make little room for different outcomes on different people. Various theorists, including Durrheim (1997, p.175), refer to this way of thinking about the world as a "utopian vision of modern psychology" which, as a science with modernist premises, "planned to predict and control human behaviour".

Neutral Objectivity

Thirdly, the assumption of neutral objectivity refers to the belief that one can and should observe phenomena objectively (Becvar & Becvar, 2006; Fourie, 1998). This implies that the observer stands separated from that which is being observed or researched and does not exercise any influence over it whatsoever (Becvar & Becvar, 2006; Fourie, 1998). Such an objective stance to observation and/or research leads the observer to find or see that which is believed to be the ultimate truth (Colapinto, as cited in Becvar & Becvar, 2006; Fourie, 1998). In essence, this modernistic belief holds that a "single, stable and knowable reality" does exist (Gergen & Neimeyer, as cited in Lyddon & Weill, p.76). This "reality and the theories about this reality are seen as either/or, black or white, right or wrong explanations" of the world (Becvar & Becvar,

2006). For example, the researcher/therapist is believed to exist independently from this reality, which allows the observer to observe reality without also influencing it (Becvar & Becvar, 2006).

For example, the researcher is believed to have an objective view of a person's particular situation and/or behaviour so much so as to be able to measure certain behaviours according to an "objectively attained norm" and ascribe certain terms such as "dysfunctional" to them. This is done whilst believing that the researcher's choice of behaviour is attained through objective means, meaning that it is free of any personal values or standards. Secondly, it is believed that the nature in which the researcher introduces this alternative to the person, can be done in an objective manner.

Fourie (1998) writes of the growing confidence that Newtonian scientists, particularly in the field of physics, attained by the end of the 19th century. The confidence was of such a nature that they "believed that the basis for understanding the universe was virtually complete" (Fourie, 1998, p.12).

The thinking in human sciences was influenced by the Newtonian epistemology which, as was highlighted above, looked at how human behaviour could be reduced to its basic parts and how these parts could be linked to each other through cause and effect (Fourie, 1998). As psychologists and researchers in the field of psychology hoped to gain the same recognition for their work as other scientists did, with what they believed to be a value-free and objective science, they too embraced these methods in their attempts to explain human phenomena (Becvar & Becvar, 2000). This is how the focus in psychology became the "individual and the individual's specific behaviours or the internal events of the human mind" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006, p.5). However, in spite of this growing confidence, prominent modernistic physicists such as Einstein, Planck and Heinsenberg started realising a growing lack in the pure Newtonian way of thinking in order to understand more complex phenomena in the world (Auerswald, cited in Fourie, 1998). These Newtonian or modernistic scientists drew mankind's attention to the "interconnected dynamic system of relationships", which "led to a different view of the

universe" (Fourie, 1998, p.12). A questioning of that which was once unquestionable started, and sparked the emergence of thinkers with more "holistic" approaches towards phenomena.

The Move Away from Modernism

With the shift away from Modernism, a focus on the interconnectedness of parts and on patterns became important. In addition, the context in which the phenomena occurred was considered important for the first time. This sensitivity to the context also influenced the manner in which those in the field of psychology considered human behaviour. Following from these realisations, the possibility of objective observation was questioned and sparked a debate around the neutrality of the observer (Fourie, 1998). Hence, the shift toward a new epistemology began.

Two ways of thinking emerged from this shift, namely "general systems theory" or "simple cybernetics", and "second-order cybernetics" or "cybernetics of cybernetics". These movements mark the shift away from Newtonian or modern epistemology towards the postmodern epistemology in the field of psychology.

To illustrate how the nature of thinking about the world, particularly regarding the neutrality of the observer, changed, general systems theory will be briefly highlighted after which second order cybernetics will be discussed. This is important for this study as postmodernism and social constructionism both believe that how we observe is coloured by the lens through which we look. According to postmodernism and social constructionism, an objectively knowable reality and therefore an objective stance to observation is believed to be unlikely.

An Epistemology of Cybernetics

Cybernetics refers to the epistemology in which "units of interconnectedness are being seen as parts of the larger wholes" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006, p.64). Hoffman (1990, pp. 1-2) points out that this concept, termed cybernetics, came from Nobert Weiner who referred to it as "the science of communication and control". In essence, this new way of thinking shifts the focus and sole responsibility from the individual, to considering the nature of relations among people; how

they mutually influence each other in a reciprocal causal manner, as opposed to a linear causal manner becomes the focus of inquiry (Becvar & Becvar, 2006).

"Systems theory" and cybernetics in general are often used as synonyms and share the same fundamental principles. In essence, the fundamental beliefs imply that a system has the ability to correct itself (Keeney, cited in Becvar & Becvar, 2006). However, a distinction is made between "simple cybernetics" (general systems theory) and "cybernetics of cybernetics" (second order cybernetics) (Becvar & Becvar, 2006). This distinction has to do with the position of the observer. A brief discussion of both follows.

Simple Cybernetics

At the level of simple cybernetics, the observer places him- or herself outside that which is being observed, and the focus lies in the description of "what" is happening (Becvar & Becvar, 2006). The observer is said to hold a "bird's eye view" perspective in relation to the observed phenomenon and/or system.

According to Becvar and Becvar (2006), the fundamental beliefs regarding "general systems thinking" or "simple cybernetics" include the following:

Recursion: which implies a focus on the interaction between people, as opposed to a focus on the individual or a phenomenon in isolation. The belief is that systems and individuals influence each other recursively. This also holds that the relationship, and the context in which it occurs, are of fundamental importance. Following from this, the focus for observation thus falls on the relational interaction as opposed to merely the individual or past events. The search for cause behind a phenomenon and the natural question "Why?" is replaced by the search for "What?" is happening. This shift in thinking emphasises recursion as opposed to causality.

Feedback is a process pointing to a system's ability to "correct itself". Becvar and Becvar (2000, p.66) define feedback as "the process by which information about the past behaviours is fed back into the system in a circular manner." In other words, a system is believed to channel information

about its output back into itself, and can be accomplished either by the environment or other systems (Fourie, 1998). Positive and negative feedback thus points to the impact that certain behaviour can have on a system and the manner in which the system responds to this behaviour. Positive feedback refers to change that occurs and which is accepted by the system, and negative feedback points to no change occurring within the system. Again, the context here remains important in order to determine the efficiency of this process (Becvar & Becvar, 2006).

Morphostasis and Morphogenesis are also important fundamentals in simple cybernetics. Morphostasis points to a system's tendency to remain stable, whilst morphogenesis implies a system's tendency to welcome change or shifts. A good balance between these states seems necessary in order for a system to remain healthy and functioning (Becvar & Becvar, 2006).

Rules according to which systems tend to function are also recognised by systems theorists. These rules are evident in the patterns of interaction in relationships. Due to the diverse and unique nature of different systems, these sets of rules also function as boundaries between systems, and can be determined by observing the patterns according to which systems behave. Members of the system tend to abide by these often unspoken rules, even though they are not always consciously aware of them (Becvar & Becvar, 2006).

Boundaries imply the hierarchical structures within the systems as well as the subsystems within systems and the suprasystems that a system is part of. These invisible boundaries divide these systems from each other (Fourie, 1998) and regulate the kind and amount of information from and to the system.

How open or closed a system is will determine the amount of new information that the system will allow to enter into it. Again, the balance here seems important as an extreme of either one could point to a system that does not function as healthily as it could. The context will also determine whether a system needs to be more open or more closed. This is often important to ensure the system's survival in a particular context (Becvar & Becvar, 2006).

<u>Entropy and Negentropy</u> links with the above concepts of openness and closedness. Entropy is said to be the state that a system is in when it is either too closed or too open, which holds a danger for the survival of the system. Negentropy points to a system that has a healthy balance between openness (allowing in new information in order to grow) and closedness (not allowing in information that might threaten survival) (Becvar & Becvar, 2006).

<u>Equifinality and equipotentiality</u> are concepts that lead one to ask the question "What?" The process is therefore looked at, instead of merely a sequence of cause and effect that is often traced far back into past events. The focus therefore does not fall back on past events in the person's life but more on the here and now interactional patterns that are believed to maintain the phenomena/behaviour. Equifinality, in the system's context, refers to those repeated interactional patterns, whereby people engage with each other, leading them to the same endings. The systems can thus be said to "be its own best explanation of itself, for regardless of where one begins, the end will be the same" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006, p.71). Equipotentiality holds that there may be different ends, although the beginnings may have been the same. This viewpoint cautions against the notion that set developmental rules or achievements will necessarily lead to a particular outcome that is always the same for all.

<u>Communication and information processing</u> are said to be the essence of systems theory, where interactional patterns between people are the focus of observation. The important fundamentals here are, firstly, that "one cannot behave, one cannot communicate and the meaning of a given behaviour is not the true meaning of the behaviour, it is however the personal truth for the person who has given it a particular meaning" (Becvar & Becvar, 2006, p.73). Also important to note here is that communication takes place in three different ways, namely the "verbal" (the actual words being spoken), the "nonverbal" (meaning with which the sender of the verbal message communicates it and lies in nonverbal communications such as tone of voice) and the "context" (the situation that will determine the kind of rules in a relationship). The latter two together are often referred to as "analogue" or "process", which is the part of the communication and information processing when observing interactional patterns.

The manner in which communication occurs and how information is shared between people in a particular context, points to the relationship and wholeness aspects of a system. The relating individuals plus their interactions indicate that "the whole is greater than the sum of its part" and refers to an important basic premise of systems theory (Becvar & Becvar, 2006, p.75). The interaction styles within the context thus become the focus.

Chapter Four

Methodology

Aims and rationale

The researcher is interested in exploring the efforts made by this small subset of volunteers in comparison to the large population base of Pietermaritzburg, Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa.

A substantial proportional of non-profit groups rely on volunteers in pursing their objectives, (Williams, 1999). There is considerable evidence, mainly from surveys of counsellors and psychotherapists in the USA (McLeod, 2011)

This study has implications not only for the volunteers but also for the organisation that they assist.

Research design

Research is situated within a landscape. It is my task to situate myself within this context. In order to do this, I shall place primary reference upon the discussion on the meanings of methodology by Neuman (2000) and the alternative paradigm dialogue by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

Neuman (2000) describes the researcher as a traveller who is, "not native" to a foreign land. The "native" is capable of producing "a primary account" of the land, whereas the traveller can only produce "an outside view". Neuman proclaims that the closer the view of the traveller is to that of the native, the better it is. Accuracy in the depiction of a social activity reflects the knowledge gained of that activity itself. The researcher has to gain mastery of the required knowledge in and of the field of study in order to present an accurate documentation of the social action under study. Neuman further describes research as "a map" outlining the "social world", a "tourism guide book" in which the informal norms and local customs could be studied.

Another author who views research as a journey is J. Mouton (1996). Mouton sees the journey as having the following four dimensions:

- the traveller, who is not seen as "the native", as with Neuman, but as having a definite "motive or reason for undertaking the journey" as he has "certain resources at his disposal";
- the destination;
- the route, which is seen as being defined by the destination in relation to the point of departure;
- the appropriate mode of travel or transport.

Mouton argues that the same elements are present in scientific enquiry;
- the scientist is seen as the traveller who has a definite motive and available resources, including people, time, finance and infrastructure at his disposal;
- the research objective or goal of producing valid and truthful knowledge is seen as the destination;
- the phenomenon or aspect of the social world to be investigated (or the terrain which is investigated) is the route;
- the methodologies to be employed is the route and the appropriate mode of transportation.

Mouton, (1996) represents this journey as a multidimensionality of science in the following figure (5.1).

Figure 5.1 The multidimensionality of science
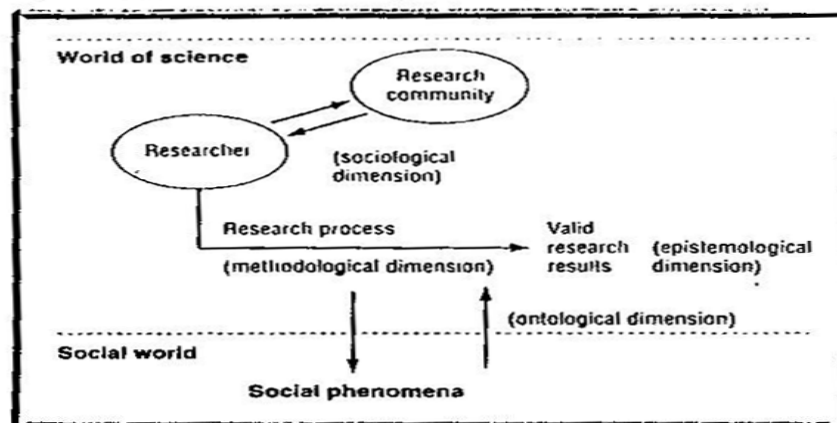
I think that the difference in the journeys, as viewed by Neuman and Mouton, is that Neuman is embedded in the interpretivists reflection of social science being a reflection of the social reality, whereas Mouton sees the researcher and the research community as embedded in the worlds between the world of science and the social world.

Pring (2000) explains that our view of the world is dependant upon the concepts through which experience is organised, objects identified as significant, descriptions applied and evaluations made. He maintains that research must refer to the world so described and evaluated, otherwise he says, it is something else being researched.

Neuman (2000) presents the argument that the positivist uses a set of procedures to evaluate a theory, the positivists believe in logically deducing from theory, collecting data and analysing facts so that other scientists can repeat the procedure followed, and the explanation of the procedure is considered true when it stands up to the test of replication. Neuman explains that the interpretivist social scientist understands that the truth of a theory is tested by those who study it and whether they are able to understand deeply or enter into the reality of those being studied.

Neuman explains further, that the interpretive approach is sensitive to context that uses various methods to get inside the ways others see the world and are concerned with feeling with others and their world views instead of testing laws of human behaviour.

Beside the positivist and interpretivist social scientist, Neuman also discusses the critical social scientist. The founders of this approach were Karl Marx (1818 to 1883) and Sigmund Freud (1856 to 1939), also further elaborated by Theodor Hdorno (1903 to 1969), Eric Fromm (1900 to 1980) and Herbert Marcuse (1898 to 1979). Neuman points out that the positivist scientist is seen as being "narrow, anti-democratic and nonhumanist in its use of reason".

Neuman explains further that Jurgen Habermas, author of Knowledge and Human Interest (1971) and Paulo Freire (1921 to 1997) author of Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970) also fall within the critical social scientist approach.

Neuman explains that the critical approach differs from both the positive and the interpretivist approach in that the critical social scientist does not merely study the world but instead acts on it. An interesting aspect to the critical approach is that the researcher is concerned with the liberation of the participants in the research study. Neuman explains that the critical social scientist makes a moral choice in not merely burying the results of his studies in some university library but actively involves his subjects in a transformative process.

Paradigms

Mouton (2001) discusses the multidimensionality of science as "ontological questions" which he says can be outlined as follows:

1. Ontological : what is the nature of the "knowable"? Or, what is the nature of "reality"?
2. Epistemological: what is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or the knowable)?
3. Methodological: how should the inquirer go about finding out the knowledge?

The definitions of these terms are outlined as follows:

Ontology is the branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of logic - the set of entities presupposed by a theory.

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, especially the study of its validity, methods and scope. It comes from the Greek "Epistêrmê", knowledge.

Methodology is the system of methods and principles used in a particular discipline; the branch of philosophy concerned with the science of method and procedure.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explains that the focus of the science of positivism began since the time of Descartes (1596 to 1650). Guba says that his concern in this article is with those paradigms that guide disciplined inquiry.

It is interesting that in his introduction to this article, Guba says it is not surprising that most people attempting to define the term paradigm are unable to offer any clear statement of its meaning, although he has said that his article is concerned with those paradigms that guide disciplined inquiry. Clearly, the question of not casting the term in stone is much respected by Guba. He explains that Thomas Kuhn was the person who was most responsible for bringing the concept of paradigms to researchers awareness.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) use the word paradigm in this chapter in its most common or generic sense of meaning a basic set of beliefs that guides action. He explains that these answers are the beginnings or starting points which determine what the inquiry is, and how it is to be practised. He explains that these answers cannot be proven or disproven in any basic sense and he says that, if this were possible, there would be no doubt about how to practise inquiry. He explains that all such belief systems or paradigms are human constructions and as such are subject to errors and foibles that inevitably accompany human endeavours.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) investigates the basic belief of critical theory which he sees as an ideologically oriented inquiry which he explains include neo-Marxism, materialism, feminism, participatory inquiry and other similar movements as well as critical theory itself. He sees these perspectives as being properly placed together as they converge in rejecting the claim of value freedom made by positivists.

At this stage, it is necessary to obtain a clear understanding of the term perspective.

Perspective is:

1. a way of regarding situations, facts, etc. and judging their relative importance;
2. the proper or accurate point of view or the ability to see objectively;
3. in psychology, a mental view, a cognitive orientation, a way of seeing a situation or scene, Reber & Reber (2001).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explains that the true perspective has to be seen through a value window. He places significance upon the question of values, to what values and who's values shall govern. He explains that the choice of a particular value system tends to empower and enfranchise certain persons while disempowering and disenfranchising others.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explains that there appears to be a logical disjunction between a realist ontology coupled with a subjectivist epistemology.

Realist : an artist or writer who seeks to represent the familiar or typical in real life rather than an idealized, formalized or romantic interpretation.

Subjectivist : the doctrine that knowledge, perceptions, values, etc. are limited by and relative to the self or any theological theory that attaches primary importance to religious experience. Hence Lincoln and Guba (1985) is explaining that the critical realist addresses the disjunction between the realist and the subjectivist by concerted transformative action.

Pring (2000) explains that the further weaknesses of the positivist model were exposed by the work of Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn. Pring explains that these scientists were writing when it became known to some that Newtonian physics, mechanics and the theory of gravitation became confined within a limited sphere when Einstein introduced the revolutionary solution, that the total universe of knowledge is relative.

1. The design of this study will follow a relatively straight forward path from my hypotheses and intentions as is, for example, explained by Leedy (2005). Leedy explains that research is by its nature cyclical or, more exactly, helical and he advocates the following developmental steps in research:

2. Observing a particular situation and asking Why? What caused that? How come? (The subjective origin of research).

3. Production of one question becomes formally situated as a problem (this he says is the overt beginning of research).

4. The problem is then divided into simpler, more specific sub problems.

5. Preliminary data are collected that appear to bear on the problem.

6. The data appear to point to an intuitive solution to the problem. A guess is made, a hypotheses or guiding question, he says, is formed.

7. Data begin to be systematically collected.

8. The body of data is processed and interpreted.

9. A discovery is made, a conclusion is reached.

10. The tentative hypotheses is either supported by the data or it is not supported, the question is either answered (partially or completely) or not answered.

11. The cycle is complete.

The resolution of the problem or tentative answer to the question completes the cycle which is shown below in Figure. 1.1. Different routes are used to arrive at the same destination but the closed circle of Figure 1.1, he says, is deceptive. Research is really conclusive in a truer sense. The research cycle might more accurately be conceived of as a helix or spiral of research. In exploring an area of research, one comes across additional problems that need resolving and so the research process begins anew. "Research begets more research". This is depicted in a diagram beneath figure 1.1.

FIGURE 1.1

The research cycle
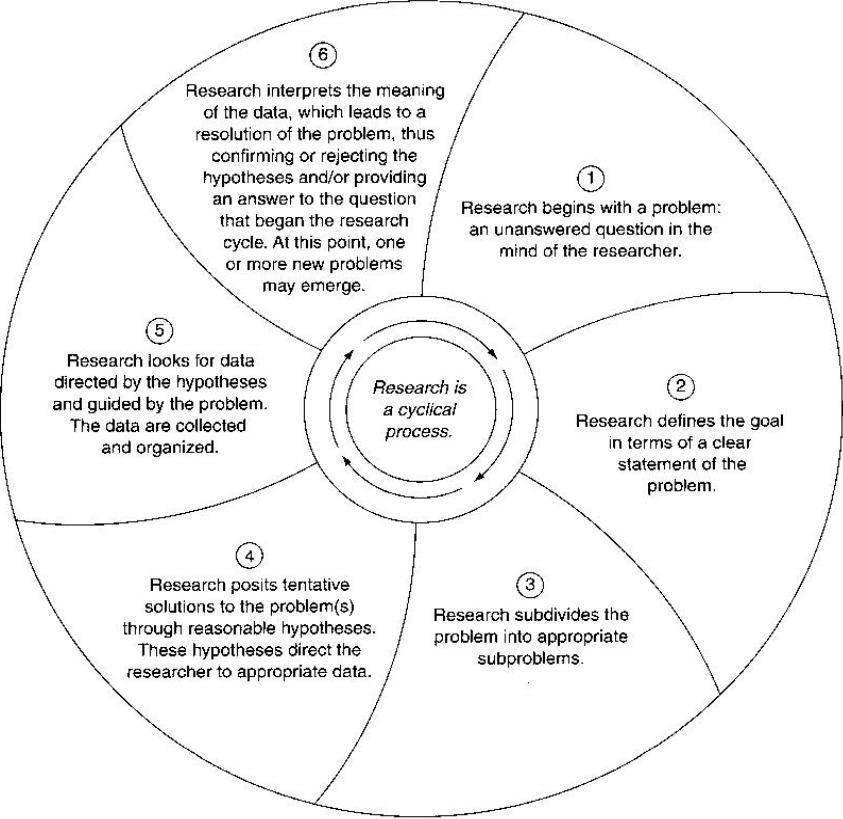
Research begins by being cyclical, as in figure 1.1 above but, as more cycles of research emerge from the initial cycle, the research begins to assume the form of a helix or a spiral of research. The number of researches built into the initial cyclical will determine the spiralling of the helix, which could have from one to six cycles indicating that learning is infinite or lifelong.

Learning is infinite as knowledge is infinite and continuous

Initial Cycle
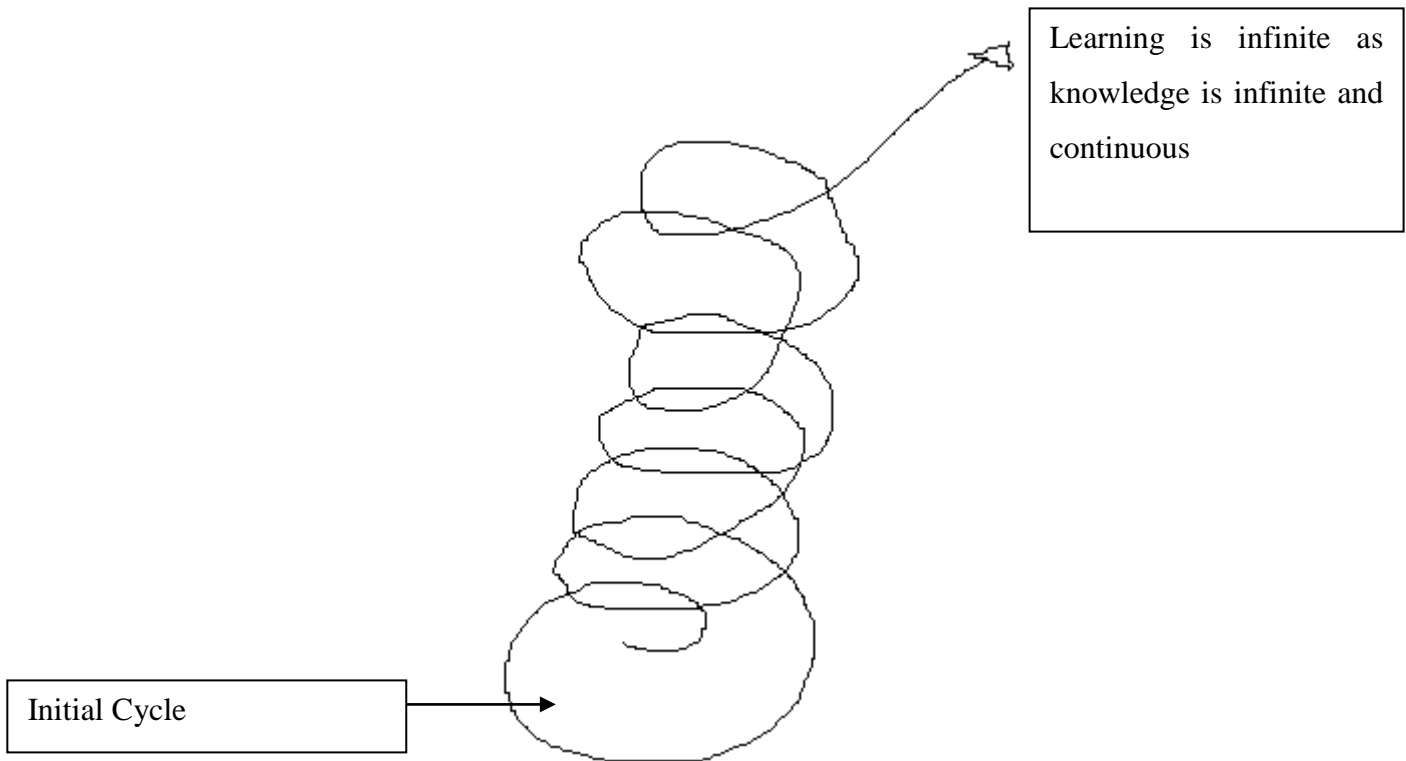
The research project utilizes a qualitative research design as it ensures that the subjective accounts and meanings of the participants are prioritized. The goal of qualitative research is to attempt to, as accurately as possible, present the perspectives of the people whom it is studying (Bryman, 2001).

Babbie (2004) state that qualitative research tries to describe and understand human behaviour. Qualitative research uses various methods, including semi-structured interviews, in order to gain insight into the experiences of individuals. It aims to develop an understanding of the research participant's "attitudes, behaviours, value systems, concerns, motivations, aspirations, culture or lifestyle" (Patton, 2005, p.1). That is, it tries to empathise with the participant while still trying to retain objectivity in order to accurately understand the ways in which the participant tries to make sense of his or her world. Thus, "such an approach clearly involves a preparedness to empathise (though not necessarily to sympathise) with those being studied, but it also entails a capacity to penetrate the frames of meaning with which they operate" (Bryman, 1988, p. 61).

Qualitative research is frequently conducted in the actual context of the participants. The focus is on the process rather than the outcome of the research. Qualitative research emphasizes the subjective experiences and perspectives of the participants. It aims for in-depth, thick and rich descriptions as well as understanding of the participant's behaviour and events (Babbie & Mouton, 2005). The researcher is not separated from the study but is seen as the main instrument in the research process (Babbie, 2004).

Sampling

The design or planning of interview inquiries rests on the principle of what Kvale (1996) cited in Henning (2004), explains in terms of the original (Greek) meaning of the word "method", which he says means "a route that leads to a goal". He also refers to the Latin word for "conversation" which means "wondering together with", Henning (2004). In her discussion of Kvale's word analyses, Warren (2002) cited in Henning (2004) explores the metaphor of travelling with the interviewer. The researcher plans to "travel or wander with" the respondent who has agreed to "respond". She needs to implement a design that will afford a companionable journey. As preparation, she contemplates the main research question and concomitant unit of analysis. She needs to select interviewees who can shed optimal light on the issue that she is investigating. In the interview she hopes to hear about what people have to say about what they do. She then needs to get to relevant people who can talk about what they do.

In the case of selecting research participants (sampling), the driving consideration is thus not the setting, as in the ethnographic research, but instead the main motivation is the people (Henning, 2004). She needs to get to the people who travel with her on the journey towards more knowledge about the topic.

The researcher will be using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is not concerned with random sampling as it is concerned with providing a sample of information-rich participants.

In other words, the participants show certain characteristics that the researcher is interested in.

This project used purposive sampling as it targeted volunteers from the counselling context. Purposive or judgment sampling is the most commonly used form of sampling in qualitative research and can be described as occurring when "the researcher actively selects the most productive sample to answer the research question" (Marshall, 1996, p. 523).

In purposive sampling, a particular case is chosen because it illustrates some feature or process that is of interest for a particular study. This does not simply imply any case we happen to choose (Becvar, 2006). In purposive sampling the researcher must first think critically about the parameters of the population and then choose the sample case accordingly. Clear identification and formulation of criteria for the selection of respondents is, therefore, of cardinal importance. Creswell (2007), comments as follows in this regard: "The purposeful selection of participants represents a key decision point in a qualitative study". Researchers designing qualitative studies need clear criteria in mind and need to provide rationales for their decisions. The search for data must be guided by processes that will provide rich detail to maximise the range of specific information that can be obtained from and about that context . In the case of purposive sampling, researchers purposely seek typical and divergent data.

This study asked volunteers within the counselling context to provide their services toward the research. It thus also used convenience sampling, as it was dependent on volunteers. Convenience sampling entails using the most accessible participants in order to save the researcher resources such as time, money and effort (Marshall, 1996). The study strategy was to sample volunteers from the counselling context. Although the results are not generalizable because of the small size of the sample, this strategy enabled a range of views and experiences to emerge.

The research study sampled three volunteers from a LifeLine counselling centre located in the Pietermaritzburg area.

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Based at LifeLine Pietermaritzburg
2. Age 18 – 90 years
3. Enrolled as a LifeLine Volunteer for more than 13 years
4. Audio consent form signed
5. Informed consent signed

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Inclusion criteria not met
2. Informed consent not obtained
3. Audio consent form not signed

Data Collection

Access to the participants was gained directly, either through scheduled interviews with the volunteers or through the faxing or emailing of a letter which detailed the purpose, the requirements and the ethical implications of the research study (Appendix A).

Qualitative interviews were used in this research study and are open in nature in that the researcher does not enter the interview process with any fixed, preconceived ideas (Babbie & Mouton, 2005). Rather, the interviewer, although he or she may have a set of general ideas or hypotheses about the nature of the participants' experiences, allows them to speak freely so that the process can determine the content of the data collected. Babbie and Mouton (2005, p. 289) believe that "a qualitative interview is an interaction between an interviewer and a respondent in which the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry but not a specific set of questions that must be asked in particular words and in a particular order." This is helpful in gaining information that is a true representation of a participant's experiences and therefore the researcher does not adhere too strictly to the list of questions which he or she may have prepared.

Interviewing

This involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals. It differs from administering questionnaires, where the respondent is required to record in some way his/her responses to a set of questions. The direct interaction of the interview can be a source of both its advantages and disadvantages as a research technique. One of the advantages is that it allows greater depth than is the case with other methods of data collection. A disadvantage is that it is prone to subjectivity and bias on the part of the interviewer (i.e. the respondents can tell you what you what to hear because of the way questions are posed, or if they know who you are and your interests).

Interviews can be used as principal means of collecting information of :

- What a person knows (knowledge and information).
- What a person likes/ dislikes (values and preferences).
- What a person thinks (attitudes and beliefs).
- May test hypotheses or suggest new one.
- Help identify variables and relationships.
- May be used in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking to follow up and validate other methods, or to probe and get deeper into motivations of respondents and their reasons for their responses.

Semi-structured Interviews

The study will use qualitative, semi-structured interviews as described by Henning (2004). All interviews will be audio-taped, if permissions for this can be obtained. These recordings will be transcribed and thereafter analysed. In cases where permission is not granted, extensive notes will be taken (Mouton, 2001, p.197).

Researchers use semi-structured interviews in order to gain a detailed picture about a participant's beliefs about, or perceptions or accounts of, a particular topic. This method gives

the researcher and participant much more flexibility. The researcher is able to follow up particularly interesting avenues that emerge in the interview, and the participant is able to give a fuller picture. Semi-structured interviews are particularly interested in complexity or process, or where an issue is controversial or personal. The researcher will have a set of predetermined questions on an interview schedule. The interview will be guided by the schedule rather than be dictated by it. The participant shares more closely in the direction the interview takes and he can introduce can issue the researcher had not thought about. In this relationship, the participant can be perceived as the expert on the subject and should therefore be allowed maximum opportunity to tell his story (Smith et al., 1995; 9-26). Questions are nearly always open-ended.

In order to gather information around the volunteer's experiences with volunteering, a list of questions was established as an aid for the researcher in forming an understanding of the participants' individual experiences. The questions asked in the semi-structured interview included:

- What made you volunteer at LifeLine?
- Do you believe people can learn from trauma?
- Do you find the counselling aspect difficult?
- Has the counselling changed your view on life?
- Did counselling come naturally to you?
- As you've been involved in this activity for so many years what, in your opinion, would the ideal criteria for a counsellor or a volunteer be?
- In terms of your family of origin, are you the eldest child, the middle child or the youngest child?
- Does volunteering come from your spiritual background or was there a role-model in your life who was involved in such an activity?
- Have you done any other form of volunteering besides in the counselling context.
- How do you sustain volunteering for this number of years?
- Do you think that counselling is a learning process?
- Did you ever wish that you received a stipend?

- It sounds as if you initially joined LifeLine purely on an altruistic basis. Would you agree?

- Would you say that you are a good listener? Have you always been the type of person who listens to friends and family in times of need?

- How has counselling helped in your life development. Has it given you any philosophies or insights into life?

- How would you describe what it feels like to be a volunteer?

- Once again, thank you for your participation and again the crux of the matter is why do you choose to help?

At the beginning of the interview with each participant, the research study was explained to her or him. An outline was given to the participant about what would be expected of her in the study by reading the relevant section to her (see Appendix A). In addition, participants signed a consent form for their participation in the study (see Appendix B) and the limitations of confidentiality were explained. Lastly, the participant's questions about the research study were answered. Each interview lasted about one hour and was audio- recorded.

Interviews are also helpful in obtaining information that may be experienced as personal or sensitive for the participant, such as issues around family or relational stress. Another advantage of using interviews containing open-ended questions is that they produce participant responses which are meaningful to the participant, culturally relevant, rich and explanatory and may provide the researcher with responses which he or she may not have anticipated (Ulin, Robinson, & Tolley, 2005).

The aim of this study was to inductively explore why these individuals choose to volunteer. Therefore, the most appropriate methodology was to use semi-structured interviews. Individual semi-structured interviews were held with the volunteers as a means to obtain data which were an accurate reflection of the participants' subjective experiences. They were also used as an opportunity to obtain contextual information.

Data analysis

Transcribing the data

Data was in the form of interviews which were recorded via an audio voice recorder. These interviews were then transcribed verbatim by hand and later typed out. Transcription often acts as the initial point of analysis, as it helps the researcher gain a better understanding of the data as well as assisting him or her develop the skills needed for the actual analysis process that follows (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was certainly true for the researcher of this project. The typed Word documents of the recordings were later printed and copied so that they could be analysed using thematic analysis.

The qualitative data will be analysed using thematic analysis as suggest by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, a primary data analyst will enter a process of data immersion whereby transcripts will be read and re-read to gain an overall understanding for the data. Initial coding will involve an open coding method whereby a line by line analysis will be done to assign text to codes. After the first two transcripts have been coded a second analyst will work with the primary analyst to develop a code book. Following open coding the data analysts will enter into a process of axial coding to understand the relationship between the codes. Codes will then be then be grouped according to themes.

Data was analysed using interpretive or thematic data analysis. According to Aronson (1994), this approach focuses on identifying the themes and patterns of living evident in the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) believe that this process enables a greater understanding of the research topic.

Thematic analysis as methodology

Thematic analysis that focuses on latent themes tends to be more constructionist, and therefore tends to start to overlap with thematic data analysis at this point. However not all 'latent' thematic analysis is constructionist.

Thematic analysis organises and describes the data set in rich detail and also interprets various aspects of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998, in Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process of thematic

analysis is not passive. Rather, the researcher is actively looking for themes and codes. The focus of thematic analysis is the organisation of data into categories and themes (Coolican, 1999). This is done in order to make comparisons between data. A category is a general place where statements that are similar in nature are placed (Coolican, 1999). It is from these categories that themes are generated. A theme emerges when several categories are joined or when a general idea that is found across many categories begins to form and is noted (Coolican, 1999). The existence of each category or theme that is generated will have to be justified by including verbatim samples from the data (Coolican, 1999). These are often samples of a participant's exact speech in the interviews or focus groups. These examples from the data help the researcher to note the variety of the participants' perspectives throughout the data set (Coolican, 1999).

During the process of recording categories, it is important that the researcher realizes that the categories are not fixed entities (Coolican, 1999). Rather, they are constantly revised the longer and more in-depth the data are analysed. Therefore, several categories may be eliminated, others added and some amalgamated into other categories. The researcher may keep a record of all the changes that he or she has made to the categories, as well as his or her reasons for making the changes (Coolican, 1999). In certain circumstances, the researcher may decide to gather further data during this stage.

It is also important to scrutinize and analyse the fit between data and the categories that have been developed (Coolican, 1999). Consideration should be made of whether the categories are full of relevant statements or relatively empty, whether there are deficiencies in some categories, whether tentative links can be made between categories or whether opposing categories might emerge if more data was gathered or different people interviewed (even if further data collection is impossible at this point, due to time constraints or lack of resources) (Coolican, 1999). Statements that do not fall into any category should be noted as odd or categories should be changed or developed so that these statements can fit somewhere (Coolican, 1999).

Individual cases can be analysed to screen for any inconsistencies or contrasts to the categories developed by the researcher (Coolican, 1999). Variation in the statements made by participants

can be an indication that the issue being discussed is complex in nature (Coolican, 1999). It is also helpful in assisting the researchers observe the different ways in which people construct their views through their choice of words (Coolican, 1999).

Once categories and themes are found, the process of coding can take place. The traditional method of coding is making photocopies of each statement and placing them into files labelled with a theme or category (Coolican, 1999). A cross-referencing system is used to keep track of statements that pertain to and are placed in many files (Coolican, 1999).

Process of Data Analysis Step by Step

Phases of Thematic Analysis

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data: Transcribing data, reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating Initial Codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic "map" of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research questions and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

The data analysis process

The first step of the data analysis approach is familiarisation and immersion (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Kelly, 2006). This entails the transcription of the data, repeatedly reading the data and writing down one's initial ideas (Braun & Clark, 2006). Once this is completed, the

researcher should be familiar enough with the data to know what kinds of things can be found there, what kind of interpretation can be supported by the data and which cannot (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The researcher therefore worked through all the data from the semi-structured interviews.

The second step begins with generating initial codes and is completed when the researcher is developing themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Terre Blanche et al., 2006). This is achieved by systematically attaching brief descriptions to small chunks of data (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). The codes that are developed constantly change as the researcher develops more ideas which help him or her get as close as possible to an accurate understanding of the participants' experiences. Thus, " the idea is really to get as close a fit of the codings to the data as possible without having a plethora of idiosyncratic codings" (Howitt & Cramer, 2008, p. 333).

Here the researcher analysed the transcribed audio tapes, looking for themes and codes in the transcripts. Photocopies of the transcripts were made so that they could be cut and grouped together after coloured marker pens were used to highlight pieces of text that were relevant pieces of code, as is suggested by Terre Blanche et al. (2006).

Step three involved searching for themes where the researcher analysed the generated codes and discovered those that are similar in nature. Terre Blanche et al. (2006) suggest five steps that the researcher may use that allow him or her to analyse the data and note the organising principles that naturally underlie it. The first is to use the language of the participants and not to alter it to the language that the researcher uses. The second is not to just summarise the data; it is important to think in terms of processes, functions, tensions and contradictions (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Thirdly, the researcher should find the optimal level of complexity, so that he or she does not have too few or too many themes (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). The fourth step encourages the researcher to not just accept one system; rather, he or she should observe what occurs when different themes are explored (Terre Blanche et al., 2006). Lastly, the researcher should remain focused on the aim or objective of his or her study.

The generated codes were then combined to create similar themes (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). This is a fluid process and the construction of themes entails change and adjustment with previously generated themes being discarded, retained or adjusted as required (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). Taylor and Bogdan (1989, in Aronson, 1994) describe themes as units obtained from patterns in the form of conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings or proverbs. Themes bring ideas or points of view together so that meaning or coherence can occur (Braun & Clarke, 2006). They allow the researcher to more accurately and fully understand the patient's experiences. A clear definition of each generated theme needs to be provided in order to ensure that its nature is fully understood (Howitt & Cramer, 2008). The researcher needs to identify examples of each theme to illustrate what the analysis has achieved (Howitt & Cramer, 2008).

The researcher analysed the transcripts of all the participants in order to develop themes by examining if any patterns could be established. The objective was to determine why volunteers choose to help, how they described their helping behaviour. A number of themes were established and a discussion of these follows in the next chapter.

The fourth step is interpretation and checking. It entails the building of a valid argument as to why one chose those particular themes (Aronson, 1994). A written account of the phenomenon that has been studied is given. It is at this stage that constantly referring to literature and incorporating it into the data analysis is important. This adds to the merit of the research by backing up one's findings with fact and previous research rather than relying on the researcher's possibly biased views or observations (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This is an important step in the data analysis process. The final interpretation must be acutely analysed so that it is cohesive, does not point to another interpretation, or to instances when one has over interpreted or instances where prejudice has occurred.

Assessing reliability and validity

Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olsen and Spies (2002) believe that it is the process of verification which is essential to the establishment of reliability and validity in a research study. In the opinion of

the aforementioned authors, verification helps the researcher in the decision-making process of data collection so that mistakes made at this stage may be noted and corrected before the data is analysed (Morse et al., 2002). The researcher is presented as having an essential role in the establishment of reliability and validity as it is he or she who decides what constitutes a code or theme and what does not. Thus, "it his or her creativity, sensitivity, flexibility and skill in using the verification strategies that determine the reliability and validity of the evolving study" (Morse et al., p.5). He or she is also responsible for ensuring that the question formation, literature, sampling, data collection and data analysis are congruent with each other (Morse et al., 2002). The verification methods that ensure reliability and validity are: ensuring methodological coherence, sampling sufficiency, developing a dynamic relationship between sampling, data collection and analysis, thinking theoretically, and theory development (Morse et al., 2002).

Coolican (1999) states that researchers conducting qualitative research use terms such as rigour, good practice and research evaluation rather than those of reliability and validity. He suggests several methods that researchers can use to ensure that their data, research findings and interpretations are considered reliable and valid. Examples of this include checking inter-observer reliability, gaining validation from the participants that the findings of the research study accurately reflect their meaning and repeatedly returning to the research setting to gather fresh data using questions gained from the early hypothesis (Coolican, 1999). Another useful method of ensuring validity and reliability is through the process of triangulation. This entails comparing the various methods used to gather data from a participant to determine if there is consistency in their answers. Inconsistent answers can be very useful to the researcher as a means to determine the different perspectives of a participant (Coolican, 1999).

Bryman (2001) suggests that in order to uphold reliability and validity it is important that researchers make their field notes and transcriptions publically available for inspection so that other researchers can come to their own conclusions about the findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that it is helpful to keep a log or "reflexive journal" which records all problems, ideas at various stages of the research, one's own reactions and values and their possible influence on the progress of the research. This is sometimes known as reflexivity - the practice of reflecting upon the ways in which the research progress may be influenced by one's own

attitudes and personal insights. Such reflexivity enables other readers to see what led to certain conclusions and to suggest alternative interpretations. Pidgeon and Henwood (1997), in Coolican, (1999) believe that checking the fit of data to categories or theory is an important method for ensuring reliability and validity. All the data should fit into categories and themes or there should be some discussion in the report of the data which did not fit. The data of this study fit the themes.

Ethical considerations

Vulnerability of participants

All the participants were over the age of 18 years; therefore, they were potentially not as vulnerable as child participants are. However, the subject of volunteering and the impact that it may have on one's life is potentially a very sensitive subject. Participants may be reluctant to speak about the adverse effects that this activity has on their lives and the way that it has potentially created a negative perception of their activity. Participants may also be hesitant to admit to disliking their activity, especially since volunteering is often perceived as a noble activity involved in with healing. The participants thus might be distressed by the interview process as well as stressed by it using more of their already limited time. It was decided that any distressed participants would be referred to a psychologist if needed. In addition, less threatening questions were asked at the beginning of the interview. Participation was voluntary and participants were informed that they were allowed to withdraw at any time.

Informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all the relevant parties involved in the study. A meeting detailing what the research entails was held with the director of LifeLine before consent was given to approach the volunteers. See Appendix B for a copy of the consent form.

Confidentiality

The terms of confidentiality were negotiated with the participants. Pseudonyms were used within the data analysis to further ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The limitations of confidentiality were also discussed.

Beneficence

Beneficence as an ethical principle refers to the need for research to be of social benefit (Van der Riet et al., 2005). Although no direct benefit was gained by the participants and the community, for example, in the form of interventions, the information that this study generated may potentially be very beneficial to the volunteers and directors of non governmental organisations who read the research report as perhaps they can create and implement their own interventions based on the information found in the research findings.

Non maleficence

This ethical principle refers to the need for research to not have a harmful effect on the participants or their communities. The researcher has to ensure that he or she in no way inflicts physical or emotional harm on the participants or exposes them to any increased risk of harm (Sadock & Sadock, 2003). The study was granted ethical clearance by the relevant ethics board of the University of South Africa and all the research data is being kept in a safe place. The data will be kept for at least five years. The data may only be used for further research with the consent of the participating volunteers and LifeLine, the researcher and her supervisor. The researcher used her professional training to ascertain whether any participant was adversely affected by the interview. However, none of the participants appeared to have suffered any emotional harm from the interview process and to the knowledge of the researcher no physical harm was inflicted on them due to their participation in the research. The participants were protected by the researcher's commitment to upholding the previously mentioned ethical principles, thus ensuring that no harm would be experienced by them through this process.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the aspects of the complex and time-intensive data collection and analysis phases of the study. This process was embarked upon by being cognizant of the requirements of the research methodology framing the research study as well as the ethical requirements of the profession of psychology. This ensured that the data collected was extremely rich in nature.

Chapter 5

Ascending from the Abyss of Depression

Emily's Story

Personal data

Participant One: Emily

Age: 69

Field of occupation: Retired

Research setting: Interview was conducted at Emily's home.

_____

Introduction

In this chapter the conversation between the researcher and the participant is carefully analysed and emerging themes are highlighted. The interviews are available on request. It needs to be noted that themes highlighted here may not be mutually exclusive. Neither are these themes meant to represent an ultimate truth about the reality of this particular person or about volunteers in general. The researcher therefore acknowledges that the themes highlighted here may be coloured by the lens through which she looked at this particular point in time. She further acknowledges that these themes are by no means exhaustive. Another person, looking through his or her particular lens, may therefore highlight different themes and/or add to the ones presented here.

The Story of Emily

Emily is a widow. She is presently a decidedly independent person and she lives alone. She has two grown children, one daughter and a son. Emily is a practising Buddhist.

The researcher met with Emily for the interview pertaining to this research study at Emily's home. She was the first participant to be interviewed for the research study, because she is retired and had time available. Emily appeared confident and answered her questions with certainty.

Emily joined LifeLine Pietermaritzburg in 1994 and has been a volunteer at LifeLine for 19 years. Emily admits that she was not always assertive and confident. She had moved to South Africa from Zimbabwe. Emily joined LifeLine Pietermaritzburg when she was going through a bad stage in her life. Emily was new in South Africa with two teenage children. Emily's husband was mostly away and she was very depressed. Emily started taking medication for depression. She did not feel comfortable taking regular medication for the depression. Emily sought counselling from LifeLine and gradually LifeLine put her back on track. Once Emily had recovered from the crisis in her own life, she decided to do the personal growth and counselling skills course.

Emerging Themes

The following themes emerged from Emily's story regarding her volunteering at LifeLine.

Need to receive help

Emily experienced stages of depression in her life. She explains the manner in which she felt.

> *Well, I was going through a very bad stage in my life. I was very depressed. My husband was away and I was new in South Africa with my two teenage children and I was very depressed.*

> *..then I went on medication for my depression and so and so forth, and gradually LifeLine put me on track completely.*

Emily appeared to have initially felt fearful and trapped in her new country, South Africa. Despite being of a depressive nature, Emily had self-motivation to seek help when necessary. Emily did not assign herself to a victim identity and accept the clinical label of depression. She rose above the depression by placing herself in a new role to help those in need.

I do have an optimistic outlook on life which is quite... quite paradoxical since I am a depressive. I have been a depressive most of my life. But I am on medication and I do have an optimistic world-view.

Emily has spent much time alone since her husband travelled a lot. Her children were also very independent. The need to help assisted in reducing the loneliness that Emily experienced. The loneliness increased after the death of Emily's husband. Emily felt lonely after the death of her husband and the isolation that Emily endured also motivated her need to help.

I felt very lonely. I was very isolated - so one day I phoned LifeLine and the friendliness of the person at the end of the line persuaded me that all was not lost.

Emily feels that she has endured much suffering in her life and she has a need to help those who have suffered.

I have always had an affinity for people who suffer. Maybe that's because I have had some suffering in my life so once I got the training I think, you know, my heart just went out to people who were suffering, and therefore, I wouldn't say that the counselling was that easy but I so wanted to help people help themselves get better.

Emily's need to receive help can be viewed as a way of learning to free herself from loneliness and isolation. She sees herself as being fortunate to have experienced a sense of loss of freedom. The loneliness and isolation encouraged her to seek help.

So I was very fortunate that I need the help, that I phoned LifeLine, that I made the contact and that I decided to do the training. And that was after I'd got help for myself because I was told that if I was in a bad position that I should not do the training but should wait until everything calmed down and I was feeling better. And I found that that was very good advice.

Need to Help

Emily acknowledges that she needed to receive help from LifeLine initially. LifeLine assisted her to stabilise her emotional and physical well-being.

> *I could get help, and that started me off on the path of getting help for myself and then, by extension, wanting to give help to others once I had, you know, got over the crisis that I was going through in my own life.*

Emily displays an open willingness for whatever feelings are real for the client. Emily is willing for realness to show through in the relationship. Emily sees counselling as a meaningful encounter in which both the client and the counsellor develop.

> *I think I have a need to help others, but I have learnt that you help others by helping them to help themselves and not just helping them.*

Emily seems to act in a genuine human way with her clients. Emily appears to practise congruence with her clients. Emily describes how she is able to live the feelings during counselling, be in the counselling relationship, and be able to communicate them appropriately.

> *I think it's volunteers have something in them that makes them a little different from other people and it's a bit like ask not what people can do for you, ask what you can do for them. It's a sort of philosophy, if you like, of trying to improve life quality, both for yourself and for others. And not just be concentrated on self.*

Emily further substantiates her need to help counselling clients.

> *Realising that we are all connected. We are all connected. Everything is connected. It's like the world is a huge spider's web and every creature and person and event is connected and so, if we can help somebody have a better life they will then bring about a better life for those in their life. It's a little like a stone in the pond and all the ripples*

going outwards. And it's just a life... a life view that says don't sit and think about yourself. You are part of the whole and you must do your part.

Emily feels a deep sense of congruence with herself and the wider society through being a volunteer counsellor at LifeLine. The researcher felt a sense of genuine realness from Emily. There was no facade of interest and concern.

The thing that we're all connected and that we must all... we're all here for a reason and we're here to help our fellow beings, if we can. And, after all, no man is an island. We're all coping the best way we can in a difficult world. And we need to help each other.

Emily's need to help does contribute to her need for fulfilment.

I think everybody volunteers for their own reasons and therefore there is always something in a person that there is a need, maybe, to do something that you feel is going to make a difference and that need is fulfilled by doing volunteer work.

Being a Good Counsellor
Emily began to elaborate on the criteria for a good counsellor. She believed that it is important for the counsellor to be non-judgemental and empathetic. Emily explains that she believes a non-judgemental stance aids empathy. She understood that empathy entailed understanding the client's private world and she is able to communicate some of the significant fragments of that understanding.

I think, possibly, to be non-judgmental and, of course, to be empathic – or empathetic – but the non-judgmental is very important because I've found that people who are judgmental tend to dry up the person that they're trying to counsel and they just, you know, do not want to divulge anything more about themselves, if they're feeling judged.

Emily stated that the tone of voice during counselling is very important. The researcher noted that Emily has a calm, gentle tone in her voice. She talks at an even pace and clearly enunciates her words.

> *You pick up people's reactions to what you might have responded, you know, and you realise that what are good... good ways of counselling and what are not so good ways of counselling. And there're especially, you know, your tone – the tone of your voice is very important. You need to have an encouraging, gentle tone, and... and I think your voice mustn't be too loud or too definite or too harsh. Your voice needs to have a gentle, encouraging tone. I think that's very important.*

Emily described further that the ability to listen is very important. She again displays congruence and sincerity with regard to understanding the story presented by the client.

> *I am a good listener, but I'm also a good talker (laugh). I am a good listener, but I like to express myself so maybe that is a two edged sword – I'm not sure – but yes, I do listen to people in... who are in trouble and then I do see the need to be absolutely quiet and just let them put everything on the table.*

Emily believes that volunteers learn as time progresses. She seems to see counselling as a skill that needs to be practiced and refined.

> *Mm. Learning all the time... all the time. And you learn of course by making mistakes. You don't go in to be a counsellor after training and... and... you're not a good counsellor – you learn by your mistakes, we all make mistakes, and you do learn and you pick up a lot of things intuitively.*

At the onset of the interview, Emily focussed on the isolation and loneliness she experienced in her life that lead her to seek help. As the interview progressed Emily's confidence and trust with

the researcher developed. Emily has had positive life experiences such as travelling that she recalls fondly.

> *I think that all my travelling experiences have helped. Born in Zimbabwe, married in Brazil, lived in Brazil, lived in Madagascar, lived in Mozambique, lived in Malawi and lived in Canada, and now living in South Africa. I think the more people and cultures you meet, the less judgemental you become.*

Emily is also an avid reader and her genres of reading have made her a good counsellor.

> *I quite like reading self-help books. Some of them are not very helpful, but there are some which I've found are extremely helpful and... and I wouldn't pooh-pooh self help books at all. But then, of course, there are the more... the more academic books that I haven't really managed to get hold of, many, but we do have a library at LifeLine and there are some very good books in there that some of the teachers at the University have donated and therefore, you know, it's ongoing. I... but I'm actually quite busy and I don't find that I have that much time for reading. It's one of the things that I need to do more of. But I like non-fiction. I don't read a lot of fiction. So, books on psychology are definitely in that... in the genre of the reading that I do.*

Emily indicated that she ensures that she maintains the confidentiality of her clients. She does respect the trust that has been bestowed to her.

Well, I just... I just don't talk about my life at LifeLine at all, to anybody, and that... it's just a separate part of my life. In core groups we are given the opportunity to discuss cases and also in face-to-face supervision with our psychologist, so we get enough outlet to discuss any aspect that we wish to discuss without breaking confidentiality. There's enough opportunity within the organisation to have proper debriefing and discussions about case management or process and things like that.

Burnout in Volunteers

Emily described the unconditional positive regard and commitment with which she has approached her volunteer counsellor activities. The researcher was concerned as to how volunteers manage phases of burnout.

Most of the time I don't feel anxious, unless it's been a suicide call or a very... a call where physical violence is involved, between the caller and his immediate family or others, then I'll feel a little bit anxious, but drained, certainly. In fact after a session on the telephone I am tired.

Well, I think it's essential to take regular breaks. I'd say once every year one needs to take a couple of month's rest. Complete rest, where you don't go into LifeLine House, where you don't necessarily have contact with any other LifeLiners. Of course, some LifeLiners are my personal friends, but then I just try not to talk about LifeLine. And that gives me an absolute fresh view when I come back and I come back refreshed. I think that the problem is, with so few volunteers, is that we tend to overload ourselves with duties and with other activities in the organisation. It does drain us. We do need to recharge our batteries by taking leave of absence.

But people do get burnt out and I have seen that happen and the biggest thing that I've seen happen is somebody who gets involved in every aspect of the organisation. Get's involved in telephone counselling, face-to-face, report reading, training, fund raising... all the different aspects. And they throw themselves in and become very enthusiastic, wanting to do everything, and I find that those people, after two or three years, are absolutely burnt out and they lose a certain perspective which I think is necessary. We all need perspective in that if we become too enmeshed in everything that's going on in the organisation we can then also become... we can feel that we're being used and abused.

Emily stated that burnout in volunteers could occur through abusive clients.

Yes, I do find the odd case difficult. I find people who are abusive and who swear at me, I find that difficult and challenging, but I don't carry that on to my personal life. Once, you know, I leave the counselling room, that's it. That's okay, but at the time I do find it does sometimes, you know, push my buttons and I feel, sort of used and abused by the caller. But then I realise that it's nothing to do with me. It is to do with him or her, and that they have issues that they're finding very frustrating to address and they take their anger out on the patient counsellor who tries to talk them through, so, really, at the time it's difficult but, if you don't take it on, you can get through... through it okay. I just realise people need more help than they really think they do.

Sustained Participation:

Emily joined LifeLine Pietermaritzburg in 1994. The researcher observed the enthusiasm and confidence with which Emily described her understanding of her volunteer role. Emily was 67 years at the time of the interview. She joined LifeLine when she was 50 years old. The researcher asked Emily to identify from her perspective how certain volunteers sustain their participation as LifeLine volunteers at the Pietermaritzburg centre.

The qualities that have sustained their participation – that is why they keep continuing? I think it is because most of them, like myself, have suffered or have problems and this takes them out of their problems and into the wider world where other people have very severe problems and it always is a reality check when you think that you have problems and then you can listen to a few phone calls of few people who are really, really stressed and have terrible problems. I think that brings one down too earth... keeps one grounded.

The lay counselling role at LifeLine Pietermaritzburg does not afford a stipend to reimburse volunteers. Emily did not express any need for compensation

No. No, I don't. This is strictly my contribution to a better world and I don't... no, I don't feel that I need payment at all, in any degree.

The researcher asked Emily if the on-going training benefited the volunteers in anyway. She acknowledged that the on-going training assisted in her sustained participation.

Absolutely. I have a lot of books and I also am very curious, I go to workshops, I go to on-going training. I'm very interested in the process, ja.

Once more, Emily was questioned about how LifeLine Pietermaritzburg sustained her interest for so many years. She insists that there was no need for incentives such as the end of year function, with the acknowledgement of the certificate.

No, oh no. No, not at all (laugh). No, not at all. I just think that I am a thirsty sponge and I have learned so much about life and so much about myself and I have… it's not so much the organisation, I think the organisation has struggled in many ways to keep the interest of volunteers and sometimes not always successfully, but I do it for my own… for my own fulfilment and it has become very important to me. Of course, the organisation does show its appreciation, both in words and in end of year parties, but I don't think a volunteer needs that all the time. Not a true volunteer. And if you have a strong sense of self and what you're doing you actually do not need affirmation all the time and a pat on the back to say well done and we appreciate you – you just do what you do and you do it because you want to do it and because it is enriching for you and helpful to other people.

Resilience

The researcher phrased the question about what motivated Emily to volunteer, more directly at some stages in the interview.

Emily would pause and have a reflective moment and thereafter state that it has helped enhance her life perspective.

It's made me think a lot about my way of being in the world, it's made me realise that my problems have been fairly minor and that I've been very privileged in many ways to have

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had friends and family who've been supportive. It's actually (clicks fingers) it's just been such an enriching experience and I would not have liked to have gone… to have continued my life without it.

Emily's participation at LifeLine as a counsellor has increased her self- esteem.

I feel very privileged because I am a volunteer but I'm an anonymous volunteer, if you like. I'm not up there in the public view doing good works. I am a voice at the end of the telephone or a face-to-face counsellor only seen by a few people so, in a way it's a discreet way of being in the world. And I actually enjoy that. I enjoy that. My footprint is very light. Although, who knows what difference I might have made to so many lives that I will never know. But, my public image is more or less anonymous. There's a greyness. Maybe I like hiding behind that, I don't know.

Her increased self-esteem was evident to those around her.

The people at work even commented that they had noticed a difference in me, in that I had become more outgoing and more confident within myself.

Emily feels that her participation at LifeLine has further helped develop a deeper understanding of herself.

I think the organisation has struggled in many ways to keep the interest of volunteers and sometimes not always successfully, but I do it for my own… for my own fulfilment and it has become very important to me. Of course, the organisation does show its appreciation, both in words and in end of year parties, but I don't think a volunteer needs that all the time. Not a true volunteer. And if you have a strong sense of self and what you're doing you actually do not need affirmation all the time and a pat on the back to say well done and we appreciate you – you just do what you do and you do it because you want to do it and because it is enriching for you and helpful to other people.

Emily has learnt to cope with her burdens.

> *But they have been people who have had severe burdens in their lives that... that are difficult to carry and therefore their energies are more concentrated on these burdens. Family burdens, things like that. I haven't really had that. My burdens have been really my own burdens and by developing myself and learning to cope, those burdens have got lighter so, in fact, volunteering has nurtured me and helped me to... to see life through different eyes and see the positives in life and I have never felt, you know, I must give this up.*

Emily has experienced a feeling of self-worth and appreciation. Emily describes how some colleagues during her years experienced a lack of appreciation.

> *Not really. Not really. But then, possibly, it's because I don't take that on. I do have colleagues who have felt unappreciated but that's maybe because they've taken that onto themselves. I just feel it's up to me to get the reward I want and if I don't feel appreciate then I just need to go and have a chat to the Director and say, hey, you know... but I've never felt that really necessary. I feel it's up to the volunteer in being proactive in addressing any feelings that they have that are negative. I don't feel that it's up to the organisation to be affirming, affirming, affirming, affirming. That's not what, you know, they should be spending their energies on. It's up to the person to be mature enough to realise that if you volunteer it's not because you want appreciation and recognition. It's because you genuinely feel that it's a positive thing to do, and that you want to do it.*

Personal Reflections

Reflecting back on the dialogue and encounter with Emily, the researcher acknowledges that she admired the strength and tenacity that Emily displayed. Emily is a widow who has not adopted the role of victimhood. She utilises her time to assist LifeLine. She has strengthened her own identity in that she has found a positive balance in her receiving help and in her need to help others with their problems.

Emily initially reflected on the lonely, isolated moments that she experienced in South Africa. Emily's husband was mostly away. LifeLine's telephone counselling line provided social support and encouragement to Emily. Although Emily was taking medication for her depression, she began to feel relieved after receiving counselling from LifeLine.

Conclusion

The researcher analysed a transcribed interview between herself and the participant. Emily constructed herself as initially being a lonely, isolated individual. She found her connectedness in the counselling process.

During careful analysis of Emily's case the following themes were highlighted:

The need to receive help

Emily was labelled clinically as a lonely depressive who filled a gap in her life through LifeLine. Her time spent with LifeLine took away the sense of loneliness. She discovered that she could help herself out of the loneliness through her connection with LifeLine. Emily did not assign herself to a victim identity and accept the clinical label of depression. She rose above the depression by placing herself in a new role to help those in need.

Emily's personal experiences of suffering allowed her to connect with the suffering expressed by the callers. Through Emily's empathetic listening skills, she connected with the caller's expression of suffering. She learnt to handle her personal experience of suffering. It is clear that Emily has grounded herself as a counsellor who can help to balance the caller's lives, as she has founded her grounding and come to terms with her own suffering.

She admits that the training she received from LifeLine enabled her to develop this skill, to free herself from loneliness and isolation.

Need to help

Emily found that her path toward attaining help for herself lead her toward the need to provide help for others. She improved her quality of life through her work at LifeLine in reaching out to help those who needed help themselves. She says that this made her realise that she is 'connected' to the need in others as well as to receive help.

This sharing of her newly acquired skill of helping others through counselling, enhanced her experience of feeling connected with others in need of such help. Once a sense of connectedness was achieved, Emily felt a great sense of fulfilment in having a skill to share with others.

A Good Counsellor

Emily's development of the skills of being non-judgemental and empathetic lead her to developing the correct tone of voice.

The counsellor appears to be the most significant factor in setting the level of conditions in the counselling relationship. Emily developed a gentle and encouraging tone in her responses to her callers. Her excellent listening ability enabled her to use her learning from her own mistakes in life to help her to listen with empathy. She states that although she does read avidly. She is not very widely read but she enjoys travel and reading books on psychology. She developed the ability to transfer the feeling of confidentiality and trust with her callers, through her understanding of the information disseminated at core group and face to face discussions of the "callers' counselling sessions".

Burnout in Volunteers

Emily states that counsellors who take on too many aspects of the organisational involvement such as funder raising, telephone counselling, face to face, report reading and group facilitation burn out sooner. Such volunteers are not retained for a long period and cannot sustain their counselling activities. Emily explains that counsellors should be able to pace themselves by taking monthly time away during the course of a year.

Emily finds that the suicide and domestic violence calls are very draining and tiring. She finds that support systems and friendships do develop amongst fellow counsellors. This helps in debriefing when she needs it.

The ethos of counselling at LifeLine hinges on the counsellor exuding unconditional positive regard towards clients. The transference of warmth and genuineness can often be exhausting for the counsellors. It is essential that consistent de-briefing occurs in order to prevent burnout. LifeLine also hosts a visiting clinical psychologists on a monthly basis. Volunteers a encouraged to attend in order to receive further skills development, on an on-going basis.

Sustained Participation

Emily says that the aspect of balancing your own life experiences with what you hear from the callers comes from a maturity of thought. A mature counsellor understands that problems can be balanced by knowing that others too have problems. This maturity of thought helps the counsellor listen to the caller with an open-mind and not be judgemental.

Emily feels that sustained participation develops from the counsellor's learning more about his- or herself and their own need for self fulfilment which enables a counsellor to empathise with the callers.

Resilience

Emily started her journey at LifeLine as a depressive personality who felt lonely and isolated. As she grew in her volunteer role, her self-esteem and her measure of her self-worth became strengthened.

Emily believes that a strong sense of self does not require a continuous external incentive or an external locus of control from the organisation. The true volunteer who sustains participation develops an internal incentive or an internal locus of control.

The enriching experience for Emily was the realisation that others too have a need to deal with their problems and this strengthens her resilience as a counsellor. The volunteer does not require continuous affirmation from the organisation. The mature volunteer is able to stand on firmly on the ground.

As Emily has tried to bring a sense of authenticity to the clients that she counsels it is hoped that this chapter has conveyed the meaning of being a counselling volunteer.

Chapter 6

A person becomes a person through other people

Sophie's Story

Personal data

Participant: Sophie

Age: 67 years

Field of occupation: Retired

Research setting: Interview was conducted at Sophie home.

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Introduction

Sophie was sixty-seven years old at the time of the interview. She is a widow and looks after her frail mother who suffers from dementia. Sophie has been a volunteer at LifeLine Pietermaritzburg for more than thirteen years. Prior to volunteering at LifeLine, Sophie was a receptionist and did secretarial work. She worked for a while, in an import-export company, where they imported and exported grass seeds from Zimbabwe, and chillies for overseas and the Middle East.

The Story of Sophia

Sophia joined LifeLine shortly after the death of her second husband. Sophia describes her second marriage as being verbally and emotionally abusive.

Sophia often phoned LifeLine during her hours of need. Sophia joined the organisation to give back to LifeLine what they gave to her during her hours of need. The counsellors renewed Sophia's hope to continue during two abusive marriages. Sophia's first husband was an alcoholic. During the second marriage, her second husband was regularly abrupt and dismissive of Sophia. She often felt isolated and lonely within her second marriage.

Emerging Themes

The following themes emerged from Sophia's story regarding her volunteering at LifeLine.

Need to Help

Sophia's interest in joining a counselling organisation sparked shortly after the death of her husband. Sophia experienced feelings of anger after her husband's death.

During her marriage, she had felt restricted and confined. Sophia's discovery of the LifeLine personal growth course contributed to her feeling of exerting her new-found personal freedom to make choices independently.

> *Well, I'd come through my husband's death, which had left me very angry, and I'd just… I'd had these eighteen years with him, of not being allowed to do anything without his permission and then he never… he never really gave me permission. You know, he was one of these "a wife is supposed to be barefoot and pregnant and tied to the kitchen sink". You weren't supposed to have a life. So after he had died it was a funny sort of feeling that I could just go to the shops without having to account to anybody. It took me about two years to get this feeling "you know, I can go do this – I can go out now. I can go and visit a friend. And then when I saw this course… a personal growth, that's what caught my eye, the word personal growth, I thought well this, this sounds like what I would like to do.*

Sophia's closest family member is her mother. Sophia's mother has been supportive of her volunteer work.

> *Oh yes, my mom… my dad has been dead for many years. He died in '81. Oh, my mom has. She has been very supportive. Very supportive.*

Sophia's need to help others has extended into other organisations. However she has focussed her efforts on LifeLine. Sophia has been a volunteer at LifeLine from the year 1993, a total of eighteen years.

Sophia is also a dedicated Christian and her mother has been involved in volunteer work. Her need to volunteer could be attributed to her spiritual background. Sophia's mother served has a role model in her life as it was she who was involved in volunteer activities.

> *No… From, perhaps, a spiritual background… we've been Christians, and my mom, my mom was always very involved in teaching Sunday school and giving off herself, you know. So, I don't know, I suppose that could have been it, but I know I just enjoy being with people and being able to help people. The important thing is to know when you must say no, and, you know, I can't do any more.*

Sophia continued to explore reasons as to why she chooses to volunteer. She feels that her mother and her religious orientation may not be the sole motivating factors in her involvement in contributing help.

> *No, she [Sophia's mother] was very encouraging for me to do things, very encouraging. Those were the good days, you know? Ja. She never hindered me or wanted to cling to me at all. She would say, "no, you must do it. I will help…" She was first to offer, if it cost money, she would say, "I will help you, but you must do it. If it is something that you're wanting and you think it's going to help you, then you must do it." So she encouraged me all the time.*

Sophia reflected on the concept of linking her volunteerism to her participating on a purely altruistic basis.

Now, how do you mean? Because I want to. Because I wanted to. Yes, yes. Ja.

Sophia attributes her need to help to her upbringing.

> *I think it's just been in my nature and I was brought up to always try and help people.*
> *Always help where you can.*

Sophia is motivated to volunteer. She has a large circle of friends from her church who are not involved in LifeLine. However, Sophia does not rely on praise from her friends to continue with volunteering. She is self-motivated and enjoys giving back to an organisation that once helped her.

> *The need to help, and also, it was that need to give back what LifeLine gave to me. And I*
> *just enjoy... I enjoy LifeLine. Some of my friends who aren't LifeLine orientated say to*
> *me, "oh, for heaven's sake, why must you go there every second Monday and do a duty?*
> *You know, there're far better things." I said, well, tell me what better things there are.*
> *You know, it's in my nature to help people, I enjoy it.*

Generally, Sophia feels confident that she has helped the client. However, at times she experiences feelings of doubt as to whether she has helped the client.

> *Oh, sometimes I do have doubts, but other times I know I've definitely helped the client,*
> *especially when they say "oh, thank you, thank you", you know.*

Need to receive help

Sophia experienced trauma and abuse during her marriage. She often phoned the LifeLine telephone counselling line to receive counselling.

> *To give back to LifeLine what they gave to me, in my hour of need. I... when I was in*
> *Zambia there was no LifeLine. I was in a very traumatic and abusive marriage. It*

continued when we came to South Africa and I started to phone LifeLine as just an outlet. I would never have been allowed to do any volunteer work during my marriage, but I'm afraid I think that I became a regular. I was always being physically and emotionally abused and I was always phoning LifeLine to blow off steam. And after my husband died it took me a few years to get through the anger – I was very angry at the eighteen year of, to me, a wasted marriage – very very angry – and I read a newspaper, personal growth courses, so I thought, well, this would be nice, this will be a challenge and be able to give back to LifeLine what they gave to me. They were there day and night, day and night. Ja.

Sophia has learnt from her trauma. She experienced several years of abuse and rejection during both her marriages. Sophia does not spend much energy reflecting on particular instances of abuse. She chooses to focus on the person, she has become.

Well, it certainly helped me because I was traumatised a lot. It certainly helped me. I think that I've become a stronger person – a much stronger person. In fact, after my husband had died and after I'd finished the course the people at work even commented that they had noticed a difference in me, in that I had become more outgoing and more confident within myself.

Sophia has a positive attitude towards counselling. She has a productive outlook towards each day. She tries to live in the present.

No, no, I don't think so. But, 'cos you know, each day is a gift. You don't know what's going to happen tomorrow, so if you get to counselling then that's a bonus. That's a bonus. I think you… I've reached the stage where I now just live each day at a time, I don't try and visualise what I'm going to do next week, or, or even beyond tomorrow. I just have… just have taught myself that I just live… if I can get through today, fine… that's good, then we face tomorrow's challenges. Whatever they are. But I do know when I've got a LifeLine duty, I'm quite excited to get out and go. Because at this moment it is

more meaningful for me because (sigh) it seems sad to say this but it's getting out of a very frustrating situation here.

A Good counsellor:

Sophia has a non-judgemental attitude towards life and she exemplifies this trait throughout her counselling sessions.

Sophia feels that she has many roles in society. She is a daughter, she was a wife, but she is also a volunteer. Sophia describes herself as a volunteer.

I'm quite dedicated. I'm not as dedicated as I was some years ago, simply because my domestic situation has changed so much. And I really don't have much time for myself, anymore. My whole sort of aspect in life is caring for my mom… my main concern.

Sophia has decreased her involvement with LifeLine in recent years. She is taking care of her frail mother. Sophia recalls how it felt to be more actively involved, with volunteering.

Oh, I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it. And as I say, it was always an anxious feeling when the phone rings… to know, you know, you don't know who the heck it's going to be…

Sophia can empathise to a great extent with clients. The degree of empathy that she exudes with clients does lead to her feeling anxious at times.

Yes. Ooh, yes, I can feel terrible anxiety, especially if the person has been physically abused by their partner. That upsets me because I… I can feel it, I can feel it. I know what that's like.

Sophia emphasised that the criteria for a good counsellor is non-judgementality and empathy.

Sophia has been involved in the activity of counselling for many years. She gave her opinion once again on the criteria for a good counsellor.

Well they must be prepared to give of their time and they must realise, too, that there's no money coming back to you for it. You know. It's not... and... and it's always anonymous. You're not going to hit the headlines for having saved somebody via your telephone counselling. That it's all... and... it's the feeling that you've helped somebody and you must enjoy that feeling and feeling that you've rendered some assistance to somebody.

Sophia considered if counselling came naturally to her.

Yes. I think it did. Because I am inclined to be a bit of a chatter-box. I do like talking. But I have learned to keep my mouth shut when the caller is phoning in and let them finish their story, something I could never do before. I've still got to watch that, though. I've still got to watch that.

The ability to listen intently or to possess a listening ear is often seen as a good quality for a counsellor. Sophia reflected on whether she is a good listener. Sophia has not always been the type of person who listens to friends and family.

I am now. I have a lot of friends who phone me to have, you know, to unload and I think every time I do a LifeLine session I'm getting better and better at listening. I've always been quite volatile, and didn't always listen, but LifeLine has taught me, before you can help the other person you have got to listen to their story throughout.

Burnout in Volunteers

Sophia reflected on factors that lead to burnout within counsellors.

I think it's if you... if you can perhaps have a run of sessions where it's been nothing but abusive calls and you've come away feeling quite hopeless and ineffective or you can go

in and there've been no calls and you feel frustrated at that. I try and take off about a month off a year, just to give myself a break.

Sophia has been involved in overnight duty slots but in recent years she has decreased her involvement in that activity. Sophia is the main carer for her elderly mother who has symptoms of dementia.

Not for many, many years and when I used to do the overnight slot it was when we did it at home… I know, I think that they allow that again, but I would never do it now. Not with looking after my mom because quite honestly, by the evenings, I am exhausted. I just want to go to bed and I get to bed early and go to sleep. Because the mental and emotional business of looking after a person who has got dementia is too taxing… is too taxing.

When Sophia participated in overnight duty slots, she did not enjoy the experience.

Ja, I never ever enjoyed overnight counselling. I hated it. And… I some… I don't know, I just felt vulnerable when I was doing it at night. I didn't… I never, ever enjoyed it and, of course, totally, totally exhausted the next day, it sort of took me the whole day to recover. I used to do it on a Saturday night because I worked, you know, until two years ago, so it had to be a Saturday night. And by the Sunday… it took me the whole of Sunday to recover. Because even if you didn't have a lot of calls you can't have a restful sleep and you're on tenterhooks waiting for the phone to ring, and the dreading… and also with it being at home, you also dreaded that some friend would decide to give you a midnight blimming call, you know, and you say "hello, LifeLine"…

Sustained Participation:

Sophia joined LifeLine Pietermaritzburg in 1993. Sophia explained the reasons behind her sustained participation.

Just the wonderful people who work at LifeLine. They just make it all worth while, and, also, you know, in the good old bad days, they had very motivational talks, about once a month, or workshops, which I used to go to regularly but now, of course, I can't. I don't think they do that now, any more. But those were so stimulating. I could hardly wait from one month to the next to go to a workshop at LifeLine, they were so good.

Sophia has maintained a keen interest and affiliation with LifeLine for over 17 years. She does not think that incentives such as certificate were necessary.

No, I think, it was the various workshops that they had that kept us motivated. And this is what I do miss, but at this moment in time I couldn't go to any, you know, so that is not really an issue, but I used to enjoy very much all those workshops. You know, you had talks by such good people in their fields – psychologists, psychiatrists – you know it was always very... very good.

Sophia sees counselling as a learning process.

Oh, yes. Everything in life's a learning process – everything. Like looking after a mother with dementia every day is something new, it's a learning process of how to deal with the situation.

Sophia does not see counselling as a job she must retire from.

I suppose there does come a stage where you must retire. You really begin to think no, I'm not keeping up with the young people or I'm not keeping up with everything. But I think I'll just carry on, I would like to carry on, because each session you learn something. Each session is a learning curve. That's what I find. You learn something different about people.

Sophia did not require compensation for her efforts. Sophia did not ever see the need to receive a stipend or any form of payment.

> *No... well... you know, everybody likes to think that they're going to get money back but it hasn't really affected me. I suppose, I suppose if I had to travel a long way... and the cost of petrol and not earning a salary... I would seriously think about continuing with the duties, you know, at some stage money must come into it but I don't... I've never ever sort of suggested that... a small amount be paid. I've never even thought about that. Because volunteering is giving of yourself.*

Sophia reflected on the criteria for the ideal counsellor. She provided further insight into the qualities she has observed that have sustained their participation in the organisation.

> *They all seem to be quite committed people, quite committed. And you know you build up a very nice friendship amongst the fellow LifeLiners, especially when they have these workshops and you get to inter-mingle with people and, I just, you know, I think that's... I just think that the whole LifeLine family is such a nice family to belong to.*

Sophia has been an avid reader. She reflected as to whether her genres of reading assisted with her counselling or if she had further enhancement in terms of her reading in order to understand the counselling process.

> *I... I don't anymore, I'm afraid, I just don't seem to have the time.*

> *Well, you know, at one time, and I think that it's going to start happening again, in our core groups we used to have manuals to work through and those were always very informative but over about the last four years we haven't had any working manual, you know, to guide us. But I am told that somebody at LifeLine is working on a manual which will then encourage our core group to be a bit more motivated, because we enjoyed*

working through the sessions and it always provoked all sorts of conversations, you know.

Sophia considered whether the further reading in her field, sustained her participation.

Ja, I suppose so, but I couldn't for a moment think what books I read. Really can't think of any books that I've read. You know… I know we were given lists of books when we did the course… but… that we did go through, but… ja, I think so. But I just… I just enjoy it. I enjoy it.

Sophia does enjoy genres of reading that relate to understanding the behaviour of people.

I love detective work. I always think – if I believed in re-incarnation – I want to come back as a detective. I loved solving… trying to solve a mystery. I enjoy that. I do enjoy wartime stories as well, Second World War stories. Even the First World War, it certainly brings things home to you, how those people suffered. Ja.

Personal Growth

Sophia was asked if counselling has changed her view on life. Sophia feels that prior to counselling, she was more judgemental. She also had minimum interactions with people of different cultures owing to the restrictions of her husband during her marriage.

Yes, I'm not so… I hope, I hope I'm not so judgemental. I hope I'm not so judgemental.

Sophia possesses an energetic personality and does have a positive outlook on life, despite experiencing abuse during marriage. The illness of her mother is also draining for her.

I try to be, you know. I'm afraid, the last two years have been extremely difficult for me with watching my mother go down, down, down and I'm finding it very, very stressful. You know, she was a very lively, bright, intelligent lady and we could have lively and nice

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conversations – two-way conversations – and she was very, very good at English and she had a very good knowledge of English history and she was a fund a knowledge and I sort of miss those chats because now she doesn't remember from one minute to the next, so I'm finding... sometimes I think I'm not so strong and I just wonder how I'll carry on. But, you know, I've done it for two years so far and I haven't cracked.

Sophia feels that counselling has exposed her to many sectors of society. Sophia has developed an open-mind. Sophia follows the dictum of LifeLine and avoids giving advice. It has been difficult to avoid giving advice. Initially Sophia found the task difficult.

LifeLine volunteers follow the Egan Model or Carl Rogers' person centred therapy. Sophia shared her view on the manner in which the Rogerian, person-centred approach enhanced her counselling.

You know, we haven't... I haven't even gone back to thinking about the Egan model. This is what I miss now, with the ongoing training... now people who do... now one year I did facilitate. I would really like to go back to facilitating because that keep you abreast and keeps you informed with these models. Because you tend to get very lackadaisical and you forget the definite process of counselling.

Resilience

Throughout Sophia's marriage restrictions were imposed on her. The restrictions suppressed her freedom of self-expression and also her self-esteem. Sophia feels that the personal growth course assisted in allowing her to re-focus on herself.

In fact, after my husband had died and after I'd finished the course the people at work even commented that they had noticed a difference in me, in that I had become more outgoing and more confident within myself.

Through volunteering and being a part of LifeLine, Sophia has assigned this role to herself. After 17 years of actively contributing to LifeLine Sophia does not see the need to change her activity.

> *No, actually no, but I suppose that there must come a time when you think you must give something else a chance. You know, try a new venture, but that hasn't crossed my mind yet.*

Through counselling Sophia has developed a deeper understanding of herself. She emphasised once again that she has learnt to be more open-minded. Sophia further added that she has learnt truths about herself through the counselling process.

> *Ja, I think that I understand myself pretty well now. I didn't before, but I do now. I'm... perhaps more... I always thought I was broad-minded... but in many respects I was bit narrow... I was a bit blinkered. But after, you know, being involved with LifeLine you have to get away those blinkers and I think that I've become much more broad-minded and accepting of things.*

Sophia's confidence has built over the eighteen years of counselling. She explains the point at which she feels happy with her counselling.

> *Well, certainly, after you've spoken for a good ten, fifteen, minutes and then the caller says, "well, yes, yes, you've given me something to think about and thank you for listening to me, " and hell, then you think "oh well, well perhaps I have made an impression."*

Sophia has experienced abuse within marriage and joined the personal growth course at LifeLine to regain her personal strength. The nature of the calls and face to face sessions at LifeLine can be quite traumatic. Sophia reflected on ways in which she copes with the LifeLine clients.

Well, you know it always a challenge. You never know from one call to the next who you're going to get. You can get an abusive regular, whose main aim in life is to just abuse the counsellor, you can get the perverts, but you do get those who are genuinely just... want someone to share their story with and, you know, although we can't tell them what they must do, it's good to walk with them and say look, the decision's yours but let's go through how you'll tackle it. And to be thanked afterwards, and said "wow, I feel better. I feel better now that I've talked it through."

Well, of course we are not allowed to speak to our families about any traumatic thing. So that's when you call upon your fellow LifeLiners and say "look, I had this dreadful call and I'm feeling upset about it." That's the sort of debriefing, I get, you know, that I use, because you can't talk to your family unless they're LifeLiners, of course.

Volunteers are a valuable socio-economic commodity. However, at times the organisation may not acknowledge the volunteers to the appropriate extent. Sophia has developed a high self-worth and self-appreciation. She has developed a genuine feeling to assist and does not seek further incentives.

Well, I suppose there are times when we all feel that we are not acknowledged enough... that we're not acknowledged. But one must just get over... get it behind you, get up and forget about it, you know.

Some days, when there's a particularly obnoxious caller who phones quite regularly, and it's always hit-and-miss when he phones, he can be totally cruel and nasty and abusive, and I just come away thinking why should I, why should I put up with his nonsense, why should I lay myself open to this. But you know, it passes. It passes. And I just enjoy... I enjoy LifeLine. Some of my friends who aren't LifeLine orientated say to me, "oh, for heaven's sake, why must you go there every second Monday and do a duty? You know, there're far better things." I said, well, tell me what better things there are. You know, it's in my nature to help people, I enjoy it.

Personal Reflections

Reflecting back on the dialogue and encounter with Sophia, the researcher acknowledges throughout the interview Sophia was anxious. The effects of being in a marriage in which her husband was emotionally and physically abusive are still present. Sophia is currently a carer for her elderly mother. She does not appear to seek praise from her community or the LifeLine organisation for the time that she contributes.

The verbal, emotional and physical abuse during Sophia's marriage appears to her to have been quite severe. However, she does not choose to dwell on that phase of her life. Through being an active contributing member of the LifeLine team, Sophia has developed a new outlook on life. She admits that her perceptions were previously narrow and closed minded.

Conclusion

During careful analysis of Sophia's case the following themes were highlighted.

Need to help

Sophia comes from a well-founded Christian background. Her mother, who supported her throughout the volunteering process, was also involved in volunteerism at the church. Sophia believes that she needs to give back to LifeLine what they gave to her in her time of need during her abusive marriages. Sophia has doubt as to whether she does really help the callers, but feels that she is continuously reassured when the callers thank her for her help. She enjoys volunteerism despite the reservation from her friends because she is firm in her belief that she wants to give back to LifeLine and help others.

The need to receive help

Sophia was traumatised by her abusive marriages as she felt she had no life. Sophia admits to having become a regular at LifeLine because she was being both physically and emotionally abused.

Sophia enrolled for the personal growth course at LifeLine after living through 18 years of an abusive marriage. She looked forward to joining LifeLine and giving back to them as they had continuously given back to her.

She does not wish to delve on particular instances of abuse but rather to focus on the person she now has become. Sophie believes that she has now become a stronger person in being more confident about who she is.

Sophie believes 'Life is a gift' and accepts life's challenges willingly and does not succumb to daily frustrations.

A Good Counsellor

Sophia sees herself as a very dedicated counsellor and that volunteering has helped her to overcome her own anxieties and become a more caring and giving person.

She believes that a good counsellor must be well committed to giving of her time and to expect no rewards to have having helped someone.

Sophia says that a counsellor should be disciplined and be able not to talk over the caller's voice and have "a good listening ear".

She believes that this is something she had to teach herself. She says that LifeLine has taught her that "before you can help the other person you have got to listen to their story throughout".

Burnout in Volunteers

Sophia believes that counsellors could avoid burnout especially after a string of abusive callers, by taking time off. She regularly takes off a month from counselling per annum. Sophia believes that counselling should not exhaust the counsellor and that the counsellor should enjoy the counselling session.

Sustained Participation

Sophia believes that the LifeLine ethos makes counselling sustainable and worthwhile. The inclusion of motivational talks and workshops were very stimulating within the counselling experience, with feedback and encouragement from psychologists and psychiatrists.

Sophia also maintains sustainability by learning continuously and experiencing on-going improvement through the people she encounters at LifeLine.

Sophia see monetary gain from volunteering as unnecessary, as volunteering she says is "giving of yourself".

Sophia says that a good counsellor should be a committed person, who can form a positive relationship with the "LifeLine Family".

Sophia does believe that reading helps counselling. Recently she has looked forward to reading the LifeLine manual, to assist her with counselling, and discussions in core group meetings with follow counsellors.

She says that her reading around The First and The Second World War has helped her understand the suffering of others as well.

Personal Growth

Sophia believes that her understanding of people has grown since the death of her husband. She is, she says, aware of not being judgemental as she doesn't wish to be judgemental.

Sophia had to contend with taking care of her aging mother. She was saddened by the current lack of in depth conversations, as she used to have these with her mother previously. Sophia worries about her life and what it would be like after her mother passes on.

Sophia is aware of the Egan Model and Carl Roger's person-centred approach which is used by LifeLine and she enjoyed being a LifeLine facilitator. Sophia tried to keep abreast with the readings around the model and how to make use of it during facilitation.

Resilience

Sophia believes that the personal growth course brought out who she really is, after the death of her husband.

The course enabled her to become more confident and outgoing. After seventeen years as a volunteer at LifeLine, Sophia has not tired at her role as a LifeLine volunteer as it has allowed her to understand who she is an be more accepting of life's challenges.

Sophia explains that she experiences a sense of quiet confidence when the caller says, "well, yes, yes, yes, you have given me something to think about and thank you for listening to me".

Sophia maintains contact with fellow LifeLiners when needed for discussions on difficult clients as she maintains the belief that the counsellor must enjoy the counselling sessions.

Counselling has broadened Sophia's worldview and she has discovered a new sense of self. Sophia's story exemplifies the motto of LifeLine:

> *A person becomes a person through other people.*

It is hoped that this chapter has illustrated Sophia's journey towards self- discovery.

Chapter 7

Being part of a collective community

Tom

Personal data

Participant Two: Tom

Age: 81

Field of occupation: Retired Doctor

Research setting: Interview was conducted at LifeLine

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Introduction

In this chapter the conversation between the researcher and the participant is carefully analysed and emerging themes are highlighted. The interviews are available on request. It needs to be noted that themes highlighted here may not be mutually exclusive. Neither are these themes meant to represent an ultimate truth about the reality of this particular person or about volunteers in general. The researcher therefore acknowledges that the themes highlighted here may be coloured by the lens through which she looked at during this particular point in time. She further acknowledges that these themes are by no means exhaustive. Another person, looking through his or her particular lens, may therefore highlight different themes and/or add to the ones presented here.

The Story of Tom

Tom is an eighty-one-year-old retired doctor, who was born in Holland and is a dedicated Christian. He arrived in South Africa in 1956 as a missionary doctor. He has been married for fifty-six years and has raised six children. He came from a very modest family background. His father was a policeman and he was the only one in the family who received a higher education. After completing his medical degree in Holland, Tom was supposed to go to Indonesia. This did not materialise due to several reasons and he was thereafter given a choice to immigrate to South

Africa. Tom had a sister in South Africa who heard that in the Transkei there was a mission-field that was opened up to the church. At that stage there was a revival of the church in Cape Town. They were looking for people to man their medical service.

Tom was always looking forward to what was going on in the world at large, and that is why he travelled a lot and always liked to meet new people, experience new cultures and find out what other people think and do.

The participant has been a volunteer at LifeLine Pietermaritzburg for more than 15 years.

Emerging Themes

Need to help

Tom had an innate and authentic yearning from youth to assist other people. Tom studied medicine in Holland. He chose not to pursue his personal financial advancement in his own country.

> *I was aware that what I had I should share with other people, I don't know if it's a genetic thing or if it was my Christian upbringing which prompted me to be more interested in my fellow people than in material things, or status or fame or whatever… and so from early childhood I was preparing to go to other parts of the world where I knew there was a great need, much more than in Holland, the country that I come from and where people already in those days were reasonably well off.*

Tom is a devoted Christian. His views on counselling and assisting people do possess a spiritual or religious affiliation.

> *I could serve people anywhere in the world and from then on I looked around where I could be of use, knowing that there were so many in Holland and that other people, who would rather stay at home, could do the work much better than… and they could do*

without me, very well. So, maybe that's one aspect. My religious background, my gratitude for being a person who has met the Lord Jesus as part of my serving Him, as Lord, means that He could sort of direct my life, he has a right to do that, and I served Him in that capacity I think as good as I could, for the rest of my life, up to now. So that is a continuous line, actually I could call it the line of thankfulness, that prompted me for what I'm doing and was doing.

Tom does not bring his religious perspective into his counselling. Participating as a volunteer counsellor has widened Tom's view of life. He admits that upbringing forms you in a cultural and religious way. Tom was brought up in a Calvinistic background.

Maybe my motivation is stronger but not my concept of who He is or what counselling can be, but widened in the sense that I am not on a mission to convert people to a certain religion but I like to help them finding the balance and peace of mind in the place where they are and their concepts what they culturally grown up… African people, I had all the years the trouble with reconciling the whole concept of ancestors with their view of being a Christian, the same I have with the Moslem people who have their ideas and concepts which are not the same as mine but when it comes to counselling I'm not trying to say you're right or wrong and I try to help them, to send them back to what they come from.

Prior to joining LifeLine, Tom reflects on his time at the hospital and sitting with the patients and their bedside. He was often an anonymous doctor for some patients who were being treated by another physician. He would listen attentively to the patients comments about the doctors having bad manners. Tom feels he has been in the area of counselling his whole life. Tom does not see himself as the classical medical doctor who just deals with the body. He has a wider mission of serving people.

I had a wider mission of serving people. I see a person not as a malfunctioning of a lot of organs but as a person who is in distress and that affects every person of his personality, mind and body equally, so I have been counselling all my life but… and maybe I should

say that my interest – and that is maybe another aspect of my volunteer… my interest was in psychology from the beginning, so I've got a lot of study what I've done privately in psychology and that was my interest… so it wasn't new to me to hear about listening and counselling instead of advising and different model which exist of counselling…

Tom is 81 years, however aging has not slowed down his cognitive ability. He is energetic and exudes a great sense of positivity and enthusiasm towards his volunteer efforts.

… I don't want to come across as a very good person, or beneficiary for other people or a very unselfish person, all those qualities may be added and some people see me like that but that's not why I do it. I do it because I enjoy what I'm doing and I think I've got something which may be of benefit to other people, I can help other people, that's why we have those face-to-face meetings where I enjoy people coming from their despair condition saying, "oh, I never thought of that". That's a way I can… I can go. Then I fell, "hey, it works. I've assisted that person to cope.

As a counsellor, Tom feels that he has helped the client and this adds to his feeling a productively helping.

Well, I sometimes help them and I get some feedback from… in various ways. Somebody comes and tells us that they do so much better afterwards and they come back to you and say, "well, you helped me a lot," so in that way you get a direct response. Sometimes they come for once and you never see them again and you don't know if you've done any good or not. So, ja, there is a varied response but I think that mostly people benefit.

Tom sees his task of helping as fulfilling.

My task as a volunteer very comfortable and the added advantage to me, of course, is that it gives meaning to my retirement phase because I have no job, I don't get money for what I'm doing, in all the, what sixteen years?, that I'm now working in the retirement

phase of my life I never earned anything, I'm living from a pension, enough to live from, and I don't need more. So, I... as a volunteer you feel sort of, ja, unattached in a way. You're offering your service free and get a lot back, not in terms of financial, but otherwise. Which is not easy to express in terms of money... maybe there is a bit of status, a little bit of... ja...

Being a good counsellor

Tom has been a integral team member in screening new recruits for volunteering and he felt comfortable in sharing his views on elements that make a good counsellor. Tom believes that an element on selflessness is important. The volunteer should not seek any status from the position.

> *The motivation for doing it can be many-fold and we see it when we do interviews, when the new people who come and say, "I want to be a volunteer". First of all I think that they must not come in for personal gain and that gain I see in a very wide concept and involves also status and prestige to be able to brag about it, "I'm a counsellor" or a good-doer, or whatever. So number one is that they mustn't go in for personal gain. And secondly I think that they must have a willingness to sacrifice something of themselves, their time, their resources in terms of money and availability, to serve other people. So some sort of altruistic component is also very important as a part.*

Tom emphasises that selflessness is important in order to effectively practise being a non-judgemental counsellor. The counsellor should not be directive and overly assertive of their personal opinion of the situation upon the client.

> *So in that way I feel, also in the counselling situation, we give people, not advice, but we help them to see what is right, but then they don't choose to do that action we give them, because, for reasons of their own, they decide this is more comfortable, this is pleasing to me, this booze... I enjoy drinking or the drugs I'm taking... putting me in a temporary fix, maybe it's part of our quick-fix attitude in our life, also for the children, rather have sex now and I educate later... in the past it was freedom first, now it's sort of shorts...*

shorts... Ja, I think that the modern people are very much aiming at short-term satisfaction in life. And that is frustrating for me because I see that it doesn't pay and it brings them continuously into troubles, because it doesn't work that way. Life is not like that.

Tom states that the counsellor needs to understand the client's worldview. Tom highlights the quality of empathy. The counsellor must endeavour to walk in the shoes of the clients.

Then, of course, their worldview, we haven't mentioned that one. The worldview is very important and also sort of flexibility on handling your own view as against the clients so that it doesn't become a sort of compulsory, direct... giving of direction. So those are a few qualities which are important

Tom acknowledges that confidentiality is a difficult concept. However, in order to maintain the trust of the client, it is a critical component as a counsellor.

Confidentiality is a difficult concept, not so difficult as a concept but to really be confidential is a bit difficult for me because I'm a talkative person and I like to share with other people. Sometimes I let things slip to my wife, or I use what I experience with people as examples in my conversation with other people but, of course, never mention any person by name so that they can be identifiable. So confidentiality is a trust that people put in you, and you are not supposed to break that and I would feel very guilty if I broke it and said, "do you know about so-and-so?" That is... no, I don't find it difficult.

Tom believes that in order to be a good counsellor life experience is important. Tom has a practical approach to life. He believes that life experience is gained first hand.

Well, I think, age is a point. I've mentioned the word... that concept of age. Some people are a bit young and therefore haven't got much life experience, see life as very rosy and full of potential, but do not realise that life isn't that sort of easy. So life... age... and with

that goes experience. Some people live but they don't have experience, or don't learn from their experience, got through life, you know, just like a donkey. So... and then the... the fact that some people have got qualities, natural qualities, or educational qualifications, which make them very suitable for work in the counselling setup. Then, of course, their worldview, we haven't mentioned that one. The worldview is very important and also sort of flexibility on handling your own view as against the clients so that it doesn't become a sort of compulsory, direct... giving of direction. So those are a few qualities which are important.

Tom has a background in medicine, however he does enjoy reading psychological literature.

Oh, no, I think with my medical background I'm interested in a lot aspects of human life and I'm focussing probably more on the social aspects and the cultural conflicts that exist in Pietermaritzburg, such a real hotbed of culture clashes that is for me most interesting,

I had a wider mission of serving people. I see a person not as a malfunctioning of a lot of organs but as a person who is in distress and that affects every person of his personality, mind and body equally, so I have been counselling all my life but... and maybe I should say that my interest – and that is maybe another aspect of my volunteer... my interest was in psychology from the beginning, so I've got a lot of study what I've done privately in psychology and that was my interest... so it wasn't new to me to hear about listening and counselling instead of advising and different model which exist of counselling...

Tom feels proud to have sustained his participation as a volunteer. He enjoys doing further reading in theology, psychology and medicine. Tom has maintained a level of satisfaction to sustain his participation in counselling for many years.

I've been reading a lot, particularly in theology and psychology. I always had... in the beginning of my life there were sort of the three fixed points in my... in my sort of career

planning was theology, psychology and medical. And somewhere in the middle I found my... my fulfilment of all three of them. So, in the mission I found my medical and my spiritual and later in life, when the medical fall a little bit away, I'm getting into the other... particularly the psychological level. So I think, ja, I've had a very full life, and I'm extremely grateful that I could have done, and look back, on what I have been doing. Not with satisfaction how good I have done it, but because it was a fulfilling life. I really used the potential, what God has given me, I think. I'm still trying to do that. And that is very satisfying

Loneliness

Tom was born into a large family. Most of his siblings were females who were older than him. He is the youngest sibling. He says that he grew up like a lonely child as his childhood was quite lonely. Although Tom is talkative and presents a vibrant exterior, the researcher observed that Tom is a reserved person.

Once again, when the researcher directed the question to the participant about his family of origin the participant reacted in the following way:

Sorry, the point is that I grew up as a lonely child.

As a... ja, because they were all too big for me to communicate with, so actually I was lonely in my childhood.

And because I was different than most children at school, I was double lonely in that people didn't understand... they were not interested in why I was not interested in their stories and their things, so I was a bit the odd one out. Still is.

Resilience

Counselling has proven to be an on-going learning process for Tom. Despite being a lonely child and often being excluded in his youth, Tom has developed new skills to interact with people.

Tom has learnt to cope with any social anxieties, he may have experienced in the past and has developed a range of social competencies.

Oh yes, so much so. Day by day. Every time. That's why I say to the new people who come to the course, "I'm old enough to know it all but I realise every time there is new things that I learn from people, from... from the way people behave [undecipherable] respect. I think [undecipherable] said, "So long as you remain curious you are young" and I think that that concept is for me so true. The more I look at people, the more I try to understand other people's reasoning and thinking, I see new things and they really keep me... keep me going.

Whoever comes into my counselling situation I see opportunities of learning and of maybe contributing to solutions. And there's not a particular area where I feel unhappy.

Tom has developed a positive understanding of himself. Although he is from a strict Calvinistic background, counselling has taught him to stretch his boundaries.

Mmm. Well, that's quite a difficult question, because, when do you know yourself. I'm trying to explore that from time to time, do some introspection, and think I know reasonably well where my weak and my strong points are, and if I yet do not know it I have just to be facilitator at the next LifeLine course and some poppy have the courage to tell me that I'm an arrogant person, and I seem to know it all and I'm talking too much and all those qualities which I'm trying to suppress, in a way. So I think my boundaries are open, I'm will to go, as long as I have not to compromise my basic philosophy in life, my religious sort of security, if you can use that word, stability, then I'm willing to go along with other people's idea and accommodate them within my own life as much as possible.

Tom has a strong, determined personality. As Tom speaks he smiles and laughs as he reflects on the moments in his life. Tom is currently eighty-one years old, however he maintains his positive

outlook on life. Counsellors are required to be spontaneous and to adapt to different situations and scenarios that clients present.

Ja, I think that I've got a very positive outlook. Life is wonderful, it's a gift and a challenge, like they say for marriage, it's a risk and a challenge, so life is a risk and a challenge and I have been willing to take the risk and I... after even my retirement I got the challenge to go to Russia as the doctor of a team, forty people, and I didn't think I would be suitable for that because I was out of the, sort of the modern medicine, and... but I accepted the challenge and to see, at the end of it, that I was instrumental to start a hospital in Russia, which was unknown there, in that place where we worked, so that was a big reward and, that... that was the reward for the challenge that I accepted. And I don't know... I at this stage will accept the challenge. I find that the old... when I'm getting older, more afraid of taking risks. I think it's because my physical body tells me, from time to time, be careful, you fool, you bump... and you've got all kinds of aches and pains and things, so your risk-taking has reduced. But mentally I think I'm not yet there.

Tom possesses an active, analytical mind. Today's society is characterised by achievement orientation, and consequently it adores people who are successful and happy and, in particular, it adores the young (Frankl, 2004). It virtually ignores the value of all those who are otherwise, and in so doing blurs the decisive difference between being valuable in the sense of dignity and being valuable in the sense of usefulness (Frankl, 2004). Tom is constantly searching for meaning within his life**.**

but if I'm not counselling, then I feel why am I actually still going around? Why should I live? There must be some, call it meaning. I think that's one of the things the volunteers do not yet understand in the beginning, when they go for the course, they, many of them probably miss a real meaning in life. It seems that we all have this goodness in us. There's a lot of badness in people but there's also a lot of goodness.

Somebody sort of say, "but where's all the bad things coming from?" My question is, "where are all the good things coming from? God obviously gives us a lot of things which we can enjoy, which are positive, which are constructive and building up people and communities so I think some people, or many people, aiming for that sort of purpose and fulfilment in life, but missing it, and if they would understand it, if you lose yourself in serving others you may find it. That's a basic expression and we all know the golden rule, losing your life you're gaining your life and in this way you're sacrificing something, you think you're sacrificing, but in the mean time you're getting so much back.

We all know the Francis from Assisi story, you know, that in giving I receive, and that's true. And in the process of counselling, they find out, "whew, I didn't know I was... I could be... I could have a meaning in my life, even if I'm not important, I'm not influential, but I can help people to cope and to survive, and to do better than they have been doing. That I think is the essence of finding meaning in your life, finding it not in yourself but in serving others. Ubuntu.

All that makes my task as a volunteer very comfortable and the added advantage to me, of course, is that it gives meaning to my retirement phase because I have no job, I don't get money for what I'm doing, in all the, what sixteen years?, that I'm now working in the retirement phase of my life I never earned anything, I'm living from a pension, enough to live from, and I don't need more. So, I... as a volunteer you feel sort of, ja, unattached in a way. You're offering your service free and get a lot back, not in terms of financial, but otherwise. Which is not easy to express in terms of money... maybe there is a bit of status, a little bit of... ja...

Throughout the interview, Tom presented himself as a confident, determined, eloquent participant. The researcher probed further to ascertain if Tom had experienced any personal trauma.

Ja, I think so. At one stage I was very unhappy with the way that I was doing my work and that includes counselling, but medical work. And I really felt that what I pretend to be I am not. And by that I mean that you have a spontaneous, loving attitude towards the person you are dealing with. I was much doing of my work in a sort of duty-like fashion. I am supposed to do this. I am supposed to love people. I am supposed to help them.

So from… motivated by my Christian upbringing. So I was unsatisfied with that, and I asked the Lord to guide me, and whatever it would take, and He replied to that by giving me a major accident in which I was nearly dead – and living right on the brink for a number of days. And that happened in Umtata and I knew immediately, when I woke up, that that was the answer.

What I learned, and that was how to deal with pain. And that's another story on its own. I say pain is an early warning system and I think people should understand that you can say, "thanks, God, for pain". Because without pain I would not be able to survive. That I think is a concept which is a story on its own but I learned it in that experience. So, when people come with pain, particularly in the situation in hospitals and otherwise, then I say, "do you know that pain is really an enormous opportunity to grow in your life as a person, and how you deal with pain is in itself a very great type of learning process".

Tom further elaborated on the concept of pain.

People experience pain, in one form or another. Be it physical. Be it mentally. Be it emotionally, otherwise. There is always some form of pain, and if you can help people to see pain not as an enemy, a thing to have to stop - and that's why I hate all those terms, stop pain, still pain - pain is not your basic enemy, it's your attitude towards pain which is the secret to… to grow through pain. So, ja, I learned a lot by that experience and I applied it later on.

Personal Reflections

Reflecting back on the dialogue and encounter with Tom, the researcher acknowledges that she admired the sincerity and dedication that Tom displayed. Tom is truly searching for the meaning within his life. From the early stages of his life, Tom seems to have been acutely aware of the goals he would like to pursue in his life. Tom stated during the interview process that his interests in reading include psychology, theology and medicine.

Tom is actively and practically exerting his will to maintain his search to understand other cultures and communities. Tom is currently eighty-one years of age. However the researcher has observed that he is enthusiastic toward his volunteer role. Tom has chosen not to show apathy towards causes that he believes in strongly.

Conclusion

During careful analysis of Tom's case the following themes were highlighted.

Need to help

Tom says that as far back as he can remember he always wanted to share with others. This need to share made him less materially minded and more attuned to the needs of his fellow men.

He says that from early childhood he had the perception of helping people beyond the shores of Holland. He wanted to help people who were born less fortunate than he was.

Tom believes that, as he knows the Lord Jesus, he could take direction from the Lord Jesus about this aspect of serving others in need.

Tom says that he understands that upbringing and cultural background are to be respected in the counselling process. Whether the person comes from an African or Muslim background, this is not his concern. Tom stresses that his interests lie in serving people. He says that he was always interested in psychology. He was especially keen on developing listening and counselling skills in order to understand other people.

He assists people to find out how to solve their problems and enjoys face to face sessions with his clients. He appreciates a client saying to him, "Well, you helped me a lot".

As a retired doctor, Tom was willing to give his service to LifeLine for sixteen years.

Being a good counsellor

Tom believes that a good counsellor should not be someone seeking recognition and personal gain. He says that a good counsellor must be prepared to make sacrifices of a personal nature to serve other people.

A good counsellor, he says, should also believe in altruism. He says that the counsellor should try to understand the world view of the client.

The counsellor must have flexibility to handle his view in relation to that of the client, so that the counsellor does not provide the direction but the helps in balancing the client's thoughts.

Tom also believes in respecting the confidentiality of his clients and he sees this as a trust relationship between counsellor and client. Tom believes that a good counsellor should have life experience and that life experience does not come with age, but with the exposure to the in depth study of the human mind.

He admires young people who have studied subjects such as psychology and psychiatry and believes that they too could make experienced counsellors.

Tom also has an interest in the cultural life of Pietermaritzburg and he draws upon this interest to help counsel people of this city.

Loneliness

Tom says that he grew up as a lonely child, as his fellow siblings were much older than him and he found communication with them difficult.

Also, at school Tom believed that he was a odd ball out, as he felt that he was different. Tom's experience at school lead to him being even more lonely.

Resilience

Tom believes that, "so long as you remain curious you are young". He has conceptualised this belief within himself.

He studies people in order to understand them and this is what motivates him to remain a counsellor. He grasps at the opportunity of leaving more about people, whenever he meets a new client.

Tom can he says be very introspective and he feels he knows himself very well. He believes in accommodating others' opinions of him, but he does not believe in compromising who he is and losing his stability because of others' viewpoints.

Tom believes in accepting the risks and challenges that life presents and sees life as "a wonderful gift". After retiring, he accepted the challenge to travel to Russia to practise medicine there. Tom says with age he is now wary of accepting any physically challenging experiences but enjoys mental challenges.

Tom finds meaning in counselling and this is why he continues to be a counsellor and facilitator. Tom is very philosophical about finding meaning to life which he links to finding meaning through counselling others.

He says that many people try to find the meaning and the purpose of life in order to achieve fulfilment. He has found that through serving others he finds the purpose and the meaning of fulfilment in his life.

He mentions the story of Saint Francis of Assisi, who taught that, "It is in giving that you receive". To Tom, this is what Ubuntu means.

He says that although he does not have any monetary gains, he gains much more from his experiences as a counsellor. As a doctor, Tom was bound to duty performance. He believes that counselling allowed him the space to know himself through serving others.

Tom says that he had a conflict with job satisfaction and he requested the Lord Jesus to help him. The help came, he believes, in a major car accident. The pain experienced in this accident has led him to understand the pain others feel in their lives.

He believes that pain is a way of learning more about life, and that it helps you to develop as a person.

It is hoped that this chapter illustrates Tom's enthusiasm and journey as a volunteer. Tom did not pursue a career in medicine purely for self-interest or material gain. It is evident that the volunteer activities have enriched Tom's life perspective and personal growth in many ways. Tom is content to be part of a collective effort towards uplifting humanity.

Chapter Eight

Comparative Analysis,

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how.
- Nietzsche

Introduction

In this chapter, an analysis between the themes associated with becoming a volunteer that emerged from the case studies and the literature will be undertaken. Similarities and differences between the themes and previous research will be discussed.

An integration and summary of the core findings of the three case studies is given between the themes associated with helping behaviour that emerged from the case studies of the three participants. Similarities and differences between the themes and previous research will be discussed.

The theoretical paradigm focussed on social constructionism. It is important to social constructionist belief that the social communities and contexts in which people live create particular attitudes and meanings for them to live by, and thus "fit" into (Dickerson & Zimmermann, 1996).

Comparative Analysis

In the previous chapters, the researcher has attempted to develop coherent descriptions of *what* and *how* volunteering at LifeLine Pietermaritzburg happens, across a number of cases. In this chapter the researcher turns to the question of *why*.

The researcher has utilised the technique of thematic content analysis. It is the first qualitative method that researchers should learn as it provides core skills that will be useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

According to Boyatzis (cited in Braun& Clarke, 2006), thematic analysis minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail and frequently goes further than this, interpreting various aspects of the research topic. Thematic content analysis within a social constructionist epistemology identifies patterns which are socially produced.

A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question, and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As such, themes constitute the researcher's story of the participants' stories. The key problem is how to draw well-founded conclusions from multiple networks (Durrheim, 2007).

A discussion now follows on the recurring themes identified after an analysis of the participants responses to questions presented to them during the interviews.

The interviews were conducted as set out in chapters 5, 6 and 7.

An analysis of the themes discussed revealed that there were three recurring themes which are:

1. The need to help.
2. Being a good counsellor.
3. Resilience.

Theme One: The need to help

Sophia came from a strong Christian home. Her mother was a Sunday School teacher. Sophia was encouraged to be helpful and thankful, hence her need to give back to LifeLine.

Clarkson (1994) indicates that counselling-orientated individuals are predominantly the progeny descended from somewhat maladaptive familial units who placed themselves in a position to help and be of assistance to others. Bond (1993), refers to the volunteer's need to interact with other individuals. Sophia says that she "just enjoys helping people and being able to help people". She further states that the important thing is to know when to say no and when the volunteer acknowledges that they can do nothing more.

Holyoak and Morrison (2005), indicate that the volunteer lay counsellor invests a large component of his/ her personal identity into his/her counselling identity. Sophia looks forward to positive feedback from the client and in knowing that she has helped. When a client expresses thanks, she knows she has helped.

Similarly to Sophia, Emily also feels the need to give back to LifeLine the help they extended to her. She says, "I could get help myself and that started me off on the path of getting help for myself and then, by extension, wanting to give help to others."

Emily believes in developing a counselling relationship with her clients. Through her communication with her client, she feels the client can learn "to help themselves".

Emily feels that the act of volunteering creates a deep sense of connectedness to her clients. She says, "Ask not what people can do for you, ask what you can do for them." Emily believes in making a difference, which she finds is fulfilled by her work as a volunteer counsellor. She says, "No man is an island and we need to help each other."

Tom similarly had an innate yearning to help others. Tom, like Sophia came from a deep-rooted Christian background which influenced his values. Tom indicates a deep respect for his client's personal views. He says he has a deeper interest, "in my fellow people, than in material things".

De Boer & Coady (2007) and Skovholt & Ronnestad (1992), compare the motivations to volunteer with Clary (1998) and Snyder (1999), together with De Boer & Coady (2007) and Cull & Hardy (1974). Collectively they refer to the health-giving services provided by volunteers.

Tom also looks for positive feedback from his clients and he believes that the client does benefit from the counselling received. He recalls clients saying to him, "Well, you helped me a lot". Emily, as a practising Buddhist, believes in the concept of connectedness. She says, "You are part of the whole and you must do your part."

Volunteers are engaged in an assortment of activities. McSweeny, Alexandra (1996) and the United Nations Development Programme (2003), indicate that volunteers constitute 47% of the non-profit labour force.

Wilson and Musiek (2002), present a revealing balance between the need to help and being a good volunteer. They reveal that the extrinsic variables are "help-containing behaviours which are intrinsic incentives which explicate the volunteers values".

Hassim (2009) indicates that the act of volunteering is an incentive for other volunteers to follow suit. Wood (1999) refers to epistemological psychologism as the demonstrative term used to illustrate the function of a volunteer lay counsellor in helping. Reber & Reber (2001), see the operations used in the helping process as pseudopodium of volunteer lay counselling. Furthermore, Reber & Reber (2001) see helping behaviour as the provision of distinct support to another person or person. Bringle & Duffy (1998) view the prosocial behaviour as aimed at profiting another person or group by helping. Seigler (2006) sees helping behaviour as helping to console or liberate the other party, while Hind & Groebel (1991) draw a distinction between helping and altruism. Trivers (1971) shows that an individual is drawn to helping others, since he/she has expectation of a future reward.

However, a person chooses to assist specifically when the profit from helping outweighs the sacrifice of the action. Here the action of helping serves as somewhat of an investment. Miller

(2002), who follows up from Trivers (1971), makes use of the term reciprocal altruism which involves continuous reinforcement. Miller (2002) looks at the term generalised reciprocity, where the impression is that humanity in its totality will benefit in some or many ways, should people assist each other in many ways.

Carl Rogers (1957), in his person-centred approach of "unconditional positive regard" looks at acceptance as a person "without negative judgement... accepting a person's basic worth." Gerard Egan (1975), in "The Skilled Helper", illustrates how to help people by "helping people become better at helping themselves", in their everyday lives.

Theme Two: Being a good counsellor:
Emily believes that a good counsellor should be, "non-judgemental and, of course, to be empathetic." "I found that people who where judgemental tend to dry up the person that they are trying to counsell and they just, you know, do not want to divulge anything about themselves if they are feeling judged." Emily also refers to the tone of voice. "You need to have an encouraging, gentle tone, and I think your voice must not be too loud or too harsh."

Madsen et al. (2007) and Kitcher (1993) also indicate that perceived similarities in individuals fosters a process whereby individuals with similar attributes are willing to perform altruistic behaviours. This they say occurs across cultures and genders. Reber & Reber (2001), define reciprocal altruism as a term best summed up by the phrase, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you".

Emily also believes that a good counsellor must be a good listener. Although Emily likes to talk, she listens carefully to people, "who are in trouble and I do see the need to be absolutely quiet and to just let them put everything on the table." Emily believes that volunteering is a skill that must be refined. "You learn by your mistakes and you do learn and you pick up a lot of things intuitively". Emily also explains that confidentiality must be maintained. "I just don't talk about my life and LifeLine at all and that is just a separate part of my life."

Skoholt & Ronnestad (1992) cited in Stanton (2005), found that lay counsellors who lack specialised education in this field operated in what they termed "the conventional mode", in which the individual functions as an aid and helps other individuals or groups. This research indicates that the lay counsellor invests a larger component of his/ her personal identity into his/her counselling.

Holyoak and Morrison (2005) refer to inductive reasoning which explores the subjective experience as an individual. Freeman (1997) observes people who are willing to volunteer, he appears to question the essence underpinning volunteerism.

Hackl, Halla and Pruckner (2007) see volunteering as either consumptive or as an investment. In the consumptive approach, the lack of income serves as an impetus to the volunteer and the lack of recompensed employment permits certain individuals to volunteer their time.

Hackl et al.(2007) also see the good counsellor as having intrinsic motivators, helping a concern for the beneficiaries gain- a simultaneous pleasure in volunteering- an intrinsic gratification- producing an overlap between consumptive and investment. Clary et al.(1998) found that stimulus dynamics, subjective reality and experience intersect and are not individual motivations.

Rath (2008) spoke about "the dearth of literature as regards the lived experiences" of volunteer lay counsellors. Rath (2008) looked at the experiences of rape crisis volunteers. Clary et al. (1998), studied the functioning of volunteers and found that the good counsellor is characterised by a good value system that is based on personal philosophies. Volunteers have a need to understand and attempt to discover through a sense of discovery and also have a curiosity into organisational function. Volunteers also seek a personal enhancement which varies in terms of psychological and sociological development. They seek to augment their career-related skills, and have a need to maintain and develop social complexes.

Hassim (2009) indicates that volunteers have a hegira of either attending to, or circumventing, personal obstructions. McLeod (2003) found that volunteers have a therapeutic commitment which involves a commonality between role requirement and role security during training.

Tom forms part of the team training new recruits who volunteer at LifeLine. Tom believes that an element of selflessness is important in order to be a volunteer counsellor/facilitator. When Tom meets new recruits, he is very aware of their motivation for volunteering. He says, "first of all I think that they must not come in for personal gain; secondly, I think that they must have a willingness to sacrifice something of themselves, their time, their resources".

Schneider et al.(2008), focus on South African volunteers and McLeod (2003) see the therapeutic commitment in rendering comparable terms of South African volunteer lay counsellors. Schneider (2008) shows that volunteer workers and lay counsellors are community-orientated rather than community-based, which fulfils identity-related needs.

Tom believes that "...some sort of altruist component is also very important". He also believes that the aspect of selflessness is very important. He says, "So...in the counselling situation, we give time and attention to people, not advice, but we help them to see what is right, but then they don't choose to do that action we give them, for reasons of their own."

Hassim (2009) suggests that volunteer lay counsellors are conduits between the health care system and patient communities. Bellamy (2001) suggested that payment could increase volunteer contribution but concedes that financial incentive is not that key to volunteers. McLeod (2003) looked at motivation themes for mature adults and found that older persons do volunteer work to sustain social engagement and/or to fill in free time. McLeod (2003) and McSweeny & Alexander (1996), indicated that individuals in mid-life a more likely to participate in volunteer wok. McLeod (2003), also found that previous experience in volunteering facilitates participation in volunteer work in later life.

Hassim (2009) also indicates that the example set by older volunteers sets a standard for younger volunteers to follow. Erlinghagen & Hank (2005), found that mature volunteers from Northern Europe were less restrained than mature Mediterranean volunteers, and Hassim (2009) indicates that it would be appealing to conduct such research in South Africa. Erlinghagen & Hank (2005), found that systemic, organisational and cultural conditions have an immense effect on one's intention to volunteer.

Hassim (2009) found that the spin-off to volunteering allows volunteers to gain knowledge of these experiences and to develop connections between families and societies, and this is compounded by Bellamy (2001), who says that most volunteers develop an attitude of compassion. Wilson and Musiek (2000) acknowledge that the act of volunteering benefits each individual, which is greater than the act of volunteering itself.

Sophia upholds a non-judgemental attitude towards life and feels a great extent of empathy towards clients, which also leads to some anxiety in her. She says, "Oh yes, I can feel terrible anxiety, especially if the person has been physically abused by their partner". Sophia outlined criteria for a good counsellor: "Well, they must be prepared to give of their time and they must realise, too, that there's no money coming back to you for it...and it's always anonymous...and it's the feeling that you've helped somebody and you must enjoy that feeling". Sophia believes that a counsellor must listen intently. "Before you can help the other person, you have got to listen to their story throughout".

Ortlepp & Friedman (2002) focus on secondary traumatic stress and role satisfaction in non-professional trauma counsellors. This research indicated that non-professional trauma counsellors experienced isolation, anger, powerlessness, hopelessness, anxiety, burnout and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms.

Moultrie (2004) indicated that many volunteers prepossess traumatic stress, hence granting the volunteer the prospect of relating to clients/ patients. Fischer & Cole (1993), indicated that volunteers' participation in a training regime often dissipated the effects of primary and

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secondary traumatic stress. Figley (1995) indicates that one may acknowledge compassion fatigue and the steady minimization of empathy over a period of time.

Balancing the above, Kassan-Adams (1995) and Schauben & Frazier (1995), look at the positive consequences to lay counselling. They believe in personal vindication and advocate that in order to be constructive, negative aspects only have meaning because of the existence of the opposite, the positive.

Primo (2007) believes that the volunteer lay counsellors are positioned to be beneficiaries of secondary traumatic stress. De la Porte, Jordaan & Gravett (2005) look at the experiences of volunteer lay counsellors by focussing on the handling of traumatic stressors, which a part of being a volunteer lay counsellor.

Kauffman (1993) says that Maslow best describes a person most likely to be a volunteer as the individual whose most basic needs have been met and who is in the process of self-actualisation. McLeod (2003) believe that helping behaviours are a product of egoism, believing that people assist others in order to moderate subjective anguish which cannot be alleviated in any other way. Moultier (2004), suggested that the inclination to assist others is often by a collectivist culture, where communal attachment is of great consequence.

Tom emphasises that the counsellor must understand the client's worldview. He also advocates practising deep empathy and walking in the clients' shoes. He says, "the worldview is very important and also a sort of flexibility in handling your own against the clients". Tom maintains that confidentiality is critical to counselling. He says, "So confidentiality is a trust that people put in you and you are not supposed to break that..."

Tom also believes in a rich life experience in becoming a good counsellor. He says, "Well, I think age is a point.. some people are a bit young and therefore have not got most life experience or don't learn from their experience got through life...." .Tom is also an avid reader and reads psychological literature. He say, "I'm interested in a lot of aspects of human life".

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Tom says that he has, "a wider mission of serving people". He says, "I see a person not as a malfunctioning organ, but as a person who is in distress...So I have been counselling all my life as my interest was in psychology...It was not new to me to hear about listening and counselling instead of advising." Tom is grateful to be who he is. He says, "I really used the potential that God has given me. I think I'm still trying to do that. And that is very satisfying."

Theme Three: Resilience

Farlex (2008), defines resilience as the capacity to recuperate, be buoyant and be able to return to it's original shape. Ortlapp and Friedman (2002) looked at the humanistic effects in volunteer lay counsellors who continue with their work regardless of their exposure to secondary traumatic experiences. Hall (2006) looks the experiences in crisis situations and the development of counsellor confidence and efficiency in coping with change and the likelihood of reframing negative experiences into positive experiences.

Emily believes that counselling enhanced her life. She says, "It's just been such an enriching experience and I would not have liked to have gone...to have continued my life without it." Emily also feels that every LifeLine counsellor has enhanced her self-esteem. She says, "I enjoy that." "My footprint is very light. Although, who knows what difference I might have made in so many lives that I will never know." Emily gained a deeper understanding of herself through her counselling activities at LifeLine.

Moultrie (2004), in the South African context, found that burnout appeared to be minimal amongst many volunteers. Further, Kitcher (1993), Hackl, Halla and Pruckner (2007), and Rogers (1957) in their research into altruism looked at the equality of humanness in an evolutionary perspective and especially at the moral fibre and sees man's aggregate moral fibre as aiming to defend him/herself and his/her genius. Hackl, Halla and Pruckner (2007) look at altruism as an integrative concept, encompassing universal, biological, psychological and sociological attributes.

Rogers (1951), in looking at actualisation, stresses that the human organism has one basic tendency in striving to actualise, maintain and enhance the organism. He believes that the best vantage point for understanding behaviour is from the internal framework of reference of the individual. He says that when the individual perceives and accepts into one consistent and integrated system, all his sensory and visceral experiences, then he is necessarily more understanding of others and is more accepting of others as separate individuals. Egan (1975), advocates an empowering approach, which directs the person towards action. That leads to outcomes that the client has chosen and values.

Emily says, "You just do what you do and you do it because you want to do it and it is enriching to you and helpful to other people". Emily has also learnt to cope with her burdens, she says. "My burdens have been really my own burdens and by developing myself and learning to cope, these burdens have got lighter, so, in fact, volunteering has nurtured me and helped me to...to see life through different eyes and see the positives in life.

She has gained self-worth and appreciation. She says, "It's up to the person to be mature enough to realise that if you volunteer, it's not because you want appreciation and recognition. It's because you genuinely feel that it's a positive thing to do, and that you want to do it."

Tom has proven to be a resilient volunteer and he has seen his counselling as an ongoing learning process. He has also developed himself in respect of social skills and has learnt to cope with any social anxieties. He says, "I'm old enough to know it all, but I realised there are new things I learn from people…from the way people behave...So long as you remain curious you are young...I see new things and they really keep me going". "However, when it comes into my counselling situation I see opportunities of learning and of maybe contributing to solutions.

Further counselling has given Tom a positive understanding of himself. He says, "I know reasonably well where my weak and my strong points are…if you can use that word stability, then I am willing to go along with other peoples' ideas and accommodate them within my own life as much as possible." Tom is very reflective of his time spent at LifeLine and he is very

positive about his outlook on life. He say, "Ja, I think that I've got a very positive outlook." "Life is wonderful. It's a gift and a challenge, like they say for marriage, it's a risk and a challenge, so life is a risk and challenge and I have been willing to take to risk..." Although Tom is an octogenarian, he continues to search out the meaning to life and he enjoys the search. Counselling is an integral part of his search. He says, "There must be some, call it...meaning, I think that's one of the things that volunteers do."

He finds that volunteers do not see the meaning initially, but in his life he has found the meaning through being who he was potentially born to be. He says, "God obviously gives us a lot of things which we can enjoy, which are positive, constructive and building us as people and communities…Losing your life your gaining your life and in this way you are sacrificing something, you think you're sacrificing, but I think mean time you are getting so much back."

Tom quotes Saint Francis of Assisi: "That in giving I receive". "That's true, " Tom says. "I think the essence of finding meaning in your life is finding it not in yourself but in serving others; Ubuntu." Tom underwent personal trauma and this has led him to empathise with the traumatic experiences suffered by other. Having come close to death, Tom can now value pain and what it has taught him about life. He says, "People should say thank God for pain". "Pain is really an enormous opportunity for you to grow in your life as a person and how you deal with pain is in itself a very great learning process."

Tom continued to state that, "It's your attitude towards pain that is the secret to...get through pain."

Sophia appears to have learnt how to become resilient through restrictions which where forced upon her in marriage. She believes it was the personal growth course which taught her how to re-focus. She say, "I became more outgoing and more confident within". Sophia allows herself to accept new challenges. She has developed a deeper personal understanding because of her experiences in counselling. She says, "Ja, I think that I understand myself pretty well now. I didn't before."

Sophia is more confident about who she is and counselling has allowed her to understand herself. She say, "When the caller says, 'Well yes, yes, you have given me something to think about and thank you for listening to me'....It's good to walk with them and say, 'look, the decision's yours but let's go through how you'll tackle it.'" Sophia has developed her own self-worth and self-appreciation, which has allowed her to develop a genuine feeling to assist.

She says, "You know, it's in my nature to help people, I enjoy it".

None of the participants in this study required a financial incentive in order to volunteer. Mutchler, Burr & Caro (2003) address motivational themes in terms of mature adults entering into the volunteer sector. Older persons who engage in formal volunteer work often do so to sustain social engagement, and/or to substitute the excessive free time they experience subsequent to retirement. Additionally, an older volunteer's augmented aptitude to volunteer informally, such as assisting neighbours, is counterbalanced by the limited volume of requests they obtain due to a diminishing social system. It is interesting to note that the research conducted by Mutchler, Burr & Caro (2003) is consistent with the research conducted McSweeny & Alexander (1996). Both sets of authors indicate that individuals in their midlife are more likely to participate in volunteer work. Furthermore, Mutchler et al. (2003) concur with the results contextualised in the continuity theory, in that persons with previous experience in volunteering are more inclined to participate in voluntary work later in life.

Tom's need to help is echoed by his own words: "I was aware that I should share with other people, I don't know if it's a genetic thing or it was my Christian upbringing which prompted me to be more interested in my fellow people than in material things..."

Emily said "I think I have a need to help others, but I have learnt that you help others by helping them to help to help themselves."

Emily joined LifeLine at the age of fifty; she is now sixty-nine. She has had nineteen years of experience as a volunteer counsellor. Sophia is sixty-seven and has been counselling for the

passed eighteen years. Tom retired from being a medical doctor. He is now eighty years and has been with LifeLine for the past sixteen years.

Emily did not express a need for monetary compensation. She says, "no, no, I don't. This is strictly my contribution to a better world and I don't....no, I don't feel that I need payment at all in any degree." Tom also believes in no financial compensation for his work as a volunteer. He says, "I'm living on pension, enough to live from, and I don't need more…You're offering your services free and get a lot back, not in terms of financial, but otherwise."

Sophia also does not seek monetary compensation. She says, "no...well...you know, everybody likes to think that they're going to get money back but it hasn't really affected me...At some stage money must come into it but I don't...I've never ever sort of suggested that. I never ever thought about that because volunteering is giving of yourself."

Emily, Tom and Sophia have an understanding of psychological principles due to their reading in psychology and regular meetings at LifeLine with psychologists. Emily and Tom find books on psychology interesting and appealing and use these readings as a support in dealing with their clients. Emily says, "So books on psychology are definitely in that, in the genre of the reading that I do". Sophia, although an avid reader too, finds it difficult to make time to read as regularly as she would like to. Her reading matter centres around detective novels and war-time stories of the First and Second World Wars.

All the participants are aware of the rules governing confidentiality in their work as volunteer counsellors.

Sophia says, "Well of course we are not allowed to speak to our families about any traumatic thing..." Sophia does rely on the feedback and the debriefing which she shares with her fellow LifeLiners.

Emily respects the trust bestowed on her as a LifeLiner. She says, "Well, I just...I just don't talk about my life at LifeLine to anybody. Similarly to Sophia, Emily says, "We get enough outlet to discuss any aspect we wish to discuss, without breaking confidentiality." Tom believes that confidentiality is a difficult concept for him due to his talkative nature. However, he is aware of the trust and confidentiality bestowed upon him. He says, "Confidentiality is a trust that people put in you, and you are not supposed to break that."

Sophia believes in giving off a tremendous amount of empathy to her clients. She says, "…especially if the person has been physically abused by their partner, that upsets me because I can feel it, I know what that's like."

Sophia believes that a good counsellor should be non-judgmental and that in not judging the client and feeling with them during their abuse, allows her to empathise with her client. Tom has the ability to combine his learning about his client and the empathy he shares with them. He says, "I learn from people and from the way people behave...and the more I try to understand people." Tom also practises being non-judgemental, which comes to the fore in his high degree of selflessness which he believes is very important to counselling. He says, "..in the counselling situation, we give people not advice but we help them to see what is right."

Emily also believes in being non-judgemental of her clients which she explains is being part of being empathetic. She says, "I think, possibly, to be non-judgemental and, of course, to be empathetic, but non-judgemental is very important because I've found that people who are judgemental tend to dry up the person that their trying to counsel."

Emily is also a very keen listener, and her listening capacity gives her the space to be non-judgemental which allows her empathetic nature to come to the foreground. She says, "I'm a good listener…I do listen to people...who are in trouble and then I do see the need to be absolutely quiet. And just let them put everything on the table."

At the same time, Emily has the ability to combine what she learns from her clients with her counselling skills. She says, "I am a thirsty sponge and I have learnt so much about life". Emily's experience of feeling connectedness to her client allows her to have a great sense of fulfilment in having a skill to share with others. She says, "It is the development of a gentle tone, " in listening to her client, which has allowed her to focus upon all her counselling skills and give of her best to her clients.

Tom looks at the life experiences of his clients and helps them to maintain a balance in their lives and centre upon themselves and where they are in their lives. He says, "The more I look at people, the more I try to understand other people's reasoning and thinking…I think the essence of finding meaning in your life, finding it not in yourself but in serving others; Ubuntu". Further, in Tom's worldview pain and sacrifice have helped him to view the pain and trauma of his clients as a positive balance to life. He says, "I think people should understand that you can say, thank God, for pain, because without pain I would not be able to survive...to grow through pain."

He says, "I like to help them find the balance and the peace of mind in the place where they are". Tom's counselling skills are effectively balanced by his sense of having a wider mission in serving people.

Chapter 9

Conclusion

Evaluating the Study

This study aimed to give "voice" to three people who constructed themselves as volunteers and/or have accepted others' (for example fellow volunteers) constructions of them as volunteers.

The hope was that through them telling their life stories, rich information would emerge around their unique experiences and meanings. This study was not geared at generalising its findings to a larger population. It was hoped that the information gained from these personal accounts would give others the opportunity to hear the perspective and voices of those who volunteer.

Sophia said, "I think it's just been in my nature and I was brought up to always try and help people, always help where you can."

All three volunteers demonstrate the impact of the LifeLine culture in their perception of the volunteer role. They see the role as listening to the client, reflecting, accompanying them through their journey, and encouraging them to express their feelings about the process they are going through, but giving no advice. All of these elements correspond to the role of the volunteer as presented by LifeLine training, a view which is based on Rogers' theory. Non- judgementality, commitment and dedication were noted as good qualities for a volunteer.

On Becoming a good Counsellor

The effect of the volunteer's role on their relationships outside of LifeLine supports Uffman's (1993) cited in Stanton (2005), findings, in that it brings both difficulties and rewards in this area. Two of the volunteers say that outside relationships have been enhanced due to their volunteer experience. One volunteer reports that his skill in listening to others and confronting them enhances his interactions with others. He says that due to feeling satisfied through his role,

he is able to give more to his own family. These rewards are not reported in the literature surveyed for the current study. The same volunteer reports a change in perspective since working for LifeLine that enables him to appreciate his own family situation more (Uffman, 1993 cited in Stanton, 2005). Another volunteer reports that the role takes time away from her mother, while the third reported no effects on outside relationships.

Negative Effects

In the themes of "the need to help" and "being a good counsellor", all three volunteers mention, under different sub-themes, the negative effect of how much time the volunteer role takes (Dovidio, 1991). Another negative effect mentioned is of clients taking a volunteer for granted. This is a negative outcome not mentioned in literature but it would relate to volunteers specifically as it seems to be due to the fact that they are not paid. This problem could be classified under stress emanating from clients, which is discussed by Kottler (2000) cited in Stanton (2005).

Role Flexibility

Two volunteers have stepped outside of the boundaries of counselling to also deal with HIV and AIDS issues. This is stressful for the one volunteer, but not for the other because, due to past experience, he feels equipped to deal with the issues.

Summary of Emily's Story:

Reflecting back on the dialogue and encounter with Emily, the researcher acknowledges that she admired the strength and tenacity that Emily displayed. Emily is a widow who has not adopted the role of victimhood. She utilises her time to assist LifeLine. She has strengthened her own identity in that she has found a positive balance in her receiving help and in her need to help others with their problems.

Emily initially reflected on the lonely, isolated moments that she experienced in South Africa. Emily's husband was mostly away. LifeLine's telephone counselling line provided social support

and encouragement to Emily. Although Emily was taking medication for her depression, she began to feel relieved after receiving counselling from LifeLine.

Summary of Sophia's Story

Reflecting back on the dialogue and encounter with Sophia, the researcher acknowledges that throughout the interview Sophia was anxious. The effects of being in a marriage in which her husband was emotionally and physically abusive are still present. Sophia is currently a carer for her elderly mother. She does not appear to seek praise from her community or the LifeLine organisation for the time that she contributes.

The verbal, emotional and physical abuse during Sophia's marriage appears to her to have been quite severe. However, she does not choose to dwell on that phase of her life. Through being an active contributing member of the LifeLine team, Sophia has developed a new outlook on life. She admits that her perceptions were narrow and closed minded.

Summary of Tom's Story:

Reflecting back on the dialogue and encounter with Tom, the researcher acknowledges that she admired the sincerity and dedication that Tom displayed. Tom is truly searching for the meaning within his life. From the early stages of his life, Tom seems to have been acutely aware of the goals he would like to pursue in his life. Tom stated during the interview process that his interests in reading include psychology, theology and medicine.

Tom is actively and practically exerting his will to maintain his search to understand other cultures and communities. Tom is currently eighty-one years of age. However, the researcher has observed that he is enthusiastic toward his volunteer role. Tom has chosen not to show apathy towards causes that he believes in strongly.

Strengths of the Study

The study has given the opportunity to three counselling volunteers to elaborate on their experience as volunteers. The voices of the three volunteers give the reader a look at the world from the view of three people who have each volunteered for more than thirteen years.

Limitations of the Study

The case study method allows for an in depth exploration of unique individual experiences. One of the limitations of this method, though, is the lack of generalisability of the data. As the researcher made use of applied research, the level of generalisation only applies to this specific context (Durrheim, 1999). Further limitations of this study include a cultural bias: all the participants were white. It is also limited in the socio-economic status, in that all the participants were in the middle-class income group. Collectivistic-rooted volunteerism is shown to be community-embedded and to have group, community, and class stratifying effects (Eisenberg, 1991).

Recommendations for future research

More qualitative and explorative studies on volunteers in the counselling context within South Africa should be conducted. This study can serve as a platform for other researchers to further investigate the experiences of volunteers within the counselling context in other counselling-driven non-governmental organisations, topics related to volunteers or topics that emerged from the constructive research process.

Conclusion

The research process appears to have been valuable not only to the researcher, but also to the participants. The researcher was taught how to conduct research. The research process gave the participants the opportunity to reflect on their experiences, thoughts and feelings around volunteer counselling.

In addition, this study may serve as a foundation for future research on volunteers within the South African context (which is encouraged) as there appears to be a lack of research in this regard.

I am your servant....It is not the individuals that matter but the collective...This is a time to heal the old wounds and build a new South Africa (Mandela, 1994).

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Appendix A1

Letter of Information

My name is Rushathree Govender, a student in the Master's programme in Research Psychology at the University of South Africa. For my dissertation, I have chosen to explore volunteers in the counselling context, and I hope that you will consent to be a research participant in my study. I have personally been involved as a volunteer. I believe that my intense investigation and interest in the phenomenon of volunteering will convince you that I am truly interested in your story, opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and emotions.

The objective of this research is to explore literature and interview experienced volunteers via semi-structured interviews.

The title of my study is "The making of a volunteer". The information that will be gathered from this study will be helpful to therapists, directors of volunteers, and lay counsellors; in the sense that they will better understand, what the most important features of a volunteer are, and volunteering in the counselling context.

This study will also contribute a new and modern perspective to the literature on volunteers. Ultimately, I hope that the research I will be conducting will ignite more interest and more research on South African volunteers, which is a growing phenomenon with the potential for social development.

The interview will be transcribed and audio taped, with your permission. The data will then be analysed via Thematic Content Analysis. The interview will not take longer than one hour.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to refuse to participate. Should you feel uncomfortable at any stage of the interview or with any questions posed, you have the right to withdraw or refuse to answer a question. This will have no negative impact on you in any way.

Your anonymity will be respected at all times, and you have the right to confidentiality, where any information you divulge will be treated as such. Only my supervisor, Professor Maria Papaikonomou, and I will have access to the gathered data and informed consent forms. You do not have to give any personal details, and you will be referred to by a pseudonym to protect your identity.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Kind Regards

Rushathree Govender

Contact Details: 073 123 96 35 or rgraregem3@gmail.com

Further queries may also be directed to my supervisor at Unisa: Professor Maria. Papaikonomou

on (012) 429 8266.

Appendix A2

Consent Form

I_____ have been clearly informed regarding the nature and objectives of the study, including my participation in it. I hereby give consent to participate in an interview which will be conducted by Rushathree Govender, a Research Psychology Master's student, under the supervision and guidance of Professor Maria Papaikonomou at the University of South Africa. I understand that my participation in this study will cause no harm to myself, that my privacy will be protected, and that I have the right to withdraw or refuse to answer any questions at any stage of the study, without any negative impact on me.

Signed_____ Date_____

Appendix A3

Consent to be audio taped

I_____ have been clearly informed that the interview I will be participating in will be audio taped. I am aware that Rushathree Govender, a Research Psychology Master's student at the University of South Africa, will ensure that my privacy is protected at all times. Only the researcher (Rushathree Govender) and her supervisor, Professor Maria Papaikonomou, will have access to the audio tapes. Should anyone else require access to these tapes, such a transcriber or a co-coder, they will be obligated to sign a letter of confidentiality and will not have access to any of your personal details.

Signed_____ Date_____