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Exploring the Lived Experiences of Marriage and Family Therapy Students Who Study Bowen Family Systems Theory, and Relating Those Experiences to Concepts of Differentiation of Self and Emotional Intelligence: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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of Differentiation of Self and Emotional Intelligence: An Interpretative

Phenomenological Analysis

By

Tracey-Ann Spencer

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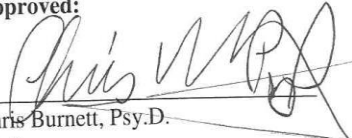
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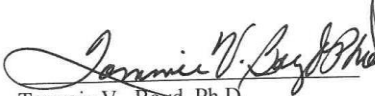
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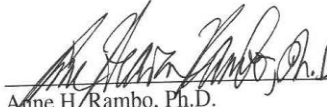
This dissertation proposal was submitted by Tracey-Ann Spencer under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Program of Marriage and Family Therapy at Nova Southeastern University.

Approved:

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Date of Final Defense

Chris Burnett, Psy.D.
Chair

contribution to the body of literature in Marriage and Family Therapy. The essence of your lived experiences has strengthened my transformative experience.

It is crucial for me to extend my deepest gratitude to my family, especially my parents, Hyacinth and Delroy Spencer. I am deeply indebted to my parents for their outstanding support spiritually, emotionally, and physically that brought this study to fruition. Your unmeasurable contribution, training and values concerning God, education, perseverance, integrity, and character have been the enabling tools in this process. I applaud your sacrificial efforts, and thank you for helping me achieve this life changing goal.

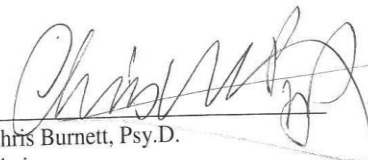To my Sister, Diana-Kaye, and my Cousin and esteemed confidant Kimberly Antoinette, I am forever grateful for your encouragement, and faithful support. I would also like to thank my Uncle Llocket, Aunts Valda, Antonette, Carmen and Marcia, Grandparents Louise Eliza, Robert, Charles and Gloria, Cousins Kacey, Kristen, Kerisan, and Chevaughn for their kind support, motivation, and their constant reminder that education is an essential asset for personal empowerment. I owe a wealth of gratitude to my extended family, friends, church family and well-wishers who are too many to name.

My academic colleagues Rochelle, Shawyna, and Tracy played a pivotal role in the journey through the doctoral program. The classes, practicums, internships and supervision sessions were more valuable because you were present, and for this I am truly grateful.

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Abstract

Bowen Family Systems Theory's (BFST) concept of differentiation of self has the ability to contribute to the self-development of the therapist, and is considered the main principle of this theory (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Emotional intelligence is an essential skill for Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs), as it provides the ability to accurately perceive, express, and evaluate emotions in one's self and others to facilitate thought, and the regulation of emotions in order to enhance emotional and intellectual growth (Salovey & Mayer, 1997). This study explored the lived experiences of Marriage and Family Therapy students who studied BFST and related those experiences to concepts of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence.

This qualitative study utilized Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to gather, process, and analyze the essence of students' experiences. This process included semi-structured open-ended interviews of six doctoral students, transcribing, and analyzing the data in accordance with IPA. The study led to the outcome of the coined term *Differentiated Intelligent Emotions*. The findings of the study produced nine themes: (1) BFST impact on clinical work, (2) BFST impact on personal development, (3) Differentiation of self, (4) Emotional intelligence, (5) Anxiety, (6) Nuclear family emotional process, (7) Multigenerational transmission process, (8) Triangulation, and (9) Individuality and Togetherness. The findings suggest the study of BFST resulted in awareness, and an increase in the differentiation of self supported by an increase in emotional intelligence. This led to improvements in personal development, professional development in therapeutic relationships, managing anxiety, nuclear family functioning, multigenerational transmission process, detriangulation, and sense of individuality.

This study contributes to the existing training and development literature concerning MFT's in terms of their differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. Future research in clinical practice and training are needed.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Bowen Family Systems Theory describes patterns of emotional processing that transpire in the nuclear family and over several generations, in larger systems, and in the society (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). This theory considers the family as an emotional unit, and a network of relationships that interlock. These interlocking relationships extend beyond the family to include biological, psychological and sociological processes. The interlocking relationships impact the thinking, feeling, and behavior of each person in the family (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Bowen (1985) defined differentiation of self as the degree of merging or separation between emotional and intellectual functioning. Kerr and Bowen (1988) posited that people can cooperate, remain altruistic and cohesive during stressful times if they possess a high level of differentiation in their family or group. If differentiation is low, they are more likely to become selfish, aggressive and avoidant in stressful times. Salovey and Mayer (1990) submitted that intelligence was not only cognitive in nature, but also emotional. Emotional intelligence is the ability to observe one's own and others feelings and emotions in order to distinguish them, and use the information to guide one's thoughts and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Yeung (2009) pointed to research that suggest that the better a person's emotional intelligence, the greater their ability to be successful, have physical health, mental health, wealth, and more fulfilled life and happiness.

Bowen Family Systems Theory

Bowen theory was developed by a psychiatrist named Dr. Murray Bowen. Bowen's theory is based on the assumption "that the human is a product of evolution and

that human behavior is significantly regulated by the same natural processes that regulate the behavior of all other living things" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 3). Evolution is thought to be an on-going process that is non-symmetrical. Systems theory further supports the assumption that mankind has more in common with other forms of life, than the differences between them. Bowen's theory rests on the assumption that human beings and their families are led by the processes "written in nature" which makes the human family a natural system. According to Kerr and Bowen (1988), Bowen wanted to maintain the meaning and integrity of his theory, so he changed the name of his theory from "family systems" to "Bowen theory" around the year 1966.

Bowen Family Systems Theory is supported by systems thinking in its theoretical underpinning of the family as an emotional unit. Nichols (2009) posited that Bowen's theory describes how the family as a multigenerational network of relationships affects the counterbalancing of individuality and togetherness by using eight concepts. Bowen's eight concepts are a) individuality and togetherness, b) chronic anxiety, c) differentiation of self, d) triangles, e) nuclear family emotional process, f) multigenerational transmission process, g) emotional cutoff, and h) societal emotional process.

Titelman (2008) posited that "differentiation of self is the core theoretical concept of Bowen's theory of the family as an evolution-based multigenerational emotional system" (p. 35). Bowen's other seven concepts describe the management of differentiation and fusion through the pattern of symptoms in individuals, couples, the nuclear family, and several nuclear families. Basically, "the multigenerational transmission process of the level of differentiation of the family leads to continuity or extinction of particular family branches" (pp. 35-36). Titelman (2008) believed that the

display of emotional processing and variation in differentiation levels at the macro level of human functioning is evident in societies.

The Emotional System Concept

The emotional system concept is essential in understanding the evolutionary process claim, and the natural world. According to Bowen's theory, the term emotion speaks to the automatic processes that direct life at all levels, ranging from the cellular to the societal level. These processes automatically guide a person within their environment. This is similar to the role of emotional intelligence as it automatically guides a person in the management of emotions within themselves and others. According to Kerr and Bowen (1988), Bowen developed this concept as a way to explain the behavioral connection between animals and human beings. Emotional system is defined as "the existence of a naturally occurring system *in all forms of life* that enables an organism to receive information (from within itself and from the environment), to integrate that information, and to respond on the basis of it" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 27). This definition fits closely with that of Salovey and Mayer's definition of emotional intelligence.

The emotional system is furnished with mechanisms that allow living organisms to find food, continue reproduction, protect itself from harm, rear its offspring and function in social relationships with others. The emotional system concept presents the belief that what is alive wants to remain alive, and does what it needs to do in order to maintain its life. The emotional system is thought of as a consequence of the most basic and fundamental reason for the perpetuation of life. The responses of the emotional system can range from automatic instinctual responses to responses that are learned over

time. The emotional system is considered to be an explanatory concept; it is a model that explains our understanding of the world (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Differentiation of Self

In the development of the eight concepts of BFST, Dr. Murray Bowen (1978) came to the realization "that the basic task of adult life is to differentiate a self in relation to the important relationships in one's life" (Titelman, 2008, p. 311). For Bowen, differentiation was defined "as the effort to become a mature human with the capacity to thoughtfully direct one's life in the face of the anxiety and emotion that permeate human relationships" (p. 311). This self formation starts in infancy and further develops in adolescence as the individual is developing identity and dealing with their parent's expectations and emotional investment in their children (Titelman, 2008).

The differentiation of self concept is a cornerstone of BFST. Differentiation of self "defines people according to the degree of *fusion*, or *differentiation*, between emotional and intellectual functioning (Bowen, 1985, p. 362). People at the low end of the continuum have very fused emotions and intellect which results in their lives being led by an automatic emotional system. Their intellect is basically controlled by their emotional system. These people are typically less flexible and adaptable, but more emotionally dependent on others. They experience stress easily which leads to dysfunction, and they have difficulty recovering from these dysfunctions. People at this end of the continuum also inherit high percentages of human problems (Bowen, 1985).

Emotional Intelligence

For the past century academic intelligence has been the main acceptable measure of human aptitude, predictor of success, and, in some cases, human value. Intelligence

quotient (IQ) held preeminence as the standard of excellence and success in life for a long time, while very little attention was given to the emotions, its systems and intelligence. Research now points to the emotions as the missing piece of the puzzle for human aptitude, success, and, in some cases, human value. The effective management of the emotional system is known as emotional intelligence. Mayer and Salovey (1990) presented the first formulation of the emotional intelligence (EI) concept, and are responsible for the EI area of scholarship which began with their seminal article in 1990 entitled, "Emotional Intelligence". Goleman (1995) stated that EI gained prominence and now has three main models with several variations and different perspectives.

The Mayer and Salovey model concentrates on "the tradition of intelligence shaped by the original work on IQ a century ago. The model put forth by Reuven Bar-On is based on his research on well-being" (Goleman, 1995, p. xiii). Goleman's model of EI "focuses on performance at work and organizational leadership, melding EI theory with decades of research on modeling the competencies that set star performers apart from average" (p. xiii). For the purposes of this research I will focus on the Mayer and Salovey's model of emotional intelligence as it pertains to awareness of the emotional system that can lead people to change.

Definitions of Emotional Intelligence

In the beginning, the framework for emotional intelligence by Salovey and Mayer (1990) defined it as several skills that "contribute to the accurate appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself and in others, the effective regulation of emotion in self and others, and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life" (p. 185). Salovey and Mayer also defined "emotional intelligence as the subset of social intelligence that

involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (p. 189). They believe that affective information should be processed, and each person will be different in the skills they use to do this. They also support the view that emotional intelligence is a part of Gardner's presentation of social intelligence that he calls personal intelligence. Similar to social intelligence, personal intelligence is split into inter- and intra- personal intelligence. This speaks to knowledge about one's self and knowledge of others. Personal intelligence includes the aspect that relates to feelings and this is close to what Salovey and Mayer referred to as emotional intelligence.

An early definition of emotional intelligence stated that it is "a type of emotional information processing that includes accurate appraisal of emotions in oneself and others, appropriate expression of emotion, and adaptive regulation of emotion in such a way as to enhance living" (Mayer, DiPaolo, & Salovey, 1990, p. 773). Salovey and Mayer (1990) emphasized the fact that emotional intelligence does not refer to "the general sense of self and appraisal of others. It focuses, rather, on the processes . . . , that is, the recognition and use of one's own and others' emotional states to solve problems and regulate behavior" (p. 189). Salovey and Mayer defined "emotions as organized responses, crossing the boundaries of many psychological subsystems, including the psychological, cognitive, motivational, and experiential systems" (p. 186). Emotions are usually responses to events, whether internally or externally, with a positive or negative meaning for that person. Emotions are different from the concept of mood as emotions are shorter and more intense.

In the discipline of psychology, "EI belongs to this same group of interrelated intelligences and denotes the capacity to understand, and use emotional information. In addition, EI plausibly reflects the emotion system's capacity to enhance intelligence" (Ciarrochi, Forgas, & Mayer, 2001, p. 8). This speaks to the fact that the emotions play a significant role in the matter of intelligence.

As EI became popular the definition saw more changes. Goleman (1995) saw the definition as having five areas. Emotional intelligence according to Goleman became "Knowing one's emotions . . . managing emotions . . . motivating oneself . . . recognizing emotions in others . . . (and) handling relationships" (Ciarrochi et al., 2001, p. 9). Based on this change in the definition, the focus shifted in the direction of motivation and social relationships. Another mixed model was offered in a manual that described a test for emotional quotient. Bar-On's (1997) definition spoke of "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (Ciarrochi et al., 2001, p. 9). As such, two lines of definition became apparent, "(a) the original approach that defined EI as an intelligence involving emotion and (b) the popularized, mixed approaches that blended EI with other skills and characteristics such as well-being, motivation, and capabilities to engage in relationships" (Ciarrochi et al., 2001, p. 9).

Mayer and Salovey (1997) constructed an abbreviated definition of emotional intelligence that they preferred, stating that emotional intelligence is "the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (p. 5). This definition of emotional

intelligence joins "the ideas that emotion makes thinking more intelligent and that one thinks intelligently about emotions" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 5). Both ideas connect intelligence and emotion together.

Mayer and Salovey (1997) defined emotional intelligence in their previous works based on the abilities involved in it. One of their first definitions for emotional intelligence stated that is was "the ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and action" (p. 10). They felt at this point that this definition and earlier ones appeared "vague in places and impoverished in the sense that they talk only about perceiving and regulating emotion, and omit thinking about feelings" (p. 10). They revised the definition in order to correct these problems. Their new definition stated:

> Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 10)

As time progressed, the definition expanded in 1999 with a two-part form. Emotional intelligence was now defined as:

> An ability to recognize the meanings of emotions and their relationships, and to reason and problem-solve on the basis of them. Emotional intelligence is involved in the capacity to perceive emotions, assimilate emotion-related feelings, understand the information of those emotions, and manage them. (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999, p. 267)

Later, Salovey, Mayer, and Caruso (2002) submitted that "emotional intelligence refers to the ability to process emotion-laden information competently and to use it to guide cognitive activities like problem-solving and to focus energy on required behaviors" (p. 159). This term gave the impression that there could be other ways of being ". . . intelligent than those emphasized by standard IQ tests, that one might be able to develop these abilities, and that an emotional intelligence could be an important predictor for success in personal relationships, family functioning and the workplace" (p. 159). The field of positive psychology maintains that emotional intelligence belongs in positive psychology for the main reason that it gives hope and suggests promise in comparison to the "traditional notions of crystalized intelligence" (Salovey et al., 2002, p. 159). EI encompasses a wider scope of intelligence than IQ.

Marriage and Family Therapy

Goleman (1995) presented the view that emotional intelligence supersedes IQ mainly in the "soft" domains where the intellect may be somewhat less pertinent for success. This would be where emotional self-regulation and empathy may be the more prominent skills required as opposed to only cognitive abilities. The field of Marriage and Family Therapy can be considered as a discipline that relies mainly on the soft domains for emotional self-regulation and empathy on the part of the therapist as opposed to only their cognitive abilities (Goleman, 1995). IQ is not the only requirement here, but also EI in order to first self-regulate, demonstrate empathy and lead a conversation with clients that can help them build their own solutions.

The Systemic Theory

The Marriage and Family Therapy field is supported by the systemic theory that considers the individual as belonging to a family system instead of operating on their own. As such the system in which the individual is embedded will affect who they become including their differentiation of self and level of emotional intelligence. Everything is interconnected and therefore it is also profitable to consider the whole system as opposed to parts of the system based on the fact that change in one part of the system will affect the whole system (Bateson, 1972). Bateson (1972) stated: "What we believe ourselves to be should be compatible with what we believe of the world around us" (p. xi). This supports the systemic, relational approach of the Marriage and Family Therapy field that we are not independent of the systems around us that influence us, but we are rather reflections and products of the systems in which we are embedded.

Flemons (1991) submitted that "a systemic approach to therapy can thus be described in terms of its sensitivity to layered networks of premises and patterns of circular interaction, within and between ideas and people" (p. 16). With this in mind, the level of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence of the therapist will influence the circular interaction with the client and the therapeutic system. It is also essential to note that MFTs don't treat clients as individuals, but as products of their family system. A systemic approach in examining the development of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence provides for a more holistic and effective understanding of how these concepts can also developed in the therapeutic system.

The Self of the Researcher

My interest in the topic of the lived experiences of Marriage and Family Therapy students who study BFST, and relating those experiences to concepts of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence, stems from my experience of interpersonal, intrapersonal and professional growth after studying BFST in the doctoral program. The first learning objective for this course dictated that students will be able to construct family genograms, and apply them to the Bowen Family Systems Thinking concepts. The second learning objective stated that students will understand the influence of generational issues and how they affect current family functioning. "After all, emotional intelligence has traditionally been passed on in the midst of everyday life–with parents and relatives, and in the rough-and-tumble of free play-opportunities that are now being lost to the young" (Goleman,1995, p. xvi). These learning objectives were met for me, and supported my transformation and growth.

It is this introspective examination of one's family system functioning over generations that leads to "the recognition and use of one's own and others' emotional states to solve problems and regulate behavior" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). I realized that the study of BFST helped me to develop an awareness of the emotional system, which resulted in an increase in my differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. I was better able to process emotional information effectively which guided my cognitive ability to solve problems individually and relationally. Upon exploring emotional intelligence in a work related training, I realized that the benefits from studying BFST were similar to Salovey, Mayer and Caruso (2002) concept of EI: "The ability to process emotion-laden information competently and to use it to guide cognitive

activities like problem-solving and to focus energy on required behaviors" (p. 159).

Purpose of the Study

As a Marriage and Family Therapist with a systemic epistemology, it is crucial to explore the concepts that can help families build solutions to problems, and enhance the quality of their lives. Given the current trends of problem formation and perpetuation over generations, there is a need for greater understanding and awareness of the differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. We use the emotional system to relate to others, and therefore intelligence is necessary for our emotional system. This is basically referring to being intelligent with one's emotions; emotional intelligence. In a systemic light, if the family experiences improvement in the functioning of their differentiation of self and emotional intelligence, then the individuals within the family will also benefit from that improvement. The individuals will further extend this improvement in their differentiation of self and emotional intelligence to the other relationships that they are embedded in at work, at school, at church, and other places. With these potential benefits, it is now time to look at how, if at all, the study of BFST impacts differentiation of self and emotional intelligence for Marriage and Family Therapy doctoral students. If the study of BFST does in fact impact the differentiation of self and emotional intelligence, then it could mean that students who study BFST are likely to experience an improvement in their differentiation of self and emotional intelligence.

There is a gap in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy concerning how Marriage and Family Therapy students experience the study of BFST, and relate their experiences to concepts of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence.

Differentiation of self and emotional intelligence are essential abilities for MFTs and the entire therapeutic system which includes the client. Differentiation of self and emotional intelligence can enhance the therapist's efficiency and effectiveness, and consequently enhance the therapeutic process leading to greater benefits for the client. The therapist's own level of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence help determine how they in turn function in therapy. This is directly related to their ability to help clients develop their own differentiation of self, emotional intelligence, and abilities to be successful in life.

It is against this background that the significance of this proposed research becomes relevant. For this reason, the researcher explored the lived experiences of doctoral students who studied BFST at NSU in an effort to understand how their own perceived levels of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence were impacted. The primary goal of this study was to gain an understanding of how the study of BFST impacts differentiation of self and emotional intelligence in MFTs. A secondly goal was to gain an understanding of how the study of BFST impacts MFT's functioning in their family and other relationships. A third was to explore the essential role of the Marriage and Family Therapist's differentiation of self and emotional intelligence in the therapeutic system.

Bowen Family Systems Theory describes patterns of emotional processing that transpire in the nuclear family and over several generations, in larger systems, and in the society (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Bowen Family Systems Theory places great emphasis on the self-development of the therapist by way of differentiation of self. Friedman (1991) posited that "Bowen has consistently maintained that it is hard for the

patient to mature beyond the maturity level of the therapist, no matter how good his or her technique" (p. 138). Friedman (1991) informed us further that "in Bowen theory, *the differentiation of the therapist is the technique*" (p. 138). The differentiation of the therapist as the technique serves to help the client to also become more differentiated so that they can better manage their emotions and intellect in order to build solutions and function effectively in their relationships with others. Kerr (1981) submitted that a person cannot become a Bowen therapist by just reading about the theory or taking workshops. Kerr believed rather that the therapist must experience an emotional transformation that occurs experientially after continued examination of their own family and applying the ideas of BFST. This is a significant part of the personal and professional developmental process for MFTs.

The therapist's differentiation of self will help them to maintain a non-anxious presence with the client, and remain detriangulated. Maintaining a non-anxious presence in a triangle can help the therapist to create change in the relationship of the clients. "To be objective and to promote differentiation in others is directly related to the being of the therapist, not to his/her technical skills" (Friedman, 1991, p. 138). It is essential for therapists to be able to separate their thoughts from their feelings, and knowing where they stop and where the clients start.

As for emotional intelligence, Mayer and Salovey (1997) maintained that it gives an individual the "ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (p. 10). This is the essential role of the

Marriage and Family Therapist. As such, it is crucial for the Marriage and Family Therapist to possess a significant level of emotional intelligence in order to be successful with clients in the therapeutic system.

A careful exploration of the relationship between studying BFST and its impact on differentiation of self and emotional intelligence adds to the body of existing Marriage and Family Therapy literature. It has implications for clinicians who practice BFST and other theories; it can improve the practice of BFST, assist future researchers seeking to build on these findings, and future training. It also has implications for theoreticians desiring to build on existing theories. This research can also be used to support evidence based practices in the field of Marriage and Family Therapy. These findings stand to have a significant impact on the understanding and implementation of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence in the therapeutic system.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

There is substantial literature and research to support the claim that BFST can lead to improvement in family functioning, but research is lacking as to how the study of BFST can impact its students. Bowen Family Systems Theory and its concept of differentiation of self, and Salovey and Mayer's emotional intelligence construct seem to be converging on the same idea that intelligence is not just cognitive functioning, but necessary for the regulation of the emotional system. For this reason, it was essential to examine further the BFST constructs of the emotional system, the relationship system, the development of the emotional system, the operation of the emotional system, how learning can improve the emotional system, and its benefits. I also examined the development of differentiation of self, the differentiation of self scale, the operation of differentiation of self, the benefits of differentiation of self, and how learning can improve differentiation of self. Salovey and Mayer's construct of emotional intelligence was also discussed along with the development of emotional intelligence, the operation of emotional intelligence, how learning can improve emotional intelligence, how the field of Family Therapy views emotional intelligence, the benefits of emotional intelligence, and its application.

Bowen Family Systems Theory

Development of the Bowen Family Systems

The Bowen Family Systems Theory was developed by Dr. Murray Bowen during the 1950s and early 1960s. Bowen was a trained psychiatrist from Tennessee born in 1913 and died in 1990. Titelman (2008) informed us that Bowen's thinking shifted from an individual, psychoanalytic model to a systems thinking approach. Bowen's evaluation in thinking was due to his training at the Menninger Foundation in the late 1940's where

he focused "on the unresolved symbiotic relationship within the dyad of mother and child" (Titelman, 2008, p. 3). Bowen changed his professional path from a heart surgeon to a psychiatrist after his six-years of service in World War II following his observation of the impact of stress on human functioning (Titelman, 2008). Bowen moved on to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in 1954 where he conducted research on schizophrenia and the family. At that point he extended his focus to include the emotional unit of mother, father, and child. This was described in the beginning as the *interdependent triad*, then later renamed as the *triangle* as he built the concept (Titelman, 2008).

During the 1950s and early 1960s Dr. Murray Bowen developed *Family Systems Theory* as a step towards an integrative theory within the field of psychiatry. Two reasons supported the importance of his theory's development. The first reason "is that family theory defined an important new set of variables that influence the physical diseases, emotional illnesses, and social acting-out problems" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. viii). Secondly, "the theory demonstrated that the interrelationship of these newly defined variables could be understood with systems thinking" (p. viii). Bowen's family systems theory provided a new way of understanding human functioning in relationships.

Bowen Family Systems Theory

Bowen family systems theory is a theory about human behavior that considers the family as an emotional unit. This theory uses systems thinking to describe the interactions in this emotional unit. Emotional system is said to be "Bowen's term for the recursive emotionally-driven problematic interaction patterns which occur in families, particularly those containing high levels of anxiety" (Carr, 2006, p. 185). "The emotional system is

composed of genes, mitochondria, cell membranes, intercellular connections, extracellular fluids, organs, tissues, psychological systems, and all the emotional reactions supported by these components" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 263). The manner in which a person behaves toward others can create clinical problems, but the components of the emotional system can influence whether the problem increases or decreases (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Kerr and Bowen (1988) postulated that the processes taking place in the brain resemble the processes occurring in the body even within the cells. The processes occurring within the body can also reflect the processes occurring within the brain. The concept of the emotional system is intended to incorporate these processes functioning in the organism. Bowen's idea understood the family as a multigenerational unit with an emotional system that is a product of several billion years of evolution. This is the driving force of the family and other relationship systems. Bowen Family Systems Theory promotes differentiation of self in an effort to help family members develop independence as opposed to perpetuating problematic patterns across generations.

The Bowenian therapist coaches clients in strategies that promote differentiation of self. Differentiation of self involves separation of intellectual and emotional systems. This intrapsychic differentiation of intellect and emotion facilitates the concurrent differentiation of self from others within the family of origin. When intrapsychic differentiation occurs, the individual does not impulsively act out strong feelings, but rather reflects on these feelings and chooses a course of action. This frees the person to avoid repeating problematic, emotionally-driven

interaction patterns associated with the family of origin. (Carr, 2006, pp. 161-

162)

The Relationship System

The concept of relationship system according to Kerr and Bowen (1988) basically

speaks to *describing* what happens, while the emotional system gives an *explanation* for

what happens. This concept is also referred to as the family relationship system. The third

purpose of the emotional system concept serves to extend beyond the individual and

incorporates the relationship system. The functioning of an individual is often difficult to

understand outside the context of their relationship or group (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). The

relationship system describes what happens as human beings interact with each other as

relational beings. "The 'individuality – togetherness balance' applies to the relationship

system. Higher level individuals can maintain individuality even with constant pressure

from the group. Lower level people lose individuality as it gradually fades into the

relationships around them" (p. 342). It stands to reason that higher level individuals

function better in relationship systems than lower level individuals. Awareness of this

fact and the functioning of the relationship system can help individuals to enhance their

functioning thereby affecting change in the systems in which they are embedded.

According to Kerr and Bowen (1988) "the concepts of family systems theory, in

contrast, were developed from the study of families and pertain to *the relationship*

system" (pp. 19-20). It is the assumption of BFST that "the factor or factors that can

trigger the initial disturbance in system balance that ultimately leads to symptoms in an

individual may be in the biology or psychology of that individual or in his relationship

system" (p. 258). This highlights the importance of an awareness of the relationship

system in which they are embedded. An awareness of the functioning of the relationship system can provide for effective adaptation and thereby avoid disturbances that can become self-perpetuating and lead to pathology.

Nuclear Family Emotional System

The nuclear family emotional system concept "describes the patterns of emotional functioning in a family in a single generation. Certain basic patterns between father, mother, and children are replicas of the past generations and will be repeated in the generation to follow" (Bowen, 1985, p. 376). A person's attitudes and beliefs concerning relationships influence the patterns, however, the main force behind them are part of the emotional system. Bowen believes that the basic unit of emotional functioning is the nuclear family (Gilbert, 1992).

In regards to the nuclear family emotional system, there are three patterns that are essential in symptom development. The patterns of emotional functioning that exist "in a nuclear family are products of the undifferentiation between family members. Each pattern is intensified by anxiety and, at a sufficient level of intensity, contributes to the development of a particular category of clinical dysfunction" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 163). Kerr and Bowen (1988) submitted that there are three categories of dysfunction that occur in the nuclear family. These categories are: "(1) illness in spouse; (2) marital conflict; and (3) impairment of one or more children" (p. 163).

Kerr and Bowen (1988) informed us that the levels of differentiation of self and chronic anxiety significantly influence the vulnerability of the entire system in regards to symptom development. "*Where* a symptom occurs in a relationship system in which family members or in which family relationship is determined by the particular pattern or

patterns of emotional functioning that predominate the family system" (p. 163). In a case

where the predominant pattern is the parents' externalizing their anxieties into the

marriage relationship, then there will be marital conflict when there are periods of high

anxiety. In a case where the main pattern supports dysfunction in a spouse or a child, then

symptoms will develop in a spouse or a child when there are periods of high anxiety. The

symptoms can present in the "form of physical illness (defined conventionally as a

'disorder'), emotional illness (defined conventionally as a 'psychiatric disorder'), or

social illness (defined conventionally as 'conduct disorder' or a 'criminal disorder')" (p.

163). The same patterns that contribute to the development of physical illness are the

same patterns that contribute to the development of emotional illness and social illness.

Kerr and Bowen (1988) highlighted the point that "the lower the level of differentiation

of a family, the greater the average level of activity of the three patterns of emotional

functioning that contribute to symptom development" (p. 165).

The characteristics for the patterns of emotional functioning for a nuclear family

evolve out of the emotional "fit" or "complementarity." The "fit" that a person

experiences with another person is related to the comfort in a relationship which could

encourage the cohesion between both persons. If the anxiety in a family increases, then

the main elements of the emotional complementarity between both persons can become

exaggerated (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Kerr and Bowen believed that "the nature of these

exaggerated elements determines whether the problem emerges as marital conflict,

spouse dysfunction, or child dysfunction" (p. 167). They stated further that "the patterns

of emotional functioning in nuclear families that contribute to clinical dysfunctions are

assumed to be anchored in the instinctual nature of man. All the various ways of adapting

to anxiety in relationship systems are part of everyone's natural makeup" (p. 167). Kerr and Bowen (1988) believe that the patterns of emotional functioning that prevail in families may change with time.

Development of the Emotional System

The nuclear family emotional system describes a family's emotional functioning within one generation. Some of the basic patterns between mother, father and their children are repeated from previous generations. These patterns will also be repeated in the generations that follow. The nuclear family emotional system describes the range of the relationship pattern in the parent child system. Each spouse developed a relationship pattern in their family of origin and they take some of these patterns to their marriage. Kerr and Bowen (1988) also explored the formation of families. They posit that "when people leave their families and form new emotional significant relationships, they tend to select mates with whom they can replicate the more influential aspects of the relationship process that existed in the original family" (p. 167). Basically they believed "people gravitate toward their emotional mirror images. This can happen even when people are determined not to let it happen. The patterns that were adapted in the nuclear family will contribute to conflict in the marriage, "toward physical or emotional or social dysfunction in one spouse; toward projection of the parental problems to one or more children; or to a combination of all three patterns" (Bowen, 1985, p. 308).

The Operation of the Emotional System

Kerr and Bowen (1988) saw the human family as kind of natural system they termed as an emotional system. Bowen Theory conceptualizes the family as an emotional unit or network with interlocking relationships. The interlocking relationships are not

limited to the family members, but also include biological, psychological, and sociological processes (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). These relationships have significant impact on how the family members think, feel and behave. So each member of the family was not functioning on their own, but was rather influenced by the family relationship system in which they were embedded. Kerr and Bowen submitted that the importance of family systems theory is based on the fact that it "derived from the direct study of one type of natural system, the human family" (p. x). Family systems theory as presented by Kerr and Bowen focused on human functioning and holds that information about the family is connected by way of the family's emotional process. This emotional process should be kept in focus as it is used to guide therapy in the family's evaluation process.

The Purpose of the Emotional System

Kerr and Bowen (1988) submitted that the concept of emotional system serves three essential purposes, the first of which is the setting of a foundation in family systems theory that suggests that all living organism behavior is directed and regulated by the same "life force". The emotional system operates like it's directed by interplay of the counterbalancing "life forces" of individuality and togetherness. They used the term "life force" to refer to that which stimulates growth in plants, causes hibernation in bears, and new born animals to crawl towards their mother for comfort.

The second purpose of the emotional system as presented by Kerr and Bowen (1988) is to provide a manner of thinking that can assist in the connection of the compartmentalization of knowledge about biological processes. The emotional system makes this connection by offering an explanation for observable things. This emotional system can fulfil this purpose because it assumes that all psychological systems in living

organisms are part of larger systems which are directed by principles of operation for each part of the system. As such, a disease in a living organism is a sign that the balance of the whole system is interrupted, instead of only the organs or systems that are affected by the disease. In light of this systemic operation, when there is a problem in the family, the family is viewed as a whole unit with a disturbance, and not as individual with a problem. The third purpose of the emotional system concept dictates that we can examine not only the individual, but the relational system as well. This is a vital purpose due to the fact that the emotional operation of living organisms is focused on the relationships in which it is embedded with others, and the environment.

Benefits of the Emotional System

The emotional system can be understood as a theory about how living organisms function and not as a technique to create change in clients. We may not be able to identify any physical correlate for the emotional system, but we know it exists based on the evidence of how living organisms function. "The concept of the emotional system is intended to encompass all of these relationship processes operating in the organism" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 33). For Kerr and Bowen (1988), to react emotionally meant to include the psychological and behavioral aspects of one's emotion. Bowen (1975) argued that emotional functioning:

> Includes the forces that biology defines as instinct, reproduction, the automatic activity controlled by the automatic nervous system, subjective emotional and feeling states, and the forces that govern relationship systems. In broad terms, the emotional system governs the "dance of life" in all living things. (p. 380)

The automatic emotional system operates based on the principles that can predict our behavior.

Kerr and Bowen (1988) submitted that the relationship system, feeling system and intellectual system are all supported by the emotional system, and that the emotional, feeling and intellectual system influence each other equally. Bregman and White (2011) further informed us that Bowen (1978) described the feeling system as "the ability to feel and become aware of instinctive emotional reactions" (p. 1). The feeling system is a "function of the connection between the emotional (instinctual) system and the thinking system. This connection provides humans with an opportunity to observe their own emotional functioning, which is at the foundation of all behavior" (p. 1). The feeling system provides living organisms with the ability to process the world in a more sophisticated way. The feeling system allows for greater adaptive capacity meaning that there are more ways to make one's way through the world with greater sophistication. The intellectual system refers to the human ability to carry out intellectual processes. The unique intellectual ability to think abstractly about the future, use symbols to communicate, and reason like no other species is made possible by the size of the human brain and frontal lobe. The emotional system is also where chronic anxiety is experienced. Chronic anxiety continuously expresses itself in the emotional system because living organisms become anxious about sustaining life and surviving threats to their wellbeing.

How Learning can Improve the Emotional System

My experience of studying BFST testifies to the fact that learning can help to improve an individual's emotional system. The knowledge of BFST, application, and

practice by way of creating my family genogram for three generations has improved my

awareness, understanding and emotional system functioning. The experience helped in

highlighting the patterns of functioning in individuality and togetherness, chronic anxiety,

differentiation of self, triangulation, nuclear family emotional process, multigenerational

transmission process, emotional cutoff, and the societal emotional process. With this

awareness I was better able to be more thoughtful and respond differently, thereby

affecting change in my family system as well.

Bregman and White (2011) examined the matter of learning and referenced Kerr

(1984) stating that "while lectures and readings contribute something, *learning to think*

systems in relationship to human behavior is dependent on emotional changes occurring

within the learner" (Bregman & White, 2011, p. 1). The Bowen theory class has

contributed to students becoming systemic thinkers about themselves in relation to the

emotional patterns that exist in their family. This systemic way of thinking has

undoubtedly led to emotional changes for students of BFST. Bregman and White (2011)

strongly advocated that "people's ability to grasp new ideas can be compromised by the

automatic responses of the emotional system" (p. 1).

Constructing a graphic representation of one's maternal and paternal sides of the

family in a genogram can present an unparalleled learning experience. The genogram can

help students learn to think systemically by providing an opportunity for them to see the

patterns, similarities and differences between their maternal and paternal relatives, and

how Bowen's concepts are demonstrated.

I strongly agree with McGoldrick, Gerson, and Petry's (2008) view that

"genograms often reveal complex relational patterns that would be missed if not mapped

across a few generations. Recognizing such patterns can, it is hoped, help families avoid

continuing the repetition in future generations" (p. 47). The concept of individuality and

togetherness can be used to explain how families function. Kerr and Bowen (1988) held

the assumption that the emotional process is "regulated by the interplay of a force that

inclines people to follow their own directives, to be independent (individuality), and a

force that inclines them to respond to directives from others, to be connected

(togetherness)" (p. 61). This is how understanding BFST can help to improve

differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. In light of the systemic theory, this

change in one family member can affect their family system, and spread from that

generation to future generations as each person learn to behave differently; become more

of an individual.

For two persons with a high degree of togetherness, Kerr and Bowen (1988)

stated that "the emotional interdependence between the two people is very great so the

probability that the relationship itself will generate a high level of chronic anxiety is very

great" (p. 77). As such, people who are drawn towards togetherness are more likely to

have poorly differentiated relationships, and poorly differentiated relationships are very

likely to have high levels of chronic anxiety. It is also likely that this relationship balance

will rely on the individual's ability to adapt in order to relieve this anxiety. Kerr and

Bowen (1988) argued that people who are poorly differentiated are less tolerant of

anxiety in themselves and others. These people are also more likely to act quickly in an

attempt to reduce the anxiety so that their relationship can be kept in balance.

Kerr and Bowen (1988) sought to help with the matter of anxiety. They believed

that many things can influence chronic anxiety, but chronic anxiety is not caused by any

one thing. The study of BFST can help students gain an in depth understanding of how to manage anxiety by maintaining differentiation of self. Kerr and Bowen supported this view:

> One person's ability to be more of an individual in a family reduces anxiety throughout the system. The ability to be more of a self breeds confidence that one can call upon that ability when it is important to do so, a fact that appears to play some role in reducing a person's anxiety. (p. 132)

A reduction in anxiety can also lead to a reduction in triangulation as individuals remain non-responsive. Kerr and Bowen believed that triangles are formed due to undifferentiation in human processes, and "the lower the level of differentiation in a family, the more important the role of triangling for preserving emotional stability" (p. 139). Interlocking triangles are formed to reduce anxiety in the central family triangle.

It has become obvious that the lower the level of differentiation in a family, the greater the need for togetherness because individuality is less developed. Poorly differentiated relationships breed a significant level of chronic anxiety. Kerr and Bowen (1988) highlighted that "as differentiation decreases, adaptations to relieve or bind anxiety increase to keep the relationship in balance" (p. 79). If anxiety increases in unstable two-person relationships, a third person is invited by triangulation to help decrease the anxiety between the two persons by spreading the anxiety into three relationships. This cycle will continue to operate unless a member of the family system learns to behave differently, and be more of an individual. When this occurs, differentiation will increase, anxiety will decrease, and the need for triangulation will ultimately decrease as well.

Differentiation of Self

Wilson (1975) argued that the concept of differentiation is an evolutionary context which defines the main properties of social organization as including cohesiveness, altruism and cooperativeness (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Organisms like the colonial invertebrates, social insects, nonhuman mammals and human beings have helped in the development of these three properties. Wilson (1975) advocated that intelligence is responsible for the elimination of "the vertebrate restraints" on social organizations in humans. Human being's ability to recall things to memory and plan ahead affords him the opportunity to participate in "reciprocal altruism." Human beings ability to consider kinship ties also set us apart from other species, and provides for cooperation. "Family systems theory also addresses the human's capacity for cohesiveness, altruism, and cooperativeness" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 93). Family systems theory tries to explain the variations of these properties in families.

The Development of Differentiation of Self

There are several factors highlighted by Kerr and Bowen (1988) that influence the level of differentiation in a person. As infants, we are dependent on our parents and caregivers for care and survival. As such the infant starts out with an emotional fusion or symbiosis with his parents and caregivers. As the infant grows, he will gain more responsibility for himself, and eventually becomes an individual. Family systems theory assumes that human being instinctually possesses the life forces of individuality and togetherness. The individuality life force leads the person to become emotionally separate from others and enables him to "think, feel, and act for himself" (p. 95). On the other hand, the togetherness force leads the person and their "family to remain emotionally

connected and to operate in reaction to one another" (p. 95). This is where the person and their family are thinking and acting in unison. Individuality and togetherness leads to the point that no one has total emotional separation from their family; the primary "attachment is never fully resolved" (p. 95).

The amount of emotional separation people achieve from their family of origin is linked to two variables according to Kerr and Bowen (1988). The first variable is "the degree to which a person's parents achieve emotional separation from their respective families, and (2) the characteristics of a person's relationship with his parents, siblings, and other important relatives" (p. 95). Children will achieve the same emotional separation from their parents, which their parents have with their family of origin. This may not hold true for every child because parents will have different relationships with each of their children. In the case of a family that is very well differentiated, emotions and subjectivity will not be the main influence on the parent and child relationship. This means that the child will consequently develop high level of differentiation where he can have his own thoughts, feelings and actions for themselves. The opposite is true for a family with low levels of differentiation.

The Differentiation of Self Scale

The differentiation of self scale "assesses the basic level of self in a person" (Bowen, 1985, p. 473). In terms of the basic self, it "*is not negotiable in the relationship system* in that it is not changed by coercion or pressure, or to gain approval, or enhance one's stand with others" (p. 473). The differentiation of self scale is created in an effort to categorize the various levels of human functioning, from the highest to the lowest on one dimension. This scale evaluates the level of differentiation of self from the lowest level of

differentiation which is O on the scale to the highest theoretical level classified as differentiation at 100 on the scale (Bowen, 1985).

The level of differentiation of self a person possesses is as a result of the degree of emotional separation that they obtained from their family. "The concept of a scale of differentiation was developed to describe this difference among people. The scale is a continuum ranging from low to high levels of differentiation" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 97). The scale of differentiation has four ranges of functioning. They are 0–25 for people considered to be at the low end of differentiation, 25–50 for people considered to have poorly defined selves, 50–75 for people considered to have sufficiently developed intellectual systems, and 75-100 for those thought to be high on differentiation. These are the people who are principle oriented and goal directed (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

The Operation of Differentiation of Self

Per Kerr and Bowen (1988) the "difference between people in the proportion of life energy prone to be invested and bound in relationship is described by the concept of differentiation of self" (p. 68). In other words, the concept of differentiation of self can be defined as the variability among people in the amount of life energy they invest into relationships; it is the ability of a person to make emotional and intellectual decisions for themselves independent of others. The core of Bowen's theory deals with the degree to which people are able to distinguish between the feeling and the intellectual processes. The concept of differentiation of self is connected to the matter of the development of a self. Differentiation of self is not a state that one can achieve, it is life time process.

Differentiation of self speaks to a person's ability to be more driven by the individuality life force than the togetherness life force. The lower a person's

differentiation of self, the more likely they are to be driven and bound in relationships which is the togetherness life force. The higher the level of differentiation in a person, the higher the possibility that their life energy is focused on their own functioning. People with high levels of togetherness and low differentiation of self are more vulnerable to erosion and symptoms under stressful conditions. There is also a difference between basic differentiation and functional differentiation. Basic differentiation speaks to "functioning that is not dependent on the relationship process" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 98), while functional differentiation speaks to "functioning that is dependent on the relationship process" (p. 98). Both concepts shape human functioning.

The aim for MFTs, is to maintain differentiation from the client so that one can hold multiple views simultaneously about them. The therapist is in contact with the problem, but does not become a part of the problem. This relates to emotional neutrality and detachment. "Neutrality becomes differentiation when it is operationalized through one's actions in a relationship system" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 111). Neutrality refers to the therapist's ability to remain calm about the relations of others, to remain aware of the emotional sides of the matter, and the influence of subjectivity of a person's notion of what they think should be. This stance can help to reduce symptoms according to Kerr and Bowen (1988), without repeating the unresolved emotional attachments of the client. Titelman (2008) supported the view that "detriangling is a significant part of the effort to define or differentiate a self in one's own family, the basic goal of Bowen family systems therapy" (p. 47). Detriangling is the central activity in differentiation of self for the therapist and client alike in order to increase the level of differentiation.

Benefits of Differentiation of Self

Kerr and Bowen (1988) proposed that people can cooperate, and remain altruistic and cohesive during stressful and peaceful times if high levels of differentiation exist in their family or group. If the level of differentiation is low, people are more likely to become selfish, aggressive and avoidant in stressful times. Differentiation of self is considered as another factor that supported the reversal of antisocial trends in evolution. It is believed that human beings have more capacity for differentiation of self than other species. The more differentiated a person is, the higher their ability to "be an individual *while in emotional contact with the group*" (p. 94). "The better developed the self, the more a person can act to enhance his own welfare without impinging on the welfare of others" (p. 94). If a person loses their individuality and increase in their togetherness influence, they can be lead to intrude on other's functioning. This is where poorly differentiated people will be constantly clinging to others for emotional support because their individuality is undeveloped. For a person to give up some togetherness means that their functioning is less dependent on others support and acceptance (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

How Learning can Improve Differentiation of Self

Human beings possess the ability to learn, and learning has the ability to influence change. Learning can improve differentiation of self as people become aware of their level of differentiation and make appropriate decisions to improve their differentiation. "A person with the ability and motivation can, through a gradual process of learning that is converted into action, become more of a self in his family and other relationship systems" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 107). Becoming more of a self is the foundation of

improving one's level of differentiation. The process of change is referred to as "defining a self" due to the fact that obvious actions are taken, and others respond to these actions. Change in the basic level is achieved while an individual is in relationship to others who are emotionally significant. This basic level change cannot be achieved by avoiding others or when one's actions disturb the relationship (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

The concept of "differentiation is a product of a way of thinking that translates into a way of being" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 108). Kerr and Bowen (1988) highlight that differentiation is not a therapeutic technique, as techniques are created in an effort to change others. "Trying to achieve a higher level of differentiation or more solid (basic) self means increasing one's capacity for emotional detachment or neutrality" (p. 108). A change in thinking will influence more detachment and neutrality. These changes are evident if a person is able to be in emotional contact with challenging problems and not have a compulsion to tell others what to do, nor rush to fix the problem, nor act detached. An individual has to develop a way of thinking that counterbalances emotionally driven urges. In essence, learning can improve differentiation of self if knowledge leads to a different way of thinking, and that difference in thinking is translated into action.

Emotional Intelligence

The Mayer and Salovey (1997) concept of emotional intelligence is mainly "focused on the complex, potentially intelligent tapestry of emotional reasoning in everyday life" (p. 9). They assume that for the majority of healthy individuals emotions transport knowledge about a person's relationships with the world. For instance, fear indicates that the individual is experiencing some significant or uncontrollable threat, while happiness usually indicates that a person is experiencing harmonious relations with

others, and anger typically represents feelings of injustice. Based on this view, we can identify some general rules and laws of emotions that can be employed in identifying and reasoning with feelings. As such, people should be able to recognize the universals of emotional expression that exist. Emotional reasoning in this light "extends into questions about relationships. For example, an insulted person might feel anger, or if the person was insecure and nonassertive, might feel shame, humiliation – or repressed anger. Recognizing these reactions requires some form of intelligence" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 9).

Historical Development of Emotional Intelligence

A historical view of the development of emotional intelligence will add to an understanding of the concept. Ciarrochi, Forgas, and Mayer (2001) presented a fivefold timeline of the activities in psychology starting from 1900 to show the progression of EI. The first division examines the activities from 1900 to 1969 where the psychological study of intelligence and emotions were two relatively separate and narrow fields. At this point psychological testing for intelligence developed what led to technological intelligence tests. Research on emotions examined which happened first, psychological reactions or emotions. At this time emotion was regularly seen "as culturally determined, largely a product of pathology, and idiosyncratic" (Ciarrochi et al., 2001, p. 5). The second division for Ciarrochi et al. (2001) included 1970 to1989. Psychologists examined how emotion and thought were influenced by each other; this is the field of cognition and affect. This was the precursor to emotional intelligence. At this time the nonverbal communication field developed scales that focused on perception of nonverbal information. Some of this was emotionally dealing with faces and posture. This was also

the period when Gardner's theory of multiple intelligence highlighted "intrapersonal intelligence" (p. 5). Intrapersonal intelligence represents "the capacity to perceive and symbolize emotions" (Ciarrochi et al., 2001, p. 5) along with several other things. Brain research also started to separate the connection between emotion and cognition, and the term "emotional intelligence" was being used occasionally.

Ciarrochi et al. (2001) defined the third time period as 1990 to1993. This was also known as the demarcation point and the emergence of EI. In 1990, Mayer and Salovey developed a formal theory of EI and a coordinated measurement demonstration, and published their seminal article on emotional intelligence. The "Emotional Intelligence" article presented the first review of the relevant areas to EI. This third period also saw the publication of a demonstration study with the first ability measure of EI. Emotional intelligence gained support as an editorial in the journal Intelligence, which gave reason for EI to be considered an actual intelligence. More foundations of EI were developed in the brain science field (Ciarrochi et al., 2001).

The fourth division as presented by Ciarrochi et al. (2001) was between 1994 and 1997 when the concept of EI was popularized and broadened. This is when a science journalist, Goleman (1995) published his book, Emotional Intelligence. Goleman's book became a best-seller worldwide, and Time Magazine had "EQ" on their cover. At this point several personality scales were published using the emotional intelligence title. The fifth and last division identified by Ciarrochi et al. (2001) was 1998 to the present era where research is being clarified. Research on EI and institutionalization of EI is the focus. The concept of EI is being refined and the introduction of new measurements are

taking place along with the first peer-review research articles on the subject matter

(Ciarrochi et al., 2001).

Intelligence and Emotion

Mayer and Salovey (1997) believed that in order to thoroughly understand the

concept of emotional intelligence, one has to carefully explore the two component terms,

which are intelligence and emotion. Psychologists from the 18th century identified an

influential three part division of the mind. The three parts were cognition or thought,

affect including emotion, and motivation or conation. The cognitive sphere incorporated

functions like the human memory, reasoning, judgment, and abstract thought.

Psychologists mainly used intelligence "to characterize how well the cognitive sphere

functions. That is, intelligence pertains to abilities such as the 'power to combine and

separate' concepts, to judge and to reason, and to engage in abstract thought" (Mayer &

Salovey, 1997, p. 4).

The second part is the affective sphere of mental functioning that includes

emotions, moods, evaluations, and other feeling states, along with fatigue or energy.

Motivation is a third sphere which speaks to the biological urges or goal-seeking

behaviors that are learned. "To the extent that it is involved in emotional intelligence, it

should be thought of as secondary" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 5). Mayer and Salovey

believed that "definitions of *emotional intelligence* should in some way connect emotions

with intelligence if the meanings of the two terms are to be preserved" (p. 5). In essence,

Mayer and Salovey (1997) argued that "reasoning that takes emotions into account is part

of what we have referred to as *emotional intelligence*" (p. 4).

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000) maintained that "emotions appear to have evolved across mammalian species so as to signal and respond to changes in relationships between the individual and the environment (including one's imagined place within it)" (p. 397). Emotions do not follow a structured time course, instead they respond to external changes in relationships or internal perceptions that an individual might have. They stated that "moreover, each emotion organizes several basic behavioral responses to the relationship; for example, fear organizes fighting or fleeing. Emotions are therefore more flexible than motivations, though not quite so flexible as cognition" (p. 397). It is reasonable to distinguish the three part division of the mind: motivation, emotion, and cognition, and their interactions as the three areas are integrated into more complex personality functioning, but we no longer speak of them separately. Instead we now focus on a more general personality or social processes, which combine these three parts (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000).

The conflicting views "between exclusively cognitive views of what it means to be intelligent and broader ones that include a positive role for the emotions can be traced back many centuries" (Salovey, Mayer, & Caruso, 2002, p. 160). The Stoic philosophers of ancient Greece thought emotions were too individualistic and self-absorbed to be considered as a reliable guide for insight and wisdom. The Romantic Movement later in the late 18th century and early19th century Europe emphasized that emotion-rooted intuition and empathy could provide insights that were not available from logic alone (Salovey et al., 2002).

Mayer and Salovey developed their formal theory of emotional intelligence and measurement demonstrations by examining evidence from research on intelligence and

emotions, aesthetics, artificial intelligence, brain research and also clinical psychology (Ciarrochi et al., 2001). Mayer and Salovey stated in the journal *Intelligence* in a follow-up editorial that "EI was a basic, over looked intelligence that held the promise to meet a rigorous definition of intelligence" (p. 7).

Salovey and Mayer (1990) advocated for the definition of intelligence according to Wechsler that "intelligence is the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment" (p. 186). Salovey and Mayer (1990) posited that emotional intelligence may not relate with other forms of intelligence, but this should not affect its classification as a form of intelligence. It is more important to note "that it fits within the boundaries of conceptual definitions of intelligence, such as those provided, for example by Wechsler" (p. 187).

Mayer, Caruso, and Salovey (1999) posited that there is a standard criteria for an intelligence to be considered as such. They believed that "an intelligence such as emotional intelligence must meet stringent criteria in order to be judged as a true intelligence. For the purposes here, these criteria can be divided into three fairly distinct groups: conceptual, correlational, and developmental" (p. 126). Conceptual criteria speaks to the fact that intelligence must reflect mental performance and not just preferred ways of behaving (Carroll, 1993; Mayer & Salovey, 1993; Scarr, 1989). Mental performance should clearly measure emotion-related abilities. The correlation criteria refers to empirical standards and the fact that "an intelligence should describe a set of closely related abilities that are similar to, but distinct from, mental abilities described by already-established intelligences" (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999, p. 127). This set of abilities is intercorrelated with each other. The developmental criteria holds that

"intelligence develops with age and experience, and is based on the groundbreaking work by Binet and Simon at the beginning of century" (Fancher, 1985, p. 71).

Mayer and Salovey's Construct of Emotional Intelligence

Salovey and Mayer (1990) referred to emotional intelligence as a framework with a skill set that is "hypothesized to contribute to the accurate appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself and in others, the effective regulation of emotion in self and others, and the use of feelings to motivate, plan, and achieve in one's life" (p. 185). One "tradition views emotion as an organizing response because it adaptively focuses cognitive activities and subsequent action" (Leeper, 1948, & Eastbrook, 1959) (as cited in Salovey and Mayer, 1990, p. 186). Leeper (1948) advocated that "emotions are primarily motivating forces; they are 'processes which arouse, sustain, and direct activity'" (p. 17). Salovey and Mayer (1990) explained the construct of emotional intelligence further and submit "that there is a set of conceptually related mental processes involving emotional information" (p. 190). The mental processes include three areas: "a) appraising and expressing emotions in the self and others, b) regulating emotion in the self and others, and c) using emotions in adaptive ways" (p. 191).

The process of appraising and expressing emotions in the self is the first to be examined. Salovey and Mayer (1990) posited that the processes of emotional intelligence start when affect-laden information enters the perceptual system. At this point emotional intelligence permits the accurate appraisal and expression of feelings. These feelings may be governed by law. It is the emotional appraisal that decides the various expressions of emotion by that person. The appraisal and expression of emotion in one's self includes verbal and non-verbal responses. Alexithymia is the term for "psychiatric patients who

are unable to appraise and then verbally express their emotions" (p. 191). Salovey and

Mayer (1990) suggested that appraising and expressing emotions correctly is included in

emotional intelligence because people who are more accurate are also quicker to perceive

and respond to their own emotions, and consequently better express those emotions to

other people. These skills are considered to be emotionally intelligent as they need the

emotional information processing with the person, and also "because it is clear that some

level of minimal competence at these skills is necessary for adequate social functioning"

(p. 193).

Appraising and expressing emotions in others includes non-verbal perceptions of

emotion and empathy (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Non-verbal perception of emotion is

considered from an evolutionary position and it was thought that being able to perceive

emotions not only in one's self, but also in other people was important. This perceptual

ability allowed for easier interpersonal cooperation. "There are several indications that

individual differences exist in the interpretation of emotions through facial expressions"

(p. 193). As for empathy, Salovey and Mayer (1990) believed "a particularly exciting

communality among emotional appraisal and expression is that they appear related to

empathy, the ability to comprehend another's feelings and to re-experience them oneself"

(p. 194). This is directly related to the role of MFTs. Salovey and Mayer (1990) shared

further that "Rogers believed an active striving to understand other people and to

emphasize with them is a priceless gift as well as a prerequisite for helping another grow"

(p. 194). In this same light, empathy is considered as an essential characteristic of

emotionally intelligent behavior. As people relate positively to each other, they

experience greater satisfaction in life and consequently lower levels of stress. Salovey

and Mayer argued: "Empathy is also a motivator for altruistic behavior" (p. 194). Individuals who possess these skills are able to estimate the appropriate affective response in others and select the socially adaptive behavior for their response.

Regulating emotion in the self and others is the second part of the mental processes involving emotional information. Salovey and Mayer (1990) informed us that we all experience mood on a direct and a reflective level. The reflective experience is where we are able to access knowledge about our own mood and the mood of others. This demonstrates "a willingness and ability to monitor, evaluate, and regulate emotions" (p. 196). In the regulation of emotion in the self, a person has numerous experiences about their mood. These "*meta-experiences* of mood can be conceptualized as the result of a regulatory system that monitors, evaluates, and sometimes acts to change mood" (p. 196). It must also be noted that although several aspects of mood regulation are automatic, other meta-experiences concerning "mood are conscious and open to inquiry" (p. 196).

In the regulation of emotion in others, Salovey and Mayer (1990) posited that "emotional intelligence includes the ability to regulate and alter the affective reactions of others" (p. 197). This also includes knowing when not to attend to other's behavior. Emotionally intelligent individuals are adept at regulating emotions in themselves and others as they do this to meet specific goals. In a positive light, the emotionally intelligent person may improve their mood and the mood of others as well as manage emotions in order to motivate others toward a worthwhile end. On the negative light, "those whose skills are channeled antisocially may create manipulation scenes or lead others sociopathically to nefarious ends" (p. 198).

The third part of the mental processes involving emotional information is using emotions in adaptive ways. Salovey and Mayer (1990) posited that we differ in our ability to harness our emotions to solve problems. Our moods and emotions slightly but systematically impact some of the elements and strategies involved in solving problems. Firstly, "emotion swings may facilitate the generation of multiple future plans. Second, positive emotion may alter memory organization so that cognitive material is better integrated and diverse ideas are seen as more related (Isen, 1987)" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 198). Thirdly, our emotions provide interruptions "for complex systems, 'popping' them out of a given level of processing and focusing them on more pressing needs" (pp. 198-199). Our emotions and moods can be used to motivate and help in the performance of complex intellectual tasks. These tasks may include, but are not limited to flexible planning, creative thinking, mood redirected attention, and motivating emotions. Approaching life tasks with emotional intelligence Salovey and Mayer (1990) believed put people at an advantage for solving problems in an adaptive manner. This is the reason for including these skills within the emotional intelligence construct.

According to Carblis (2008), Salovey and Mayer's intelligence-based model is built on the foundation that the construct of emotional intelligence described by Mayer et al. (1999) is mainly cognitive. Mayer and Salovey (1993) argued to justify their choice of the term intelligence over competence stating:

> We did not use the term intelligence to create a controversy, but because we are really talking about a mental aptitude–one that insists on intellectual processing. We are not talking about reaching a criterion, as would be implied by a competence conception. Nor are we talking about an ability divorced from

intellect, but rather enhanced processing of certain types of information: in short, emotional intelligence. (p. 439)

The Intelligence of Emotional Intelligence

Mayer and Salovey (1993) advocated that the framework for emotional intelligence organizes the current literature on individual-differences based on the ability to process and adjust to affective information. Several intellectual problems entail emotional information that needs processing. This processing may be different from the way non-emotional information is processed. Emotional intelligence could also be labeled "emotional competence;" however, Mayer and Salovey (1993) "chose *intelligence* in order to link our framework to a historical literature on intelligence" (p. 433). Mayer and Salovey's (1993) concept of emotional intelligence overlaps with Gardner's (1983) '[intra]personal intelligence':

> The core capacity at work here is *access to one's own feeling life*–one's range of affects or emotions: the capacity instantly to effect discriminations among these feelings and, eventually, to label them, to enmesh them in symbolic codes, to draw upon them as a means of understanding and guiding one's behavior. In its most primitive form, the intrapersonal intelligence amounts to little more than the capacity to distinguish a feeling of pleasure from one of pain . . . . At its most advanced level, intrapersonal knowledge allows one to detect and to symbolize complex and highly differentiated sets of feelings . . . to attain a deep knowledge of . . . feeling life. (Mayer & Salovey, 1993, p. 239)

Mayer and Salovey (1993) described the numerous criticisms they received in anonymous reviews of their initial articles and in a symposium where they presented the

construct for connecting emotion and intelligence. The criticisms brought some important issues to the forefront. The issues raised the points:

(a) that intelligence is an inappropriate and misleading metaphor, and we are redescribing social intelligence, as well as perhaps falsely casting dispositions such as interpersonal warmth as abilities; (b) that there are no important abilities connected with emotion, or at least no unique abilities; and (c) finally, there is an objection that we might be "rocking the boat" by connecting a heretofore less controversial area (emotion) with a controversial one (intelligence). (Mayer & Salovey, 1993, p. 433)

Mayer and Salovey addressed these three criticisms and ask the question if there is really intelligence to the construct of emotional intelligence. They also refine the concept of emotional intelligence and repositioned it in the context of the intelligence research tradition (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Mayer and Salovey stated that "the way in which we have defined emotional intelligence–as involving a series of mental abilities– qualifies it as a form of intelligence" (p. 435).

In response to criticism "(a) that intelligence is an inappropriate and misleading metaphor, and we are redescribing social intelligence, as well as perhaps falsely casting dispositions such as interpersonal warmth as abilities" (Mayer & Salovey, 1993, p. 433), Mayer and Salovey stated: "Emotional intelligence may have better discriminant validity from general intelligence than social intelligence" (p. 435). They stated further that "If emotional intelligence is partially independent of general intelligence, it will be of greater theoretical importance. The skills we posit as a part of emotional intelligence are usually grouped together with social intelligence" (p. 435).

Mayer and Salovey (1993) asserted that "E. L. Thorndike defined social intelligence as the ability to perceive one's own and other's internal states, motives, and behaviors, and to act toward them optimally on the basis of that information" (p. 435). With this in mind, it is obvious that a significant part of general intelligence function in the social realm making it easy to comprehend why there has been challenges to establish the discriminant validity of social intelligence (Broom, 1928; Guilford, & DeMille, 1965; Keating, 1978; O'Sullivan,; R. L. Thorndike, 1936; R. L. Thorndike & Stein, 1937) (as cited in Mayer and Salovey, 1993, pp. 435-436). When compared with social intelligence, emotional intelligence can be easily "distinguished from general intelligence as involving the manipulation of emotions and emotional content. As a result, it may have better discriminant validity" (p. 436).

Mayer and Salovey (1993) responded to the criticism "(b) that there are no important abilities connected with emotion, or at least no unique abilities" (p. 433) by stating that "there may be unique mechanisms underlying emotional intelligence" (p. 436). They clarified further that "there are several mechanisms that may underlie emotional intelligence: (a) emotionality itself; (b) the facilitation and inhibition of emotional information flow; and (c) specialized neutral mechanisms" (p. 436). As for the matter of emotionality itself, they believed:

> Emotionality contributes to specific abilities. Individuals differ in the frequency and amplitude to their shifts in predominant affect (Eysenek, 1982; Larsen, Diener, & Emmons, 1986). Accordingly, certain individuals have available to them a rich panoply of feeling. In the same way that some individuals are verbally fluent because they can rapidly and effectively generate words (French, 1951;

Thurstone, 1938), these people may be emotionally fluent, in that they can rapidly

and effectively generate emotions and *emotion-related thoughts*. (Mayer &

Salovey, 1993, p. 436)

In regards to the second mechanism of the facilitation and inhibition of emotional

information and flow, Mayer and Salovey (1993) posited that "emotion management

influences information channels" (p. 437). To this matter they explained that:

There exists a class of mental operations, both automatic and voluntary, by which

we enhance or diminish our emotional experience. Such management of internal

experience may inadvertently amplify or reduce other concomitant information

necessary for problem solving. Mostly, we think of emotional management as

serving the purpose of limiting experience. This side of management is the

traditional one of defense mechanisms. As Anna Freud (1996) put it:

[The ego] defends itself . . . . energetically and actively against the affects . . . .

Love, longing, jealousy, mortification, pain . . . . (pp. 31-32) (as cited on Mayer

& Salovey, 1993, p. 437)

Mayer and Salovey (1993) explained the third area of specialized neutral

mechanisms stating that "there may be specialized ability at coding and decoding

emotional representations" (p. 438)**.** They believed that there is some level of integration

that occurs at the neurological level between affect and thought. The term *alexithymia*

was coined from the Greek meaning no words for feelings. Alexithymia is now used to

refer to psychiatric clients who don't possess the ability to appraise and consequently

express their emotions. Professionals in this area have made speculations about

neurological explanations concerning alexithymia. The speculations include the

possibility that alexithymia "is due to blocking of impulses from the right to the left hemisphere at the corpus callosum or to a disconnection between limbic systems and higher cortical activities (MacLean, 1949; Ten Houten, Hoppe, Bogen, & Walter, 1986)" (p. 438). They believed that interconnections between some brain locations can contribute to conceptualization of emotional-motivational patterns in the same way that the visual cortex can contribute to imagery ability. It is essential to remember that these neurological theories are speculative considering the current position of this field (Mayer & Salovey, 1993).

In response to criticism (c) concerning the objection that they may rock the boat by connecting emotion and intelligence, Mayer and Salovey (1993) posited:

This final criticism of emotional intelligence suggests that it should be somehow separated from allied fields owing to the controversial relations between IQ and other variables, as well as to the implication that intelligence is relatively fixed and difficult to change. We doubt the readers of this journal are very sympathetic to such criticisms, in part because of its simplistic conceptions of intelligence and intelligence research. (p. 439)

Mayer and Salovey (1993) considered this matter paradoxical that emotional intelligence is being criticized for joining with a controversial field since "part of its purview is itself the processing of such emotionally evocative (threatening) information" (p. 439). At the beginning Mayer and Salovey stated that they could have named their construct something else like emotional competence. However, they did not apply the term intelligence to start a controversy, but rather because they are genuinely referring to mental aptitude. This is mental aptitude that helps with intellectual processing. "We are

not talking about reaching a criterion, as would be implied by a competence conception.
Nor are we talking about an ability divorced from intellect, but rather enhanced
processing of certain types of information: in short, emotional intelligence" (p. 439).

Models of Emotional Intelligence

Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000) presented that there are two sets of models,
the mental ability model and the mixed model. The mental ability models of emotional
intelligence focus on emotions and their interactions with thought (Mayer & Salovey,
1997; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The Mayer and Salovey (1997) model is a mental ability
model as it belongs to the emotion and cognitive interaction arena. The mental ability
models function in the area defined by emotion and cognition while the mixed models
label several other components as emotional intelligence. Bar-On and Goleman's models
belong to the mixed model group of emotional intelligence. The mixed models focus on
treating both the mental abilities and various other characteristics like "motivation, states
of consciousness (e.g., "flow") and social activity as a single entity" (Bar-On, 1997;
Goleman, 1995a) (as cited in Mayer et al., 2000, p. 403).

Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000) maintained that "Bar-On's (1997) model of
emotional intelligence was intended to answer the question: "Why are some individuals
more able to succeed in life than others?" (p. 402). Bar-On examined psychological
literature pertaining to personality characteristics that appeared to be related to life
success, and he identified five broad areas of functioning that were relevant to success.
These areas include (a) intrapersonal skills, (b) interpersonal skills, (c) adaptability, (d)
stress management, and (e) general mood. Each broad area is further subdivided. For
instance, Bar-On divided intrapersonal skills into "emotional self-awareness,

assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, and independence" (p. 402). Bar-On

presented this rationale for using the term emotional intelligence:

> *Intelligence* describes the aggregate of abilities, competencies, and skills . . . that
>
> . . . represent a *collection of knowledge used to cope with life effectively*. The
>
> adjective *emotional* is employed to emphasize that this specific type of
>
> intelligence differs from cognitive intelligence . . . . (Mayer et al., 2000, p. 402)

Mayer et al. (2000) maintained that "Bar-On's theoretical work combines what

may possibly qualify as mental abilities (e.g., emotional self-awareness) with other

characteristics that are considered separable from mental ability, such as personal

independence, self-regard, and mood; this makes it a mixed model" (p. 402). Mayer et al.

(2000) held that Bar-On (1997) is relatively cautious about his claims concerning his

model of emotional intelligence regardless of the model's breath. Bar-On's model

predicts success that is "the end-product of that which one strives to achieve and

accomplish" (p. 402). Bar-On's Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQi) refers to a person's

potential to succeed instead of the success itself. Essentially, Bar-On believed that EQ

and IQ, "can provide a more balanced picture of a person's general intelligence" (Bar-

On, 1997, p. 19).

Mayer et al. (2000) highlighted that Goleman (1995a) presented another model of

emotional intelligence. Goleman created a mixed model with five areas, namely: "(a)

knowing one's emotion, (b) managing emotions, (c) motivating oneself, (d) recognizing

emotions in others, and (e) handling relationships. His list of specific attributes under

motivation, for example, include, marshalling emotions, delaying gratification and

shifting impulsiveness, and entering flow states" (Goleman, 1995a, p. 43). Goleman

(1995) believed he was moving beyond emotional intelligence to something broader. It was Goleman's belief that "ego resilience" (Goleman, 1995a, p. 44) was similar to his model as they both included social and emotional competencies. Goleman further stated that "there is an old-fashioned word for the body of skills that emotional intelligence represents: *character*" (Goleman, 1995a, p. 285).

Goleman (1995a) presented extraordinary claims concerning the predictive validity of his mixed model of emotional intelligence. Goleman argued that emotional intelligence is responsible for success at home, at school, and work. With regards to young people Goleman believed "emotional intelligence will lead to less rudeness or aggressiveness, and more popularity, as well as improved learning (Goleman, 1995a, p. 192), and better decisions about "drugs, smoking, and sex" (Goleman, 1995a, p. 268). In terms of the work place, Goleman advocated that emotional intelligence will help employees in their teamwork efforts, in corporation, and in learning how to work together more effectively (Goleman, 1995a). Essentially, Goleman stated that generally, "emotional intelligence will confer . . . an advantage in any domain in life, whether in romance and intimate relationships or picking up the unspoken rules that govern success in organizational politics" (Goleman, 1995a, p. 36).

Mayer and Salovey's model has four tiers. The tiers start with basic psychological processed and build up to more complex stages including emotion and cognition. As the concept of emotional intelligence progress, Mayer and Salovey (2001), Mayer et al. (1999, 2000), Mayer and Salovey (1993, 1997), and Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso (2000b, 2000c, 2004) created a two-part single construct where emotional intelligence entails the general processing of information and the skills involved in the processing. This two-part

single construct was done in a way to maintain their definition of emotional intelligence within the concept of intelligence where "the capacity to reason abstractly through the perception, understanding, and use of symbols" (Carblis, 2008, p. 89).

Carblis (2008) shared the view of Salovey and Pizarro (2003) as they argued the value of emotional intelligence highlighting two benefits they identified. The first benefit they reasoned is "that the concept of emotional intelligence provides an organizing framework that enables the synthesis of the large body of research available relating to affective phenomena. Secondly, they maintained that the concept provided a theory of individual differences in emotional competencies" (Carblis, 2008, p. 90).

Regardless of reservations about the concept of emotional intelligence, Morrison (2006) concluded:

> There is a growing realization that psychological processes considered to be purely cognitive or intellectual in fact depend on a synergy between cognition and emotion. Whether or not programmes are actually fostering EI competence, various useful skills are learned. These include: labelling and describing emotions, appraising basic emotions in oneself and others, conflict management, taking perspective of others, decision making and problem solving techniques, effective peer relation trainings. (Mathews et al., 2004, p. 542) (as cited in Morrison, 2006, p. 7)

Bar-On (2000) submitted that the theories concerning intelligence vary, but there is increasing consensus about the central part of the intelligence system. "This system consists of a capacity for identifying or imputing information, and a capacity for processing information through both immediate symbol, manipulation and reference to

expert knowledge (Mayer & Mitchell, 1998)" (p.107). The Bar-On "model views emotional intelligence as operating across both the cognitive and emotional systems. It operates in a mostly unitary fashion but is still subdivisible into four branches (Mayer & Salovey, 1997)" (p. 107). The first branch is emotional perception and identification. This "involves recognizing and imputing information from the emotional system. The second and third branches, emotional facilitation of thought and emotional understanding, involve the further processing of emotional information with an eye to problem solving" (p. 107). Generally speaking, the emotional facilitation of the "thought branch involves using emotion to improve cognitive processes whereas that emotional understanding branch involves cognitive processing of emotion. Our fourth branch, emotional management, concerns emotional self-management and the management of emotions in other people" (p. 107).

The Ability Theory

Salovey et al. (2002) presented a model of emotional intelligence in "The Positive Psychology of Emotional Intelligence" article. In this article they presented a brief summary of the ability theory of emotional intelligence. Salovey et al. (2002) maintained that there are times when emotional intelligence can be seen as a unitary construct for empirical utility, but their work mainly considers the concept to be divided into four branches. The first branch is emotional perception and expression. Salovey et al. (2002) spoke to this as "recognizing and inputting verbal and nonverbal information from the emotion system" (p. 161). The second branch is emotional facilitation of thought, and is at times referred to as using emotional intelligence. Emotional facilitation of thought "refers to using emotions as part of cognitive processes such as creativity and problem-

solving" (p. 161). The third branch is emotional understanding that "involves cognitive processing of emotion that is insight and knowledge brought to bear about one's feelings or the feelings of others" (p. 161). The fourth branch is emotional management, "the regulation of emotions in oneself and in others people" (p. 161).

The Four Branch Model of Emotional Intelligence (after Mayer and Salovey, 1997) is as follows:

1. Emotional Perception and Expression

Ability to identify emotion in one's physical and psychological states.

Ability to identify emotion in other people.

Ability to express emotions accurately and to express needs related to them.

Ability to discriminate between accurate/honest and inaccurate/dishonest

feelings.

2. Emotional Facilitation of Thought (Using Emotional Intelligence)

Ability to redirect and prioritize thinking on the basis of associated feelings.

Ability to generate emotions to facilitate judgment and memory.

Ability to capitalize on mood changes to appreciate multiple points of view.

Ability to use emotional states to facilitate problem-solving and creativity.

3. Emotional Understanding

Ability to understand relationships among various emotions.

Ability to perceive the causes and consequences of emotions.

Ability to understand complex feelings, emotional blends, and

contradictory states.

Ability to understand transitions among emotions.

4. Emotional Management

Ability to be open to feelings, both pleasant and unpleasant.

Ability to monitor and reflect on emotions.

Ability to engage, prolong, or detach from an emotional state.

Ability to manage emotions in oneself.

Ability to manage emotions in others. (Salovey et al., 2002, p. 162)

According to Ciarrochi et al. (2001), the ability conception of emotional intelligence recognized a new ability trait that has very little similarity with other traits in the past. Emotional intelligence has the new trait of possibly being able to predict significant outcomes that were previously unpredictable or less predictable in the past. "For example, it appears that higher EI predicts lower levels of violence and other problem behaviors. This occurs even after the effects of intelligence, gender, and self-reported empathy are statistically controlled for . . ." (p. 24). In this case, Ciarrochi et al. (2001) believed the use of EI will be pragmatic. Emotional intelligence is also useful as Ciarrochi et al. (2001) submitted that "if EI satisfies traditional standards for an intelligence then that is a persuasive reason to discuss emotions and the information they convey" (p. 24). Emotional intelligence is important on an individual level and means that those referred to as "bleeding-hearts" or "hopeless romantics" are also processing information sophisticatedly. With EI having this ability, its discussion at an organizational level is legitimized in schools, businesses, and other institutions that have been hostile or unconcerned about feeling life (Ciarrochi et al., 2001). If emotions carry information then they should not be ignored. On the social level Ciarrochi et al. (2001)

posited that the ability conception of EI creates transcendence between the head and the heart, and both live at peace by attaining a higher level of understanding through EI.

The Development of Emotional Intelligence

Matthews, Zeidner, and Roberts (2007) discussed the development of emotional knowledge and stated that the acquisition of emotion knowledge (EK) "requires the development of emotion systems as well as connections between emotion systems and cognitive systems to label and verbalize perceived, expressed, and experienced emotions" (p. 129). Matthews et al. posited that rudimentary emotion knowledge starts shortly after birth. At this point "infants selectively respond to emotion information (e.g., smiles) conveyed by their caregivers (Izard et al., 1995; Messinger, 2002)" (p. 129). In the toddler and preschool years the child develops the ability to recognize/label basic emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, fear. This "generally starting with the ability to distinguish happy expressions from non-happy expression (Izard, 1971). Subsequently, young children begin to grasp distinctions between negative emotions and start to develop an understanding of situations that tend to elicit particular emotions" (Matthews et al., 2007, p. 130).

These emotion systems, however, do not develop simply as a function of the unfolding of genetic processes. They emerge as a function of genes, environment, and gene-environment interactions. Although emotion expression and emotion perception are present in early infancy, their development course is highly dependent on parent-child interactions and other aspects of nurturance. For example, emotion discourse in the home is predictive of emotion understanding, including emotion situation knowledge and understanding of display rules (e.g., Dunn, Brown, & Beardsall, 1991; Garner, Jones,

Gaddy, & Rennie, 1997) (Matthews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2007). As such, it would be incorrect to characterize emotion knowledge as an "intelligence" that has a dominant genetic component or as a construct that operates without temperament, cognitive ability, and contextual factors.

In relation to a person's family of origin and the development of their emotional intelligence, Mayer and Salovey (1997) presented that all things seen as equal, "a person's emotional intelligence determines her emotional achievement. But things are rarely equal, and the family in which one grew up, the lessons about emotions one was taught, the life events one has undergone, all influence" (p. 15) what a person learns about emotions.

Mayer and Salovey (1997) found evidence in a study with Maria DiPaolo supporting:

The idea that there is a basic skill that accounts for individual differences in recognizing (consensual) emotion not only in faces, but in abstract designs, and even in colors. That is, skills at decoding faces, designs, and colors were either generally high, medium, or low in a given individual. Moreover, people higher in these skills also obtained higher scores on a scale of self-reported empathy, a skill also envisioned as a part of emotional intelligence. These findings argue for the existence of emotional intelligence as described in the first branch of the diagram (perception of emotion), in that they point to a unity of emotional recognition, in faces, colors, or designs. Mayer and Geher further found that emotional perception of characters in situations correlates with SAT scores (a measure of

intelligence), with empathy, and with emotional openness (from the highest, 'regulatory' branch). (pp. 16-17)

The matter of acquiring emotional intelligence is of pivotal importance if an individual is to enjoy its benefits. Mayer and Salovey (1997) argued "most skills can be improved through education and it is likely this will hold true for at least some of the skills related to emotional intelligence" (p. 43). Emotional skills have their beginning in the home based on the parent-child interaction. Parents help their children to recognize and label emotions, respect their feelings, and connect emotions to social situations. This level of success for the process may differ for each home. Over the course of the study Mayer and Salovey (1997) realized that each person operates from various emotional starting places that are different. "These can be considered their emotional knowledge base. The opportunities for learning emotional skills are not always equal. Parents may suffer from psychological limitations so severe that they are unable to initiate an emotional-cognitive learning process" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 19).

Bar-On (2000) advocated that the role played by social experience is central to his view of both developmental history and the construct of emotional competence. Table 2.1 on the following page showing the noteworthy markers of emotional development in relation to social interaction was adapted from Saarni (1999). The table is a schematic presentation of the major developmental "milestones" for how we learn to connect our emotional and social experiences meaningfully. The three broad organizing themes used are: regulations/ coping, expressive behavior, and relationship-building. These themes were used to capture the essence of the important elements in emotional development. The organizing themes are interactive with each other; they can be seen "as the

Table 2.1: Noteworthy markers of Emotional Development in Relation to Social Interaction

Age Period	Regulation/Coping	Expressive Behavior	Relationship Building
Infancy: 0 to 12 months	Self-soothing and learning to modulate reactivity. Regulation of attention in service of coordinated action. Reliance on caregivers for supportive "scaffolding" during stressful circumstances.	Behavior synchrony with others in some expressive channels. Increasing discrimination of others' expressions. Increasing expressive responsiveness to stimuli under contingent control. Increasing coordination of expressive behaviors with emotion-eliciting circumstances.	Social games and turn-taking (e.g., "peek-a-boo"). Social referencing. Socially instrumental signal use (e.g., "fake" crying to get attention).
Toddlerhood: 12 months to 2 years	Emergence of self-awareness and consciousness of own emotional response. Irritability due to constraints and limits imposed on expanding autonomy and exploration needs.	Self-evaluation and self-consciousness evident in expressive behavior accompanying shame, pride, coyness. Increasing verbal comprehension and production of words for expressive behavior and affective states.	Anticipation of different feelings toward different people. Increasing discrimination of others' emotions and their meaningfulness. Early forms of empathy and prosocial action.

Age Period	Regulation/Coping	Expressive Behavior	Relationship Building
Preschool: 2 1/2 to 5 years	Symbolic access facilitates emotion regulation, but symbols can also provoke distress. Communication with others extends child's evaluation of and awareness of own feelings and of emotion-eliciting events.	Adoption of pretend expressive behavior in play and teasing. Pragmatic awareness that false facial expressions can mislead another about one's feelings.	Communication with others elaborates child's understanding of social transactions and expectations for comportment. Sympathetic and prosocial behavior toward peers. Increasing insight into others' emotions.
Early elementary school: 5 to 7 years	Self-conscious emotions (e.g., embarrassment) are targeted for regulation. Seeking support from caregivers still a prominent coping strategy, but increasing reliance on situational problem-solving evident.	Adoption of "cool emotional front" with peers.	Increasing coordination of social skills with one's own and others' emotions. Early understanding of consensually agreed upon emotion "scripts."
Middle childhood: 7 to 10 years	Problem-solving preferred coping strategy if control is at least moderate. Distancing strategies used if control is appraised as minimal.	Appreciation of norms for expressive behavior, whether genuine or dissembled. Use of expressive behavior to modulate relationship dynamics (e.g., smiling while repro-aching a friend).	Awareness of multiple emotions toward the same person. Use of multiple time frames and unique personal information about another as aids in the development of close friendships.

Age Period	Regulation/Coping	Expressive Behavior	Relationship Building
Preadolescence: 10 to 13 years	Increasing accuracy in appraisal of realistic control in stressful circumstances. Capable of generating multiple solutions and differentiated strategies for dealing with stress.	Distinction made between genuine emotional expression with close friends and managed displays with others.	Increasing social sensitivity and awareness of emotion "script" in conjunction with social roles.
Adolescence: 13+ years	Awareness of one's own emotion cycles (e.g., guilt about feeling angry) facilitates insightful coping. Increasing integration of moral character and personal philosophy in dealing with stress and subsequent decisions.	Skillful adoption of self-presentation strategies for impression management.	Awareness of mutual and reciprocal communication of emotions as affecting quality of relationship.

multidimensional trends that constitute a dynamic fabrics weft and warp, yielding the

woven pattern of emotional functioning" (p. 74). The developmental progression

illustrated starts from the birth period and goes to the adolescence stage, "but the 'fabric

of emotional functioning' is indeterminate in length and may even extend its influence

across generations" (p. 74).

The Operation of Emotional Intelligence

Bar-On and Parker (2000) put together a list of the skills that constitute emotional

competence. "We learn these skills in social context, and as a consequence, the skills

listed below should be understood as representing western cultural beliefs about emotional experience and may have limited generalizability to other cultures" (p. 74). Bar-On and Parker (2000) presented the skills in a sequence, but the sequence of the skills are not in a developmental order. The skills are in order of their protodevelopmental manifestation of the skills. It is likely that one would observe the skills being applied effectively and competently around the period of late adolescence. "However, given the significance of context, there will inevitably be situations in which we respond with relative emotional incompetence, in spite of our best efforts to cope effectively" (p. 77). These are the Skills of Emotional Competence:

1. Awareness of one's emotional state, including the possibility that one is experiencing multiple emotions, and at even more mature levels, awareness that one might also not be consciously aware of one's feelings because of unconscious dynamics or selective inattention.

2. Skill in discerning others' emotions, based on situational and expressive cues that have some degree of cultural consensus as to their emotional meaning.

3. Skill in using the vocabulary of emotion and expressive terms commonly available in one's subculture and, at more mature levels, skill in acquiring cultural scripts that link emotion with social roles.

4. Capacity for empathetic and sympathetic involvement in others emotional experiences.

5. Skill in understanding that inner emotional state need not correspond to outer expression, both in oneself and in others, and at more mature levels, understanding that one's emotional-expressive behavior may impact on another

and to take this into account in one's self-presentation strategies.

6. Skill in adaptive coping with aversive or distressing emotions by using
   self-regulatory strategies (such as "stress hardiness") that ameliorate the
   intensity or temporal duration of such emotional states.

7. Awareness that the structure or nature of relationships is in part defined by both
   the degree of emotional immediacy or genuineness of expressive display and
   by the degree of reciprocity and symmetry within the relationship; as such,
   mature intimacy is in part defined by mutual or reciprocal sharing of genuine
   emotions, where as a parent-child relationship may have asymmetric sharing of
   genuine emotions.

8. Capacity for emotional self-efficacy: The individual views himself or herself as
   feeling, overall, the way she or he wants to feel. That is, emotional self-efficacy
   means that one accepts one's emotional experience, whether unique and
   eccentric or culturally conventional, and this acceptance is in alignment with
   the individual's beliefs about what constitutes desirable emotional "balance." In
   essence, one is living in accord with one's personal theory of emotion when
   one demonstrates emotional self-efficacy that is integrated with one's moral
   sense. (Bar-On & Parker, 2000, pp. 75-76)

Bar-On and Parker (2000) discussed the consequences of emotional competence
and stated that as children acquire these skills of emotional competence in various
contexts, their behavior demonstrates the consequences of their emotional competence.
There are three consequences, and they all have a rich empirical research history. The
first "consequence is effective skills in managing one's emotions, which is critical in

being able to negotiate one's way through interpersonal exchanges" (p. 78). The other essential consequence "of emotional competence are a sense of subjective well-being and adaptive resilience in the face of future stressful circumstances" (p. 78). Bar-On and Parker (2000) added further: "Much of the relevant research supporting both the proceeding list of emotional competence and these three consequences are available in published reviews" (p. 78).

How Learning can Improve Emotional Intelligence

Ciarrochi et al. (2001) posited that "emotional intelligence is made up of a set of skills, and most skills can be improved through education. Thus, it is not surprising that we should look to schools as the prime location for the promotion of EI" (p. 135). Goleman (1995) supported that view stating that school is "the one place communities can turn to for correctives to children's deficiencies in emotional and social competence" (p. 279). "The learning of emotional skills however, begins at home, and children enter school at different 'emotional starting places'" (Ciarrochi, Forgas, & Mayer, 2001, p. 135).

> As students across the school years are not systemically educated in affective competencies, basic values, social skills and moral reasoning, they are not given the crucial foundations and skills for becoming caring, empathic, responsible, and compassionate adults. Thus, what is needed, experts maintain, is the direct training of social and emotional competencies in the classroom. These competencies relate to the ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of life in ways that enable one to successfully manage life tasks, such as learning, solving problems, forming relationships, and adapting to

the complex demands of growth and development. (Mathews, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2012, p. 163)

Elias, Kress, and Hunter (2006) stated that "academic knowledge that is not tempered by social-emotional intelligence and ethical guidance can be a danger to society, not a boon" (p. 167).

It is also pivotal to examine interventions in education and the interest in developing school-based programs that focus on abilities like emotional intelligence. Salovey et al. (2002) indicated that there is rising interest in the last decade concerning the availability of materials proposing how teachers can develop emotional intelligence in children at school (Mayer & Cobb; Salovey & Sluyter, 1997). "For example, in guidebook for developing emotional intelligence curricula for elementary school students, Schiling (1996) recommended units of self-awareness, managing feelings, decision making, managing stress, personal responsibility, self-concept, empathy, communication, group dynamics, and conflict resolution" (p. 70). The rubric for emotional intelligence is being applied generally "to the development of a range of social-emotional skills" (p. 70). As such, several school-based interventions that were created to promote emotional intelligence are mainly categorized under the label of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs (Cohen, 1999a; Elias et al., 1997) (Salovey et al., 2002).

Cohen (1999b) stated that "there are over 300 curriculum-based programs in the United States purporting to teach Social and Emotional Learning" (Salovey et al., 2002, p. 70). These programs range from being "based on specific social problem-solving

skills training (e.g., Elias & Tobias, 1996) to general conflict resolution strategies (e.g., Lantieri & Patti, 1996), to very broad programs organized around themes like 'character development' (Lickona, 1991)" (Salovey et al., 2002, p. 70). There have also been significant interventions in the workplace as it pertains to increasing emotional intelligence. These programs in the workplace are earlier in the developmental stage than those for the classroom. "Furthermore, many of these workplace 'emotional intelligence' programs are really old and familiar training sessions on human relations, achievement motivation, stress management, and conflict resolution" (Salovey et al., 2002, p. 72).

There are several promising interventions. "One promising approach to workplace emotional intelligence is the Weatherhead MBA Program at Case Western Reserve University, where training in social and emotional competency is incorporated into the curriculum for future business leaders (Boyatzis, Cowen, & Kolb, 1995)" (Salovey et al., 2002, p. 72). This approach is not focused clearly on emotions really, but the MBA students gain experiences that are intended "to promote initiative, flexibility, achievement drive, empathy, self-confidence, persuasiveness, networking, self-control, and group management. Communication and emotion-related skills also are increasingly being incorporated into physician training (Kramer, Ber, & Moores, 1989)" (Salovey et al., 2002, p. 72).

The Emotional Competency Training Program at American Express Financial Advisors is possibly "the workplace program that addresses itself to emotional intelligence most explicitly" (Salovey et al., 2002, p. 72). The goal of this program is to help managers to become 'emotional coaches' for employees. The program's training emphasizes "the role of emotion in the workplace and gaining an awareness of how one's

own emotional reactions and the emotions of others affect management practices" (p. 72).

Salovey et al. (2002) stated that "a higher business growth rate (money under

management) has been found for the financial advisors whose mangers had taken the

training program as compared to those who had not (reported in Cherniss, 1999)" (p. 72),

although there are no published systemic evaluations of the program as yet.

Cassady and Eissa (2008) submitted that much of the excitement about emotional

intelligence surrounds the hope that people can improve their emotional intelligence more

than their traditional intelligence, personality traits or their talents. So if emotional

intelligence can be improved then there is hope to raise a new generation that is socially

savvy, "reduce social ills, strengthen marriages, create business leaders, and help people

succeed where they typically would not under traditional intelligence bases" (p. 26).

Cassady and Eissa stated that "if ability EI can be improved, there may be potential for

interventions to have more transferable outcomes, since the basic EI abilities are less

context-specific and affect every aspect of life" (p. 40). Emotional intelligence is learned

from the family of origin, but the Family Therapy III - Bowen Theory Course can be a

way to improve emotional intelligence as students gain self-awareness from the

exploration of their family genogram and learn new ways to be emotionally intelligent.

Simmons and Simmons (1997) supported the view that in the same way that the

emotional system can be improved by learning, an individual's emotional intelligence can

also improve by way of learning. They believed "almost everyone can make very

significant adjustments in their emotional intelligence with noticeable results occurring in

a matter of weeks or a few months" (p. 11). The Family Therapy II–Bowen Theory

course helped to improve my emotional system, and consequently my emotional

intelligence after four months in that course. Simmons and Simmons submitted that emotional intelligence is developed by interaction of three main influences. These influences are heredity, learning and physical or chemical changes in one's body by way of external forces. These influences are thought of as nature, nurture and injury. The hereditary or nature influence speaks to the genetic process that equips us with characteristics and tendencies from our parents. Simmons and Simmons posited that there are characteristics that are totally determined, while others are partially influenced. The potential for an individual's height, hair color and their eye color are among the totally determined characteristics while emotional intelligence traits like "hard work, hostility, friendliness, or courage are only partially influenced by one's genetic heritage" (p. 20).

It is the belief of Simmons and Simmons (1997) that a child receives their emotional intelligence from their parent by way of chromosomes like eye color, and so "children are born with certain emotional intelligent tendencies" (p. 20). The tendencies may be active, patient, quiet, or assertive. They believed that "disorders like depression tend to run in families even when the children haven't been raised by their biological parents. These basic, innate emotional intelligent tendencies appear to reside in the limbic system. They are not caused by direct experience" (p. 20).

As humans, we all have basic needs according to Simmons and Simmons (1997). Abraham Maslow identified the five basic human needs in the 1970s to be biological in nature, pointing to our need for food and water. The second need Maslow identified is safety, the other needs are to feel that we belong and are lovable, to feel esteemed and respected, and the fifth need is "to reach our full potentials, capacities, and to exercise our talents. Psychologists often refer to this as the need for self-actualization" (p. 20). It is

these needs that Simmons and Simmons (1997) believed motivate humans to develop their emotional intelligence as they find ways to deal with their environment in order to meet these needs.

As for the influence of learning and nurture, Simmons and Simmons (1997) advocated that "our beliefs and opinions about how to meet our needs are developed through our life experiences – what we see, hear, or learn about" (p. 21). We can learn from our direct experiences or from observing other's experiences – vicarious experiences. In this light, children can learn from the individuals around them, the environment and the media. We determine from these experiences "what we are like, what the world is like, and how to cope best with life's demands. We learn to like, say, and do what we believe will result in positive consequences for us" (p. 21). Along with this, we also learn to avoid the things that will have negative consequences. The children of parents who model achievement and reward achievement are likely to work hard and are frequently goal-oriented. On the other hand, children with parents who punish them for emotional expression are likely to inhibit their expressions. In other words, if an attribute is rewarded in a child, they will develop that same attitude, and the opposite is also true.

We learn our emotional intelligence based on how we make decisions. So for example Simmons and Simmons (1997) explained: "A child who is neglected or criticized will often decide that he or she is worthless. Children who are mistreated may decide that they have to take care of themselves since no one else will" (p. 22). These children may not decide to trust and begin to look out only for themselves. In this same light, a physically or emotionally abused child may decide to act out with anger and

hostility. Although emotional intelligence is usually created by conscious awareness, it can also be developed without conscious thought which "involves a classical or stimuli – response relationship" (p. 22). In this case, a stimulus is able to trigger a response that another stimulus has already caused. This happens because the first stimulus is now paired with the second stimulus. As such, we know that pain is naturally unpleasant, so if a parent physically abuses their child by beating, the child can pair or associate their parent with this pain and avoid their parent. "These feelings can be subconscious and are at the emotional level" (p. 22), so the child may not even be able to explain their reaction.

Generalization may also occur where the child has been abused by their parent and consequently develop a fear of abuse by all people. "The effects of generalization are often limited by the process of discrimination, or learning to distinguish between similar events and to respond only to the appropriate one" (Simmons & Simmons, 1997, p. 23). In this light the child may learn from their experience that their parents are abusive, but that their grandparents, uncles and aunts are not abusive.

Humans can also learn emotional responses but absorbing them from others with different experiences. As such, fear can be learned, dislike for people can be learned from those who dislike those people even if the person developing the fear or dislike never had a negative experience of that thing or person. In this same light, positive feelings can be absorbed from being around positive people.

In regards to the physical and chemical influence or injury Simmons and Simmons (1997) believed that there are times when physical or chemical changes in the body can alter what we are intended to become. Brain damage is one such instance that can lead to "loss of physical control of body parts, emotional intelligence changes, or loss

of memory. A brain tumor or head injury often results in unexplained anger and hostility"

(p. 24). There are some chemical abnormalities that are hereditary, but others are caused

by what we do to our own bodies. Drug abuse is one such instant that can lead to

hallucination, hyperactivity or an overly sedated state. The process of withdrawal can

lead to similar symptoms due to the fact that the body has become dependent on the drug.

The Field of Marriage and Family Therapy

The field of Marital and Family Therapy has strong views about the concept of

differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. Killian (2012) argued that emotional

intelligence has become a topic of flourishing "interest in family therapy, psychology,

counseling, and nursing because emotional awareness is a crucial concept in human

relational systems (e.g., in couples, between helping professional and their clients and in

organizations)" (p. 2). Over the years, "research on intelligence has found that person's

success in life both personally and professionally depends not only on his or her cognitive

abilities or general intelligence but also on emotional and social traits (Thorndike, 1920;

Wechsler, 1940)" (Killian, 2012, p, 3). Theorists like Wechsler and Gardner have

"hypothesized that cognitive intelligence as measured by IQ test did not encompass

intelligence in its entirety and held the additional factors contributed to an individual's

ability to succeed in life (Derksen, Kramer, & Katzko, 2002)" (Killian, 2012, p, 3).

Killian (2012) emphasized the fact that emotional focused therapy has addressed

the importance of emotional awareness in satisfying relationships, and emotions as a

natural part of human systems (Greenberg & Johnson, 1986; Johnson, 1998; MacIntosh

& Johnson, 2008). Hill (2001) "discussed the relationship between emotional

intelligence, empathy, and forgiveness in relationship systems. However, only a handful

of research studies has been published in the area of emotional awareness or emotional

intelligence in the field of couple and family therapy" (Killian, 2012, p. 3). Given this

situation, the focus of this research stands to add significant and relevant literature to the

field of Marital and Family Therapy.

The Emotionally Intelligent Therapist

Conboy and Ellis (2004) spoke about the emotionally intelligent therapist and

using emotional quotient, assessment, and coaching to enhance the therapeutic alliance

stating that

> Trust is an essential component to the therapeutic alliance between therapist and
>
> client. In order to create this trusting relationship, the therapist, as the central
>
> change agent, needs to sustain a lifelong practice of emotional curiosity that leads
>
> to deeper self- knowledge. We (Dr. Ellis and Mr. Conboy) argue that one
>
> important aspect of this underpinning of trust involves the need for
>
> psychotherapist to familiarize themselves with the latest findings in the disciplines
>
> of emotional intelligence (EQ) and coaching. (p. 1)

The emotional curiosity would lead to self-awareness as the self of the therapist would be

examined. In this case the therapist would be enhancing their emotional intelligence as

they accurately appraise and express theirs and their client's emotions, regulate emotions

in themselves and their clients, in order to motivate, plan and achieve the goal for therapy

(Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

In the same way that academicians dedicate themselves to sustained intellectual

curiosity, Killian (2004) believed that psychotherapist dedicate theirs to emotional

curiosity (as cited in Conboy & Ellis, 2004). Just like deep intellectual curiosity is richer

than just asking mere dispassionate and impersonal questions,

> Emotional curiosity is a deep and passionate desire for self-knowledge, and for insight into how others navigate through their emotional currents as well. This emotional curiosity which can lead to greater emotional intelligence, is the fuel that sustains the therapeutic alliances that effective therapists create with their clients when positive change occurs. (p. 1)

Ellis and Ryan (2005) examined emotional intelligence and positive psychology and the therapist tools for training and coaching clients to move beyond emotional relief stating that research on emotional intelligence and positive psychology give "hope to many that they can move beyond 'normal' and be successful and happy in their professional and personal life experiences if they develop the skills necessary to manage their attitudes and their effectiveness in relationships" (p. 1). Emotional intelligence and positive psychology practitioners seek to do more than getting their clients back to zero, their aim is to "take clients past the relief point to the point where they can say they are genuinely happy much of the time" (p. 1). Seligman and other researchers of similar persuasion believed that increasing "your level of happiness is getting more pleasure out of life, becoming more engaged in what you do, and finding ways of making your life feel more meaningful" (Ellis & Ryan, 2005, p. 1). The goals of positive psychology and emotional intelligence seek to help the client to achieve a higher level of personal happiness in their range.

Ellis and Ryan (2005) argued that "in the process of developing a therapeutic plan for clients, therapists knowledgeable in emotional intelligence protocols can implement the personal action plan used by many trainers and coaches to assist clients at all levels of

emotional-intelligence development" (p. 2). Therapists and coaches trained in emotional intelligence; claim that "self-awareness is the keystone for future success of therapy. The clients need to experience 'knowing who I am' and understand why they think, feel and behave the way they do" (Ellis & Ryan, 2005, p. 1). This is essential in helping the client to develop their emotional intelligence so that they can meet their goals and needs in life in healthy ways.

The Evolving of Marriage and Family Therapy

Schwartz and Johnson (2000) submitted that family therapy has evolved significantly in the area of emotional intelligence since the days of the pioneers. Both Schwartz and Johnson "developed approaches that center on inner and outer conversations about vulnerable emotions (Johnson, 1996; Schwartz, 1995)" (p. 3).

Harlene Anderson's collaborative approach is almost Rogerian in its emphasis on respectful, nondirective listening. While Michael White's narrative therapy steers conversations away from discussions of current family problems (Schwartz, 1999), he encourages people to witness emotional aspects of their past. Other psychodynamic and experiential forms of family therapy have always focused, and continue to focus on emotional material. It seems that the field is slowly catching up with that "touchy/feely," visionary Virginia Satir, and shaking off its no-emotion legacy. We have to admire de Shazer's tenacious dedication to that legacy despite what his followers and clients prefer or what the evidence suggests. (Schwartz & Johnson, 2000, p. 3)

It is hoped that the field of Marriage and Family Therapy will continue its progression and include new ways of understanding how emotional intelligence can assist the healing process and help clients build their solutions.

Benefits of Emotional Intelligence

According to Yeung (2009), "emotionally intelligent individuals are able to identify what they feel and intentionally generate other mood states to help them achieve their goals. In other words, they know how to motivate themselves" (p. 2). Motivation is frequently considered to make the biggest difference between those who succeed and those who fail. Yeung explained: "Becoming self-aware also applies to becoming aware of the impact that you have on other people" (p. 1). One may believe they possess certain strengths and weaknesses, but their beliefs may impede their goals if other people believe they have different strengths and weaknesses. Once a person becomes aware of their "own emotions, strengths, and weaknesses, you can begin to think about how to manage and apply them to help you achieve your goals" (p. 1). If we should consider emotional intelligence as a journey, then self-awareness can be seen as the skill of map reading (Yeung, 2009).

Feldman and Mulle (2007) supported this view stating that "self-awareness is the fundamental skill of emotional intelligence. It is the base from which other EI competencies arise. Self-awareness means tuning into what's going on with you emotionally: recognizing and acknowledging your emotional state" (p. 5). Having an awareness of your emotions allows you to harness the power towards your hoped for outcome in situations. They presented: "Without an awareness of your emotions, your EI is non-existent" (p. 5).

Lewkowicz (2007) highlighted that research indicates that the missing part in educating our youth is the support for emotional and social development. According to Lewkowicz, "research from various fields of inquiry have come to similar conclusions– the importance of educating not just the mind, but the whole person" (p. 2). Evidence is growing that supports the significant connection between social-emotional learning and academic performance (Elias et al., 1997). Elias et al. (1997) stated that research further "suggests an increased likelihood that youths who build social-emotional competencies will develop the values and attitudes that lead to safer, less risky life choices" (Lewkowicz, 2007, p. 2). Goleman's (1995) groundbreaking research on emotional intelligence highlighted "the great need for developing mastery over the emotional realm so that people can get their needs met in healthy ways" (Lewkowicz, 2007, p. 2).

Ciarrochi et al. (2001) submitted that emotional intelligence has attracted the public's attention due to its suggestion that emotions transmit sensible meaning and this meaning needs understanding. Today many organizations, countries and schools have embraced the EI concept believing that it can help individuals, and students gain essential skills for living (Goleman, 1995). Journalists and writers have led many to believe that EI may contribute to healthy, rich, successful, loved and happy lives. These outstanding claims require scientific evaluations (Ciarrochi et al., 2001). As for the business world, Goleman (1995) posited that competence models at the highest levels of leadership mainly consist of a range from 80-100 percent abilities based on emotional intelligence. According to the head researcher of a global executive search firm, "CEO's, are hired for their intellect and business expertise–and fired for a lack of emotional intelligence" (p. xv).

Hughes, Thompson, and Terrell (2009) argued that research over a decade has "consistently demonstrated that those with higher emotional intelligence (EI), as measured by the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), are more likely to perform at higher levels than their less emotionally intelligent co-workers" (p. xxii). Although IQ and other technical skills are the main requirement for several roles, after a person is hired, IQ no longer discriminates between those who succeed and those who do not succeed on the job. Hughes et al. (2009) stated further that factors like "empathy, assertiveness, optimism, and the ability to tolerate stress and control impulses are strong indicators of star performers" (p. xxii). Top organizations are beginning to document real bottom line impact in the form of reduced turnover, increased customer satisfaction, higher productivity, better engagement, and improved leadership as a result of replacing less effective selection and development activities with one based on IE (Hughes, Thompson, & Terrell, 2009).

An individual's emotional intelligence determines their potential for learning the basics of mastering themselves, while an individual's emotional competence demonstrates how much of the potential has been mastered (Goleman, 1995). This is translated in how we conduct our relationship with others. According to Mathews et al. (2012), empirical evidence holds that the majority of studies suggest that couples require high emotional intelligence and a good working knowledge of emotions in their relationship in order to understand their emotions and that of their partner. By significant contrast, partners who are characterized by low emotional understanding seem more likely to attack their partners and interpret partner hurt and distress as hostility. As such, instead of expressing guilt and remorse, they are likely to behave hateful. These reactions

may increase conflict and decrease the quality of the relationship (Mathews et al., 2012). Couples with both partners scoring low on emotional intelligence reported more unhappiness with their relationship than couples with both partners who scored high on emotional intelligence (Brackett, Warner, & Bosco, 2005).

Goleman (1995) highlighted the advantages of emotional intelligence and stated that "disturbing emotions and toxic relationships have been identified as risk factors in disease" (p. xiv). Several studies have confirmed that individuals who manage their emotional lives with calm and self-awareness appear to enjoy significant and measureable advantages in health. Peter Salovey has conducted examinations on how EI could contribute to an individual's health and wealth. Salovey explained how the inability to manage one's emotions effectively can contribute to health problems like heart disease. He further demonstrated how poorly managing negative emotions can contribute to disastrous financial decisions. As a recommendation, Salovey submitted that the use of better emotional and cognitive strategies could lead to a more fulfilling life (Ciarrochi et al., 2001). The concept of EI had its beginning as a topic within the field of academic psychology. Since then, educators, psychiatrists, human resource specialists and several others gained interest in EI.

Vandervoort (2006) advocated for the importance of EI stating that "there are many potential personal, social, and societal benefits of incorporating a focus on emotional intelligence, which has shown to be moldable (Cohen, 1999; Goleman, 1995; Topping, Holmes, & Bremmer, 2000), into higher education" (p. 1). In the same way that courses on emotional intelligence has been efficacious in improving emotional intelligence and the learning process, and reducing emotional and behavioral problems at

the primary and secondary level, the same benefits can be realized at the college level. In this same light, it became obvious that incorporating these courses "into the curriculum results in higher scores on standardized achievement tests (Hawkins, Von Cleave, & Catalano, 1991), providing evidence for the view that processes previously thought to be purely cognitive in fact work synergistically with emotional processes" (Vandervoort, 2006, p. 4). Possessing knowledge about ourselves and others, along with the ability to use this knowledge in problem solving is essential in academic learning and success (Cohen, 1999; Goleman, 1995) (as cited in Vandervoort, 2006). Goleman (1995) did not subscribe to the fact that if IQ accounts for approximately 20 percent of an individual's career success then EQ would account for the remaining 80 percent. Instead Goleman submitted that along with emotional intelligence, we also have to take into account the "wide range of forces–from the wealth and education of the family we are born into, to temperament, to blind luck and the like–in addition to emotional intelligence" (p. xiii-xiv).

Considering that high emotional intelligence includes high social competence, those with high emotional intelligence are more likely to have better social support networks. Sufficient evidence shows that the individuals with low emotional intelligence are more likely to have mental health problems like depression, anxiety, and hostility (Cohen & Syme, 1985; House, Landis, & Umberson, 1988; Vandervoort, 1999) (as cited in Vandervoort, 2006). The "big three" traits of empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness or constructive honesty according to Rogers (1957) are essential for positive therapeutic change in clients and also as indicated by literature (Lambert &

Bergin, 1994) essential traits that help to make emotionally supportive relationships
(Vandervoort, 2006).

Increasing emotional intelligence can improve the probability of a greater
personal and social adaptation. "The educational experience would tend to be more
balanced or holistic as it would focus on educating the whole person" (Vandervoort,
2006, p. 6). Davis and Humphrey (2012) advocated that "proponents of EI purport that
'intelligent' utilization of emotion-related knowledge/allied skills and positive
perceptions of competency to handle emotion-laden situations are imperative to
successful adaptation (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Petrides et al., 2007)" (p. 1). Empirically,
research has supported this theoretical conjecture. Emotional intelligence is also reliably
associated with better mental health (Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010).

Application of Emotional Intelligence

In application, Salovey and Mayer (1990) submitted that people who approach
life tasks using emotional intelligence should be at an advantage for solving these
problems adaptively. The kinds of problems people see and how they frame these
problems may be more linked to their internal emotional experiences than the problems
others face. Salovey and Mayer (1990) referred to an example that such an individual is
more likely to ask if they will be happy in their career than how much will they earn.
After framing a problem, the individual with a higher emotional intelligence is more
likely to find creative and flexible means to arrive at an alternative to the problem. They
are also more likely to apply emotional considerations in the selection of solutions.
Salovey and Mayer believed "such an approach will lead to behavior that is considerate
and respectful of the internal experience of themselves and others" (p. 200).

Yeung (2009) advocated that "interpersonal savvy, or the skills of being able to understand, influence, persuade, win over, and motivate other people, is the pinnacle of emotional intelligence" (p. 1). However, becoming an "expert in emotional intelligence means that you need to identify the right technique for influencing each particular individual in every different situation" (p. 1). It is the responsibility of the emotionally intelligent individual, to figure out the best way to handle different people in various situations.

Interpersonal savvy has four key skills that will help an individual achieve their goals in work and life. These skills are: empathy and rapport, communication, building rewarding relationships, and tackling unsatisfactory relationships. Empathy and rapport refers to "building a vital precursor to interpersonal effectiveness" (Yeung, 2009, p. 1). This skill includes the following steps: listening, reading emotional cues, asking questions, demonstrating listening and sensitivity, and making eye contact. Communication speaks to "asking people for what you want or need from them" (p. 1). The communication skill includes reinforcing rapport through self-disclosure, expressing your emotions, disclosing secrets with care, making effective requests, giving constructive feedback, asserting yourself, learning to say no, but . . . . communicating without words, and minding your language.

Yeung (2009) highlighted that building rewarding relationships means "building long-term and mutually useful relationships" (p. 1). One can build rewarding relationships by responding and reciprocating, understanding innermost needs, respecting relationship barriers, building other-esteem, controlling emotional outbursts, facilitating problem solving, and seeing the glass as half full. Tackling unsatisfactory relationships

refers to "dealing with relationships when they go wrong" (p. 1). The steps to tackling unsatisfactory relationship according to Yeung are broaching disagreements, discussing differences, acknowledging personality differences, respecting personality differences, establishing ground rules, restoring goodwill, and acting as a peacemaker.

Matthews et al. (2012) claimed that focusing on EI or on emotional literacy can be significant for clinical psychology and other fields like education, and industrial-organizational psychology. They believe that EI should be significant for psychotherapists and mental health counselors whose practice is directed towards helping clients develop emotional competence. Several contemporary psychological treatments rest on the assumption that emotional problems mainly indicate faulty thinking. It may also be essential to improve emotional understanding and competence directly without the help of overt cognitive medication (Greenberg, 2011).

Ciarrochi et al. (2001) presented that "the promise of EI is that it might help us solve at least one aspect of human problems, namely, conflict between what one feels and what one thinks" (p. xi). Organizations have found great interest in emotional intelligence as it helps to predict good performance by way of the traditional personality assessments. Self- report measures of emotional intelligence possibly mainly consists of standard personality traits like extroversion, sociability, self-esteem optimism, metamood experience among others. For the most part, these scales don't really deal with emotional intelligence, but they have the similar predictive abilities as the original personality traits that they measure with the new name (Ciarrochi et al., 2001, p. 23).

According to Goleman (1995), in Europe the U.K. has led the way, but more than a dozen other countries have led their schools to embrace EI. Australia, New Zealand,

and other countries in Latin America and Africa are also among the countries that have

embraced EI. Goleman stated: "In 2002 UNESCO began a worldwide initiative to

promote SEL, sending a statement of ten basic principles for implementing SEL to the

ministries of education in 140 countries" (p. xi). Emotional intelligence has been

accepted by educators and formulated into programs called 'social and emotional

learning' (SEL). It is the belief of educators that students not only need to develop

competencies in the academic areas, but also in social and emotional areas so they can

master these significant skills for living in the world (Goleman, 1995). Ciarrochi et al.

(2001) posited: "Social intelligence denotes the capacity to understand, and use social

intelligence" (p. 8). Social and emotional learning has become the umbrella under which

programs in character education, violence prevention, antibullying, drug prevention, and

social discipline are housed.

This study explored the lived experiences of Marriage and Family Therapy

students who study BFST, and relate those experiences to concepts of differentiation of

self and emotional intelligence. The researcher made an effort to understand the students'

experiences systematically, and how they were impacted intrapersonally and

interpersonally by their study of BFST. The findings of this research can add significant

information to the body of knowledge concerning the study of BFST, differentiation of

self and emotional intelligence. Differentiation of self and emotional intelligence are

therapeutic necessities for MFTs. The field of Marriage and Family Therapy will benefit

from this understanding and be better equipped to apply the findings in the training of

MFTs, and clinical work with clients. The development of differentiation of self and

emotional intelligence in the therapist is crucial as the therapist will then be able to

impact the therapeutic system and help clients develop their own differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. This can help to stem the problematic patterns that persist for clients over generations considering that change in one family member can affect the whole family system.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study was to explore the lived experiences of Marriage and Family Therapy students who studied BFST, and relate those experiences to concepts of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence using a phenomenological qualitative methodology. The researcher gained an understanding of how these students made sense of their experience studying BFST by utilizing an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The study carefully explored student's personal and professional development regarding differentiation of self and emotional intelligence as a result of studying BFST. Open-ended interviews were used to gather information about the student's lived experiences.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2013), "is an inquiry process of understanding based on a distinct methodological approach to inquiry that explores a social or human problem" (p. 300). Creswell (2013) stated further that this is done as "the researcher builds a complex, holistic picture; analyzes words; reports detailed views of participants, and conducts the study in a natural setting" (p. 300). The qualitative research process commences "with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks that informs the study of research problems addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 44). Qualitative research methodology was applied because it "represents a legitimate mode of social and human science exploration, without apology or comparisons to qualitative research" (p. 6).

Qualitative research employs the use of words and meanings from participants as data in the methodology (Kvale, 1996). In order to truly explore the experiences of the

participants, open-ended questions were used to give the participants an opportunity to fully describe their lived experiences. In qualitative research, "the purpose is to describe and understand central themes the subjects experience and live toward" (Kvale, 1996, p. 29). Like qualitative researchers, family therapists also explore the client's world with them using words and meanings they place on their experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) supported this view stating that "qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). Family therapists and qualitative researchers analyze words in order to identify common themes so that they can form meanings (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

A qualitative research method was chosen because its concept of gaining understanding from the detailed view of participants (Creswell, 2013), also bears similarity to the family therapy approach of gaining understanding from the client's reality. It stands to reason that this methodology would suit this study. This interpretative phenomenological analysis approach explored the lived experiences of students who studied BFST, and related those experiences to concepts of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence.

Phenomenology

The German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is credited as the father of phenomenology. Husserl believed in treating a person's reality as a pure phenomenon.

> For Husserl, phenomenology involves the careful examination of human experience. He was particularly interested in finding a means by which someone might come to accurately know their *own* experience of a given phenomenon, and

would do so with depth and rigour which might allow them to identify the

essential qualities of that experience. (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 12)

With this in mind he also believed that we should ignore anything outside the person's

immediate experience (Groenewald, 2004).

According to Creswell (2013) phenomenological study "describes the common

meaning of experiences of a phenomenon (or topic or concept) for several individuals. In

this type of qualitative study, the researcher reduces the experiences to a central meaning

or the 'essence' of the experience" (Moustakas, 1994) (as cited in Creswell, 2013, p.

285). Creswell (2013) presented the view that "the 'essence' is the culminating aspect of

a phenomenological study" (p. 79). Phenomenology focuses on descriptions, experiences,

meaning and essence of the participant (Creswell, 2013). A phenomenon "is the central

concept being examined by the phenomenologist. It is the concept being experienced by

subjects in a study, which may include psychological concepts such as grief, anger or

love" (p. 285).

Moustakas (1994) stated: "The phenomenal experience becomes increasingly

clarified and expanded in meaning as the phenomenon is considered and reconsidered in

reflective processes" (pp. 50-51). He believed that "the ultimate in understanding

experience is a knowledge of essences" (p. 51). Hegel supported this view stating that

"phenomenology referred to knowledge as it appears to consciousness, the science of

describing what one perceives, senses, and knows in one's immediate awareness and

experience" (p. 26). The process uses science and philosophy to unfold the phenomenal

consciousness towards absolute knowledge (p. 26). Phenomenology can be applied to

human science research as it "is concerned with wholeness, with examining entities from

many sides, angles, and perspectives until a unified vision of the essences of a phenomenon or experience is achieved" (p. 58).

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

This study was a qualitative interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was chosen because it focuses "on personal meaning and sense-making in a particular context, for people who share a particular experience" (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 45). Interpretative phenomenological analysis is an approach to qualitative inquiry that was recently developed, and has grown rapidly. It began in psychology but has been used in disciplines in the human, social and health science fields (Smith et al., 2009). They stated that "interpretative phenomenological analysis is an approach to qualitative, experiential and psychological research which has been informed by concepts and debates from three key areas of the philosophy of knowledge: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography" (p. 11). This qualitative approach to research "is committed to the examination of how people make sense of their major life experiences. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is phenomenological in that it is concerned with exploring experience in its own terms" (p. 1). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis is idiographic as it is concerned with knowing the detailed experience of each person and the sense each person make of their experience, while its hermeneutic character speaks to the theory of interpretation. It is influenced by the philosopher Edmund Husserl who encouraged phenomenologists to go 'back to the things themselves', instead of trying to fix experiences into categories that are predefined or too abstract (Smith et al., 2009).

Smith et al. (2009) stated, "When people are engaged with 'an experience' of something major in their lives, they begin to reflect on the significance of what is happening and IPA research aims to engage with these reflections" (p. 3). The effort of the participant to make sense of their experience fits with IPA's theoretical axis of an interpretative endeavor. This endeavor is informed by hermeneutics which is the theory of interpretation. It is normal for IPA studies to have small number of participants as the aim is to bring to light something from each participant's experience (Smith et al., 2009). As such, the study explored in-depth similarities and differences between each participants' experience of studying BFST and how they relate their experiences to concepts of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence.

Methodological Requirements

Data Collection

Data collection took the form of face to face semi-structured interviews with the flexible use of an interview schedule. After the stamped consent form was obtained from IRB, the researcher visited the Bowen Club, an ongoing Bowen themed student study group, to introduce the study and distribute flyers to recruit participants who met the inclusion criteria. Potential participants were instructed to contact the researcher by phone if they were interested in participating. The researcher obtained contact information from the first six participants who fit the criteria. A meeting was scheduled at an agreed upon time to explain the procedures and details of the study. This meeting took place in Maltz Building on NSU main campus.

The first step in the data collection process was scheduling interview appointments with each participant at a time that was convenient for all parties involved.

The second step was to conduct the interviews. These open-ended face to face interviews were conducted by the researcher. Interviews were audio recorded and the researcher also took notes during the interview. The interviews lasted between 10 to 30 minutes each. Interviews were conducted at Nova Southeastern University in an available room in the Maltz Building. The researcher used questions from "list of interview questions" (see appendix C) as an interview guide.

In step three, the researcher transcribed the interviews. The researcher transcribed each interview in her home office in Microsoft Word document using head phones to ensure confidentiality. The researcher used pseudonyms in the form of letters such as Participant A, Participant B and so on to de-identify participants during transcribing, and in the presentation of the analysis and findings in the final text. The transcriptions were stored on my desktop computer at home which is protected by a password. The audio recorder was locked in a safe cabinet with key for protection in PI's home office. The fourth step would be to call participants if clarification was needed on their interview, but this was not necessary for any participant.

As the researcher, I used memoing to record my thoughts, feelings and perspectives of the research process. Creswell (2013) stated that in the process of memoing, "the researcher writes down ideas about the evolving theory throughout the process . . ." (p. 89). Memoing is a vital source of data for qualitative research that can be helpful to the research at the data collection stage of the study. Memoing serves to help the researcher to be reflective of the research process instead of becoming distanced or automated in just collecting data. As such, I made notes of my reflections, attitudes, and noted any revelations about the data collection process. These notes were also dated. This

self-reflective memoing helped me to stay aware of my lived experience of completing the BFST course, and also gain an appreciation for the participants' lived experiences.

Sample.

The sampling plan for this phenomenological study was purposeful sampling. The sampling for this research is "theoretically consistent with the qualitative paradigm in general, and with IPA's orientation in particular. This means that samples were selected purposively (rather than through probability methods) because they can offer a research project insight into a particular experience" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 48). Creswell (2013) argued that "the concept of purposeful sampling is used in qualitative research. This means that the inquirer selects individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomena in the study" (p. 156). The list of inclusion criteria for this study included NSU doctoral students in the Marriage and Family Therapy program, students who have completed the Systemic Family Therapy III–Bowen Theory course, students who are members of the Bowen club, males and females, English speaking students, students older than 18 years, students who are willing to participate in the study, and students who are able to meet for 45 minutes to complete the interview.

This group was chosen because it is believed they have an in depth understanding and interest in BFST and its significant application to their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and professional development. Smith et al. (2009) supported this view and stated that "participants are selected on the basis that they can grant us access to a particular perspective on the phenomena under study. That is, they 'represent' a perspective, rather than a population" (p. 49). By this means they were able to describe how the study of

BFST is related to their differentiation of self and emotional intelligence.

The researcher focused on the lived experiences of the 6 doctoral students from the Bowen Club and reflected on what constituted the nature of their lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). These 6 students had completed the Family Therapy III–Bowen Theory course and voluntarily chose to study BFST beyond a course level by their ongoing participation in the "Bowen Club" described above.

Procedures for Interviewing.

After recruitment, the researcher and potential participants met in the Maltz Building on NSU main campus. The researcher described the study in detail and explained the voluntary nature of the study, the potential risks and benefits. Participants were informed that they could leave the study at any time without any penalties, but none did. They were also informed about audio-recordings and limits of confidentiality. The researcher answered all their questions and potential concerns. The researcher asked the participants to sign and date their consent forms. The researcher signed and dated the consent forms as well, and provided a copy of the consent form to participants and kept a copy for her own records. Consent forms were locked in a safe cabinet with key for protection in researcher's home office.

During the interview, each participant was asked the same set of questions from the list of open-ended interview questions (see Appendix C). Open-ended interviews were conducted to collect data from the students that led to "a textual and structural description of the experiences, and ultimately provide an understanding of the common experiences of the participants" (Creswell, 2013, p. 81). Each interview lasted between 10 to 30 minutes as the researcher kept the interview focused on the topic of the study.

The interviews were conducted in the early part of 2015. The researcher used a digital audio recorder to record the interviews. The transcriptions were then categorized into essential themes and what constitutes the essence of the participants lived experiences (Creswell, 2013) for data analysis.

Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed "data for significant statements, meaning units, textual and structural descriptions, and description of the 'essence'" (Creswell, 2013, p. 105). The interview transcripts of each case were analyzed through a systematic and qualitative analysis. This was further translated into a narrative account for the researcher to conduct an analytic interpretation in detail that is supported by verbatim extracts from the participants' transcripts (Smith et al., 2009). The qualitative approach of IPA was applied to the process of data analysis using the six steps as outlined by Smith et al. (2009).

Step 1: Reading and re-reading.

The first step of an IPA analysis is reading and re-reading the data. This "involves immersing oneself in some of the original data. In most IPA studies this would be in the form of the first written transcript and this stage of the process would involve reading and re-reading the data" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 82). In this stage of the analysis I immersed myself in the original data by listening to each interview recording at least twice, and reading and re-reading the written transcripts. Listening to the audio recording more than once helped to support the accuracy of the transcript as corrections were made on the second and third listening. Hearing each participants' voice on the audio recording helped to give the words on the paper life and meaning, and this helped in the analysis process.

Smith et al. submitted: "Imagining the voice of the participant during subsequent readings of the transcript assists with a more complete analysis" (p. 82).

The reading and re-reading as the first stage of the analysis was done to guarantee that the participant became the focus of the analysis. It was important for me to enter the world and experience of the participants by employing a stance of active engagement with the data. "Repeated reading also allows a model of the overall interview structure to develop, and permits the analyst to gain an understanding of how narratives can bind certain sections of an interview together" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 82). My observations, assumptions, biases and recollections were recorded in a notebook so as to help me bracket those off. This helped me to maintain focus solely on the data from the participants' lived experience. Reading and re-reading helped me to connect the various parts of each participants' experience into a whole story.

Step 2: Initial noting.

In the initial noting phase of the analysis I examined the semantic content and language in an exploratory manner for each participant. I maintained an open mind and made detailed notes and comments about the interesting things in the transcript of each participant. This allowed me to become familiar with the transcript and the way each participant talked about, understood and thought about the various issues they mentioned (Smith et al., 2009). The aim at this stage was to establish a comprehensive and detailed set of notes and comments on the data gathered from the participant. The descriptive core of comments are the phenomenological focus and relate to the participants' meaning as it describes the relationships, processes, places, principles and values that are important to them. This interpretative noting has helped me to understand relevance of each

participant's concern.

Exploratory commenting has three main processes: descriptive comments, linguistic comments and conceptual comments (Smith et al., 2009). These three types of comments were noted on each transcript. The descriptive comments described the content of the participants' statement. Smith et al. discussed that this is taking the participants' thoughts and experiences at face value, and seeing their experience in light of their relationship to the essential elements in their world. Some of these descriptive comments included but were not limited to "developing thoughtfulness", "relationship with mother", "relationship with husband", "using BFST concepts", and "reducing emotional reactivity". In the linguistic comments I looked at how the participants used language, and how their content and meaning were presented. I examined their use of pronouns, pauses, laughter, tone, repetition (Smith et al., 2009) and emphasis on certain words. For the conceptual comments I looked at the transcript in an interrogative and conceptual manner. This is more interpretative and focused on the participants' understanding of the issues being discussed. This phase drew on my professional knowledge and understanding of BFST to dialogue with the participants' understandings of their experience, "it is about the opening up of a range of provisional meanings" (p. 89). At this point I made conceptual comments on each transcript about what the participants' statement implied in relation to the eight concepts of BFST, and emotional intelligence.

Bracketing.

In an effort to remain aware of my assumption and biases I bracketed my lived experience of studying BFST. Moustakas (1994) stated: bracketing speaks to the process of the researcher putting aside their previous knowledge about the phenomena. The

previous knowledge of the researcher will possess biases and assumptions which could impact the quality of this study. Moustakas (1994) stated that "I must first explicate my own intentional consciousness through transcendental processes before understanding someone or something that is not my own" (p. 37). The process of bracketing gives the researcher the opportunity to conduct the study from a curious and objective place away from their previous knowledge, assumptions and biases. This also allows the researcher to grasp a better understanding of the participants' lived experiences. By this means the phenomena can be seen with a new lens, as the participants share the essence of their lived experience. Bracketing also supports the quality control efforts.

Step 3: Developing emergent themes.

At this point the transcript had grown substantially with the addition of the descriptive comments, linguistic comments, and conceptual comments. The developing of emergent themes was now the focus of the analysis. "This involves an analytical shift to working primarily with the initial notes rather than the transcript itself" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 91). I focused on the initial notes rather than the transcript in order to identify the connections and patterns from my exploratory notes. This is where I analyzed the exploratory notes and comments in order to identify the emergent themes. I broke down the whole interview into parts that support the identified themes in order to accomplish this task.

The researcher looked for evidence of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence in order to develop the respective themes. As for differentiation of self, the researcher asked questions that led to evidence of how the participants managed their emotional and intellectual functioning in their transcript. The researcher asked questions

related to emotional intelligence that lead to discussions of how the participants were able

to recognize and use their emotional state and the emotional states of others "to

discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions"

(Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189) as well as solve problems and regulate behavior.

Although these were the main themes of the study, other themes were presented by the

participants, and all the themes were treated equally in the analysis. The themes were

illustrated as phrases from the interview that supported the essence of that concept. The

themes are a representation of my analytical interpretation of the participants' lived

experience.

Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes.

At this point I identified the themes within the transcript and placed them in

chronological order. After identifying themes in the order they appeared in the transcript,

I created an outline categorizing how the themes fit and relate to each other. The themes

that conveyed a similar understanding were placed in the same category. The concepts of

BFST were used as the main themes along with the impact of BFST on clinical work, and

the impact of BFST on personal development. Figure 4.1 illustrates how the themes were

categorized. This step in the analysis allows the researcher to pull emergent themes

together and produce a structure that highlights the most interesting and essential pieces

of the participants' account of their experience (Smith et al., 2009).

Step 5: Moving to the next case.

The next participant's transcript was analyzed using steps 1 through 4 as stated.

Each case was treated on its own terms and based on its individuality. According to

Smith et al. (2009) "this means, as far as is possible, bracketing the ideas emerging from

the analysis of the first case while working on the second" (p. 100). This supports the idiographic commitment of IPA. The idiographic commitment of IPA speaks to "situating participants in their particular contexts, exploring their personal perspectives, and starting with a detailed examination of each case before moving to more general claims" (p. 32).

Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases.

After steps 1 to 4 were completed for the six participants, I looked for existing patterns across their transcript accounts in regards to the themes. I did this by identifying the connections, the most prevalent themes across the cases, and how themes in one case affect other themes. This helped to lead the analysis to a theoretical level as themes present in one participants' experience also represent concepts that were similar to other participants' experience. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis possesses the ability for this dual quality of identifying how participants represent a unique idiosyncratic position, and also how that idiosyncratic position is shared with other participants (Smith et al., 2009).

<div align="center">

Self of the Researcher

</div>

I took the position of a researching therapist. As a researching therapist I am able to use my therapeutic skills to create a non-judgmental, trusting and respectful alliance with participants. This can encourage the participants to be open and share their lived experiences. This role fits with the research question as I am able to gain insight into the development of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence for other MFTs. As a researcher, I also benefited from the wealth of findings that will be produced about how the experience of Marriage and Family Therapy students who study BFST can be related to concepts of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. This can consequently

identify implications for clinical and theoretic work, training and future research in the field of Marital and Family Therapy.

I believe my past experiences also added to the substance of this research. As a past student of the BFST course, I was also better able to relate to the theoretical underpinnings, foundational concepts and jargon that students used to express their lived experiences, challenges, understanding, and development through the course. I have been a Marriage and Family Therapist in training since 2009, and a clinician with AAMFT supervision since 2010. I have completed two graduate level qualitative courses, and two graduate level quantitative courses.

Trustworthiness of the Study

As the researcher I developed a quality control plan for managing the ethical, safety concerns, and self-of-the-researcher. This was essential to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. To do this, several methods were employed. Definitions were taken from primary sources such as, but not limited to Mayer and Salovey, Creswell, Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, Bowen, Kerr and Bowen, Goleman, Bar-On and Parker to ensure appropriate and accurate use of the concepts and methodology. My biases would include being a researcher and member of the BFST course with my own lived experience of studying this theory. My assumptions and biases were bracketed so that they would not impact the quality of the study, and permitted me to fully appreciate the lived experiences of the participants. After writing, I also checked back with the text to ensure exact reproduction of the material being used. I carefully observed the specifics of qualitative research, quality control, and also submitted stages of the research for

approval to the dissertation chair and committee who served as reviewers of the research process.

Ethical Guidelines

The ethical guidelines of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT), Nova Southeastern University and the Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) were taken into consideration for this study. In an effort to observe the ethical guidelines of these governing bodies and the field of Marriage and Family Therapy, qualitative research, and IPA, the researcher gave each participant in the study a clear outline of the study, its intention, and procedure. Each participant was given a consent form that informed them of the description of the study, the digital audio recording procedure, risks and benefits of participating, cost and payment for participating, confidentiality and privacy, their right to withdraw from the study, and that participation in the study was voluntary.

Participants signed the consent form after reading, and acknowledging that they understood, and all their questions were answered. Participants were also able to ask the researcher questions for their clarity and complete understanding of the nature and procedure of the study. The anonymity of each participant was carefully respected, stored safely and protected. Pseudonyms were applied in an effort to protect the identity of the participants. All participants were treated fairly, respectfully, given the same questions, and the same time for interview.

CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH FINDINGS

In phenomenological research, it is essential for the participants to have a significant relationship with the lived experience in question. In this case, the participants would need to have derived something meaningful from the study of BFST. As such, purposeful sampling was employed to recruit the six doctoral students who completed the Systemic Family Therapy III-Bowen Theory course and decided to study BFST beyond this by joining the Bowen Club. A collective summary of the participants is presented in this chapter in an effort to maintain confidentiality. The results of the study will be illustrated next by presenting the themes that emerged from the analysis of each participants' experience as presented in the interview. The themes in the analysis are: (1) BFST impact on clinical work, (2) BFST impact on personal development, (3) Differentiation of self, (4) Emotional intelligence, (5) Anxiety, (6) Nuclear family emotional process, (7) Multigenerational transmission process, (8) Triangulation, and (9) Individuality and togetherness.

Participant Profiles

All the participants in this study were doctoral students in the Marriage and Family Therapy program at Nova Southeastern University. Three of the participants were in their fourth year of the program, one participant was in her third year, and the remaining two were in their second year of the program. The participants all resided in South Florida. All the participants are females ranging in age from 28 to 55 years. There were four Caucasians, one African American, and one Hispanic. Three of the participants were mothers, and one was expecting her first child, while four were married and one was engaged to be married. They have all completed the Systemic Family Therapy III –

Bowen Theory course and decided to join the Bowen Club led by Dr. Christopher Burnett in order to pursue their interest, and study of the concepts in BFST. These participants also practiced BFST in their clinical work.

Results

The results were derived from a six step data analysis process. In step one I read and re-read the transcript, and listened to each of the six audio-recordings at least twice in order to ensure accurate representation of the participants' account, and to ensure that the participants became the focus of the analysis. The initial noting began in step two with exploratory comments. The semantic content and language were examined in an exploratory manner. The three processes of exploratory comments; descriptive comments, linguistic comments and conceptual comments were noted on each transcript. At this point I developed a familiarity with each transcript and the participant it represented. This step in the process prepared the data for step three where the emergent themes were developed. My focus at this point was on the initial notes and not the transcript so as to identify the emergent themes for each participant. The themes were considered the main concepts that represented the participants' essence of their lived experiences of studying BFST. Some of these concepts were stated directly, while others were referred to using other terms. Overall there were thirteen emergent themes. These themes and the participants who expressed each theme are illustrated in Table 4.1.

The next stage was step four, searching for connections across emergent themes. The themes were categorized based on how they related to each other. The final nine themes were: (1) BFST impact on clinical work, (2) BFST impact on personal development, (3) Differentiation of self, (4) Emotional intelligence, (5) Anxiety,

(6) Nuclear family emotional process, (7) Multigenerational transmission process, (8) Triangulation, and (9) Individuality and togetherness. All the other related themes were categorized under these nine themes. This categorization and connection across themes is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

At step 5 in the analysis process I repeated steps one to four for all the participants, and they were treated as individual cases. I bracketed my ideas from the previous cases so as to maintain the integrity of the study. In step six I looked for patterns across cases. This is where I identified the connections, the most prevalent themes, the least prevalent themes, and how the themes in one case affected the other cases. The patterns across the cases are noted in Table 4.2. The patterns, connections and prevalence of themes were illustrated by excerpts from each participants' transcript.

<div align="center">Themes and Participants' Narratives</div>

Bowen Family Systems Theory Impact on Clinical Work

It was Kerr and Bowen's (1988) hope that from understanding how to evaluate a family and interpret the data, the clinician would "better appreciate this interrelationship between theory and practice" (p. vii). Kerr and Bowen (1988) believed that "when a therapist pays primary attention to theory, there is automatic attention to the therapist's own level of maturity. The theory and therapy then proceed in tandem, and the therapy proceeds with more sureness" (p, 366). The expressed experiences of the participants supports this view as their attention to BFST helped their professional development. If a therapist is fused to their client's emotionality, they will contribute to the fusion within the family and thereby unable to promote differentiation within that family. "It is not

Table 4.1 Step 3: Developing emergent themes

Emergent Themes	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D	Participant E	Participant F
BFST impact on clinical work	*	*	*	*	*	*
BFST impact on personal development	*	*	*	*	*	*
Differentiat-ion	*	*	*		*	
Emotional reactivity	*	*		*	*	*
Thought & emotions	*		*	*		
Managing emotions	*					
Thinking differently/ thoughtful-ness	*	*	*	*	*	*
Anxiety	*	*	*	*	*	*
Family relationships	*	*	*	*	*	*
Genograms		*	*	*		*
Multigenerat-ional transmission process	*	*	*		*	
Triangulation		*		*	*	
Individuality & togetherness	*	*				

Figure 4.1 Step 4: Searching for connections across emergent themes

The emergent themes were categorized as follows to form the main nine themes:

1. BFST impact on clinical work

2. BFST impact on personal development

3. Differentiation of Self

Emotional reactivity

Managing emotions

Thought and emotions

4. Emotional Intelligence

Thinking differently/thoughtfulness

5. Anxiety

6. Nuclear Family Emotional Process

Family relationships

7. Multigenerational Transmission Process

Genograms

8. Triangulation

9. Individuality and Togetherness

Table 4.2 Step 6: Looking for patterns across cases

Main Themes	Participant A	Participant B	Participant C	Participant D	Participant E	Participant F
BFST impact on clinical work	*	*	*	*	*	*
BFST impact on personal development	*	*	*	*	*	*
Differentiation	*	*	*	*	*	*
Emotional intelligence	*	*	*	*	*	*
Anxiety	*	*	*	*	*	*
Nuclear family emotional process	*	*	*	*	*	*
Multigenerat-ional transmission process		*	*	*	*	*
Triangulation		*		*	*	
Individuality & togetherness	*	*				

necessary for a therapist to have complete emotional autonomy to be effective. He just

needs to be more autonomous or less reactive than the family" (p. 283). Essentially, "a

goal of therapy is for one or more family members to think more objectively about

intense emotional processes, that is, for family members to reflect as well as feel" (p.

284). In other words, it is a goal of therapy for clients to be able to use their emotional

and intellectual systems which means the therapist has to be mature in these areas in order to lead their clients. "Both psychoanalysis and differentiation of self in one's family of origin enhance a therapist's ability to monitor the effect of his own emotional functioning on his clinical work" (p. 286).

All the participants made reference to the impact of studying BFST on their clinical work with clients. Most of the participants spoke about their introduction to BFST in the Master's program that stirred their interest. This interest and desire for greater understanding was fulfilled later when they started the Doctoral program where an entire course was devoted to BFST, and also the inception of the Bowen Club after the course ended. Some participants had previously decided to practice other models, but after their encounters with BFST in Dr. Burnett's practicum reported that they were unable to think outside these concepts, and eventually grew to appreciate BFST concepts. Several of the participants made reference to how the study of BFST impacted them as the "self of the therapist", while others spoke about how the experience of studying BFST changed their presence and thought pattern in the room with clients.

Participant A. In my clinical work, the experience of sitting down with someone and not feeling like it's my responsibility to change a specific part of their interactional cycle or change something about them ohm, that's incredible to me like, I've had, I feel like it's transformed, I am totally a beginning clinician, I don't work full time as a therapist or anything like that so you know I have less clinical experience as some of the people in the program perhaps or other people who worked in the field for years so you know I really see myself as a beginner but I feel like that transformed my presence in the room, how I connect with clients ohm, ohm, I think it's kind of yeah opened up different

kinds of possibilities and the kinds of conversations we can have . . . .

Participant B. I think that I can see this in so many more aspects of life on a daily basis, day to day, that not only can I help my client ohm, by reducing my anxiety in the room knowing where it's coming from, but I can try to help them reduce theirs, I'll feel successful in that.

Participant C. I think this class, and learning these concepts has really helped me, I mean, it's really helped develop who I am as a therapist. I think that this is you know, this is another model, but this model particularly has helped me to like I feel it flows natural, like I don't have to have a book to open up to read about this concept to say I am going to incorporate this in this way, in this fashion, it's already, it comes natural for me.

Participant D. Ohm, I kind of, I feel like it's just kind of a way of life and I use it everywhere. Ohm, I conceptualize cases a lot with other people since I'm like T.A.ing (Teaching Assistant) and stuff, ohm, so I do talk with students about conceptualizing cases through Bowen.

Participant E. And it's been really helpful in understanding and conceptualizing the cases that I work with and not being so ohm, oh this is the way it is, or they're not making change or what I see or deem to be change doesn't necessarily they seem to like deem it change, and like its allowed me to be more present, and like be with my clients and not focused so much on what I should be doing, or what I should be doing in the therapeutic like context but more so understanding how things work at like the larger system.

Participant F. Ohm, every day, in therapy, every single day.

Bowen Family Systems Theory impact on Personal Development

There is much truth to Kerr and Bowen's (1988) claim that "increasing factual knowledge about one's family is an important component of becoming more of a self" (p. 287). The BFST course provided the avenue for Marriage and Family Therapy students to gain factual knowledge about themselves, their family of origin and previous generations. This affected the way they think and eventually led to a change in the way they regulated their emotions and behavior. Kerr and Bowen (1988) posited that "people can try to make themselves feel differently about themselves and others, but the most effective and durable approaches to modifying feelings and attitudes seem to require changes in the way people think" (p. 254). Irrespective of the source of the change, Bowen believed that "it is important to recognize that significant changes in physical and psychological functioning occur as a result of more ability to be a 'self' in one's more emotionally significant relationship systems" (p. 338).

All six participants shared an experience of how the study of BFST impacted their personal development. Several of the participants spoke about how the concepts helped them "to become better", "grow into the person they want to be", become "calmer", "happier", "more patient", "thoughtful", and gained "inner peace". They also shared how this personal impact has affected how they are now able to think and respond differently in the various relationship systems in which they are embedded. Some participants likened their personal experience of studying BFST to an experience of transcendence and something spiritual as it feels like a way of understanding life.

Participant A. . . . once I started to understand, everybody's behavior in terms of survival and adaptation and dealing with the forces of individuality and togetherness

ohm, I found (a) it was more interesting to look at the world that way and (b) ohm, I felt

calmer, and happier and more connected to people . . . .

Participant B. I feel like it was always a struggle for me, so I feel like the Bowen

ideas are definitely taking me forward to becoming a better person.

Participant C. So, ohm, I try my best not to let their anxiety be my anxiety which

is a daily, it's a daily ohm, process, but I think I'm much better as a result of doing this

class.

Participant D. Oh, for sure I didn't have ohm, the awareness that I do now, of

like what to, how to see the, ohm, relationships and the patterns of the relationships and

interactions that I have with people in my family, so I notice like ohm, I always knew that

like, I was, ohm, kind of more serious older sister kind of thing before, but now I can see

a lot of the "whys" behind it, ohm, my own, like my own responsibilities as far as like

how I react to other people, and things like that, so ohm, so I see more clearly through

Bowen lens my place in my system and how I am.

Participant E. I think that even my husband has noticed too that, ohm you know

after all these years being in school and especially studying Bowen that I've been able to

like become more of a chill person and not so like ohm, intensified . . . .

Participant F. So once you understand the concept and you're able to see the

patterns over and over again, there's some things that are just not fighting, it creates an

inner peace.

Differentiation of Self

According to Kerr and Bowen (1988), "the more a therapist has worked on

differentiation of self in his own family, the more he will be able to get closely involved

with a clinical family and still be 'outside' the system" (p. 285). In other words, the therapist has to possess their own significant level of differentiation in order to work with clients and remain differentiated. "A successful effort to improve one's level of differentiation and reduce anxiety strongly depends on a person's developing more awareness of and control over his emotional reactivity" (p. 127). This means that the emotional system is no longer responding automatically, instead the emotional system is being regulated by the intellectual system. Kerr and Bowen (1988) supported this view stating that "when people can be in contact but still emotionally autonomous, it is their intellectual systems that are largely influencing the character of their thoughts and actions" (p. 256).

The theme of differentiation of self also includes the themes of emotional reactivity, managing emotions, and thought and emotions. The awareness of differentiation of self was recognized as the foundation for the improvement that several of the doctoral students experienced both within themselves and in their various relationships. While only one participant made reference to "managing emotions", all participants made reference to either "emotional reactivity" or "differentiation of self", and several made reference to both themes. Differentiation of self was often mentioned in relation to anxiety, as having the ability to help others reduce their anxiety. Several of the participants spoke about how their differentiation of self has improved in their family and other relationships, while others highlighted the fact that attaining differentiation of self is an ongoing process, and they are constantly working on themselves in that regard.

Participant A. Ohm, yeah, I guess this is a continuation of what I'm saying ohm, ohm, whereas before if for whatever vague sense I had of differentiation I perceived

myself as highly differentiated from my family, I do not use that word to mean what I now, and how I now understand it, you know. So now, previous, before studying Bowen Theory I thought that I had broken the ties, broken the patterns and that I was really different from my family and ohm, so when I went through the process of ah, of understanding how, of ohm how all of those relationships still had such a strong influence on me it was at first devastating, I was at first really upset about the idea that I had not escaped out of those tensions but then I found a great deal of forgiveness in it and in seeing the whole human race you know . . . .

Participant B. I think that our understanding, our self differentiation, can break us from so much anxiety, ohm, can help to transcend us across to be more successful in those understandings.

Participant C. Yes, I think that it has, I think that the, the main thing is ohm, the differentiation of self for me, that's probably been the biggest concept that I took away. . .

Participant D. Ohm, definitely it has, ohm I'm more cognizant of like when I'm interacting with anyone in my family, or ohm, in my romantic relationship, or friends that I can see how my reactions ohm, specifically more emotional reactions like how I can be more thoughtful about them ohm, whereas before it was just like I didn't know the difference of being thoughtful and reactive like emotionally reactive, it was just all reaction.

Participant E. Well after definitely I've noticed when, when, whose anxiety is it?, been able to differentiate it between my own and theirs and not necessarily allow ohm, their anxiety to feed into mine or like their anxiety impact me in a way that it's not helpful or useful for my own functioning.

Participant F. I was very reactive to them, ohm, I entered this program I think in part to figure out my family, I was very reactive to them, now I have just accept them for who they are and I am a lot less reactive now.

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence essentially is:

The ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth. (Mayer & Salovey, 1997, p. 5)

Emotional intelligence was further refined by Salovey et al. (2002) to be "the ability to process emotion-laden information competently and to use it to guide cognitive activities like problem-solving and to focus energy on required behaviors" (Salovey et al., 2002, p. 159). Emotional intelligence and differentiation of self are similar in their regulation of the emotions by the intellect. The higher a person's level of differentiation, the greater their ability to use their intellectual system to guide their emotional system. Kerr and Bowen (1988) advocated that "differentiation depends on the ability to distinguish between intellectual functioning and emotional functioning and on the ability to act on the basis of intellectual functioning when one wants to" (p. 336).

The themes of thinking differently and thoughtfulness were categorized as emotional intelligence. It is significant to note that every participant made reference to thinking differently, or were able to solve problems or regulate their behavior or the behaviors of others through their thoughtfulness, or looked at the greater system before

making decisions instead of just going with their feelings. They also stated that this was as a result of their learning and understanding attained from their study of BFST. Their ability to think differently and new found thoughtfulness was also incorporated into the functioning of their family relationships, how they raised their children, their work relationships and their therapeutic relationship with clients.

Participant A. I can think about, say if I think about my own family, ohm, I watch myself ohm, get just as tied up in knots, just as angry, just as scared, just as insecure, just as everything that I ever did before, but I think then after and I can even observe it happening and feel like oh my God why can't I do something different, why do I feel ohm like this but, even just in terms of even afterwards to be able to think about it and see it in context and then can perhaps incorporate why it felt differently maybe whereas before I may really have felt some really intense emotion and then may have had another effect for longer period of time, this I can see, I can place that in a different frame work so ohm, I can manage it differently.

Participant B. Yeah, it's actually the process of thoughtfulness and using what I now know with the eight concepts and tenets of Bowen idea of anxiety, what natural systems means to him, ohm, I can incorporate those ideas into the way that I am thinking through my thoughtfulness . . . .

Participant C. . . . right now it helps me to, this helps me to process things differently like, like I, like it influences me in a way, I can't even really express it, like it's so ingrained in me now, like I think the way I think is different . . . .

Participant D. I Ohm, yeah so like I was seeing before I couldn't see, identify a lot, ohm, and now I try to at least, ohm, push myself more thoughtfully, and like take a

second, how does that make sense in this context and all that stuff, but yeah, so now I can be more thoughtful.

Participant E. I try to like you know almost stop and take a step back and be like okay, how is this conversation useful, are we just like you know venting about it to each other, so and I think you know like everyone's you can't be perfect at it but, if you are able to take that step back and realize like okay, like am I feeding into someone else's or, is their anxiety feeding into me, and be able to like think that way allows you to become more thoughtful and hopefully less reactive.

Participant F. Ohm, yes, now I'm not just reacting for the moment and just wanting a short term solution, now I'm able to look at the greater system and why I'm reacting that way and what is creating that feeling and then what I could do, and sometimes I don't do anything at all so it does help a lot.

Anxiety

Kerr and Bowen (1988) defined anxiety "as the response of an organism to a threat, real or imagined. It is assumed to be a process that, in some form, is present in all living things" (p. 112). However, "well differentiated people have enough confidence in their ability to deal with relationships, even emotionally intense ones, so that they neither avoid them nor become highly anxious in encountering them" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 118). In a systemic light, one family member's ability to be more of an individual can reduce the anxiety level in the family system. Kerr and Bowen advocated: "The ability to be more of self breeds confidence that one can call upon that ability when it is important to do so, a fact that appears to play some role in reducing a person's anxiety" (p. 132).

All participants made direct reference to how the study of BFST impacted their

level of anxiety. Anxiety was a theme on its own, no other themes were paired with anxiety. Participants reported that much of the anxiety they absorbed from their family system has reduced significantly since their study of BFST. Anxiety was mentioned in relation to genograms as this pictorial demonstration supported the understanding of how anxiety functioned in the family and prepared them to respond differently. One participant was able to reduce both her anxiety and her mother's after applying her thoughtfulness, and further helping her mother to gain this understanding. The reduction of anxiety was also experienced in the therapy room with clients. As the therapists reported experiencing their own reduction in anxiety, they felt better equipped to help clients reduce their own anxiety.

Participant A. . . . becoming aware of myself in relation to my family's anxiety, seeing how much ohm, how much different things in my life triggered my anxiety, ohm, I felt less negative about myself for feeling those things because I could understand better why I experienced that and I have, I have begun to privilege lessening my anxiety in certain situations . . . .

Participant B. I have a lot more patience with my mother, ohm, I understand now that the intergenerational transmission process has definitely ohm alluded her to a much anxiety which has carried down the pipe, kind of like a trickle down ohm from my grandmother, three generations, my grandmother, to her, to now me. Ohm, so it helps me to better control my anxiety personally, and ohm I can again be more patient with her. Bring that into my family now, my nuclear family ohm, has shown a lot of prospect where I am a lot less anxious as well.

Participant C. I think the concepts of anxiety and differentiation of self really helped me to put things into perspective and it also showed me that, how much of an influence I have on circumstances when I don't have to actually ohm, overtly manipulate a situation.

Participant D. I've been able to just kind of take a step back and ask a little bit with like Burnett's voice in my head "whose anxiety is it?" and ohm, so that's helped me kind of like I know, my part, and in my perpetuating the cycle of what I usually do and react with my mother ohm, so I've trying just a little bit to change a little bit of my reactions with that.

Participant E. There's so much, ohm, definitely to understand whose anxiety is it, I think that's for me has been key because then if I can understand maybe where the anxiety is coming from I can maybe take a step back and see how its impacting me and if it is impacting me how do I choose to react, you know I have that ability to react so.

Participant F. I'm in a lot better at it now, ohm, I am able to recognize myself and honor my feelings. I'm also able to do it very well at work, not only with my clients but with the agency itself, so it makes me, ohm, I am very good at reading the anxiety and using it for me, not against me.

Nuclear Family Emotional Process

According to the operations of the nuclear family emotional process, Kerr and Bowen (1988) believed "when a parent and a child function in ways that promote emotional separation, differentiation is maintained between the generations" (p. 200). However, if emotional separation is undermined between the parent and the child, then anxiety and undifferentiation will be transmitted from that generation to the next

generation. "The lower the level of differentiation of a family, the greater the average level of activity of the three patterns of emotional functioning that contribute to symptom development" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 165). The three patterns of emotional functioning that lead to symptom formation are illness in a spouse, conflict in the marriage, and impairment in one or more of the children.

As the doctoral students experienced the impact of studying BFST and changed, so did their functioning in their family systems. Their change influenced a change in their family system as well. All six participants made reference to their functioning in their family before studying BFST and after studying BFST. This change has also impacted their marital relationships. After careful analysis, several participants made reference of how their family of origin operated and expressed their intentional attempt to do things differently with their family and children.

Participant A. I don't think that my, I don't think my role has changed, I think that I have recognized what that role is, and so I make different choices about it. Ohm, around the time, like I referred to there being a crisis in the family and ohm, I don't know how accurate this is but the way I understand this, I was really really trying to step out of the role I was in, I had decided that I, I just, I felt that in order to protect my relationship with my mother I needed to not be in that role with her because it ohm, her calling me I associated with like just suffering, you know like, that sounds bad but ohm, but you know I didn't want to hear all the things she had to say and so I thought you know in order to have a different kind of relationship I needed to step out of this role with her . . . .

Participant B. And in my personal life ohm, being together with my family knowing that it's okay to be an individual. I don't have to do the same thing my partner is doing, we can come back and we can all be together and explore togetherness as doing something as family unit as well as I'm okay to be out there on my own doing the things individually and that was always being an only child with this kind of nervous anxiety with family.

Participant C. So before I'd be like ohm, this for my husband, pick up these socks, pick up these socks, pick up these socks and its like, okay . . . , is it necessary for him to pick up these socks? Why am I getting so anxious about him not picking up his socks, he's not anxious about it, is it, you know just putting those things into perspective and you know, by doing that has changed how our relationship function, and by me being less anxious about it, wow, those socks get picked up, look at that you know, so, I find that it helps in those regards.

Participant D. Ohm, I would think a big part of what has, other than like the concepts and talking about the theory in specific, but doing my own genogram, ohm, and the class, and over and over again even afterwards and having other people process that with me, ohm, has been super impactful in my overall, ohm, understanding of Bowen, and how its impact my life because I've been able to like reflect on it personally and in my own family.

Participant E. Ohm, one thing is interesting like, on top of all that stuff that I just gave you, like I am, ohm, I am six months, well five and half months pregnant, so ah, I think that knowing that I'm pregnant has allowed me to be less reactive because in a sense like I, I see how its impacted me like my own anxiety, like how I like relate to

others, ohm, and it's been like an interesting process not even conscious I would say of more like being, I think like not letting things bother me because like I know like it's not helpful for like me to be upset cause it's not going to be helpful for the baby so ohm, I've noticed that like while I have become less reactive and less like emotional about things like and anxious about things, I would say like my husband's taking on more the anxiety role, which is fine cause he doesn't have like a big growing baby in him . . . .

Participant F. Ohm, I learn that you can fight your family and you can't run away from things because running away keeps them there so pretty much dealing with it and just trying to deal with it the best you can.

Multigenerational Transmission Process

Kerr and Bowen (1988) proposed that "knowing more facts about one's multigenerational family and knowing the people in the family better can change how a person thinks about his family and about himself" (p. 300). This change occurs because this thinking leads the individual to respond differently in their various relationships. Kerr and Bowen (1988) argued further: "Every person's basic level of differentiation reflects an *outcome* of relationship processes that are anchored in the multigenerational emotional system" (p. 228). Every individual contributes to the creation of the basic level of differentiation of the future generations of their family by their ways of functioning that promote and undermine emotional separation of other family members (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

Majority of the participants spoke about their examination of their genogram and the pattern of behavior of their mother's generation and their grandparent's generation. This examination has led to some conscious decisions about doing things differently for

these participants. The drawing of genograms has revealed the operation of anxiety within their families over generations, and for some it highlighted how similarly they were functioning to their mothers. One participant saw the genogram as the most helpful tool that led to her thoughtfulness. Considering the personal impact of the genogram, one participant reported that she draws a genogram for almost every client she sees. This visual demonstration helps the clients to realize their family's functioning and put things into perspective for themselves that they may not have seen before she said.

Participant B. . . . I am thinking through my thoughtfulness as well as knowing that through my self differentiation and my constant working on myself, through my levels of self differentiation of my family, oh, I am able to grow into the person I want to be, thus raising my daughter how I want her to be raised with these understandings, so that I don't make the same mistakes that my mother did with me.

Participant C. Ohm, and one of the things about the Bowen, the family, the Bowen Family Systems is that incorporating the family diagram and seeing how there is so many similarities of different generations, I thought I was so much different than my mother, but I realize now that I'm not that different, and the way I do things is very similar to her so in order for me to change some of the things that I don't necessarily like a lot of stuff from my mom, but the things that I don't like, that I didn't appreciate growing up I can change from those things based off of the concepts that I have learned in the program or in that class.

Participant D. Ohm, through the genogram, I mean the genogram is the tool that has been the most helpful, ohm, to be more thoughtful ohm, especially when I'm learning about it in the moment with my family, so yeah, the genogram is very important.

Participant E. I've noticed that like you know the way I relate to my mom is a little bit different, we used to, you know like we were close, but I guess somewhat emotionally reactive to each other, so I moved to Florida to like gain like miles away from her and like have some of that like separation, ohm, like I never like cut her off but like I needed that distance to kind of manage the intensity between us, so now that I'm like having my own child I've kind of maybe like picked up the phone more and call my mom and like not be reactive when she's been like irritating to me so, yeah . . . .

Participant F. Ohm, I guess a strong situation would be with my son's father, my ex, and, just different, we're very different, we're the same people and we react very passionately and before I was just thinking oh, he's just a bad person in this way, he cares more about his job, he cares more about this, and I was very angry at him, but then looking through his genogram and the whole processes I was able to understand him and his family and how he basically is, what he is and certain periods of time, it was okay, we were okay, but then as I grew with the same thing we weren't okay, ohm, so I was no longer angry at him, now I just accept him for who he is and the anger went away, it was replaced by understanding, we can't be together, just because our genograms don't fit anymore, ohm, but it went from not hatred, but a very strong distaste to, to understanding.

Triangulation

Triangles occur when "one relationship becomes intertwined with others through a process of *triangling*, so that the relationship process in families and other groups consists of a system of *interlocking triangles*" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 134). When anxiety increases, people can become more reactive and more likely to form triangles to

reduce their anxiety and stabilize the system. However, "if people can maintain their emotional autonomy, triangling is minimal, and the system's stability does not depend on it" (p. 139). Well differentiated people do not rely on triangles for security, so their triangles are low-key and flexible (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Kerr and Bowen argued: "The process of detriangling depends on recognizing the subtle as well as more obvious ways in which one is triangled by others and in which one attempts to triangle others" (p. 149). This speaks to the awareness that comes from differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. Kerr and Bowen (1988) informed us that "nobody detriangles completely from any triangle, but the process of achieving even small increments of change can result in some increase in one's basic level of differentiation" (p. 157).

Three of the six doctoral students spoke about triangles and triangulation in their interview. One participant experienced triangulation with her mother as recent as the morning of the interview. She was able to use her thoughtfulness to reduce both her anxiety and her mother's anxiety, thereby remaining detriangulated. It was evident from the interviews that the participants were aware that the lower the level of differentiation of self the greater the level of anxiety, and the need for triangulation to reduce the anxiety. Bowen Family Systems Theory has given the participants the tools to manage their own triangulation and also help those who are triangulated.

Participant B. Yes, ohm, this morning, I used that concept ah, of ohm, not only triangulation, I was trying to, my mother was trying to triangulate me into some decisions that she had to make, as well as she was becoming very anxious and through my thoughtfulness I was able to calm her down just a little bit so we could both reduce her

anxiety. So I feel I am not just helping myself, but now I am helping her understand a little bit as well.

Participant D. Ohm, everything, ohm, I kind of feel like Bowen Family Systems Theory has given me the words and tools to describe what I have always already seen, but didn't know what to see or what to call it, ohm, so I learned kind of ohm, what is entailed when I am stuck in a triangle with my parents or whoever, ohm, and it's given me like I would say tools, more tools than anything.

Participant E. I've been able to like take a step back and really like think about my role, ohm, and how I function with my own family especially in ohm, more so now in my like work relationships at ohm, at work I am able to see you know, where the anxiety goes, the triangles, the you know level of differentiation between all the different therapists and myself so it's interesting in the work environment, in the work place to see the relationships and how, ohm Bowen Family Systems has you know helped me understand those relationships and my role there.

Individuality and Togetherness

There is an interplay between the life forces of individuality and togetherness that leads to emotionally significant relationships operating in balance. "Relationships are in balance because each person invests an *equal* amount of 'life energy' in the relationship and each retains an *equal* amount of energy to direct his life separate from the relationship" (Kerr & Bowen, 1988, p. 65). It is essential to highlight that "a well differentiated person has a togetherness force and is responsive to togetherness determined cues from others. His action or inaction in response to those cues, however, is strongly self-determined" (pp. 70-71). Differentiation basically describes "the process by

which individuality and togetherness are managed by a person and within a relationship system" (p. 95). In other words, Kerr and Bowen stated that a person's level of differentiation is dependent on their ability to regulate their life forces of individuality and togetherness, considering that higher levels of individuality are strongly associated with higher levels of differentiation of self.

Individuality and togetherness is one of BFST eight concepts. No other themes were categorized with this theme. Only two of the six doctoral students made reference to the concept of individuality and togetherness in the interview. The understanding of human behavior in terms of individuality and togetherness led one participant to view the world more interesting that way, and secondly, led her to feel calmer and happier, and more connected to others. The study of BFST led one participant to embrace individuality both personally and while in relationship with her clients. One participant expressed that the ideas of individuality and togetherness are huge, and useful in helping clients.

Participant A. . . . I perceived all those pulls on me and it helped me to see ah that that was what was going on and I kind of acknowledged what a difficult place that was for me to be, and how it did kind of make it almost impossible to know what I really wanted, and so I just kept looking and in the end I picked something, I made a compromise, and I choose a day that I could leave that it wouldn't be a whole two weeks thing, and I decided not to go with the other people, I found my own trip so I could added my own little adventure in the middle of it. It felt like an experience of ohm, of ohm, towards individuality, I was going to go to a foreign place and then go off on my own within that foreign place and it, and then I was like, I was okay with it because I know, because of all those pulls and tensions on me I couldn't find a perfect way to make the

decision but I, but thinking about it did a, I think I did the best I could and I had the perfect vacation . . . .

Participant B. . . . the ideas of individuality and togetherness is absolutely huge, and I think that I can see this in so many more aspects of life on a daily basis, day to day, that not only can I help my client ohm, by reducing my anxiety in the room knowing where it's coming from, but I can try to help them reduce theirs, I'll feel successful in that.

Considering the focus of this study, it is essential to highlight how the participants connected differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. Both concepts speak to the functioning and regulation of the emotional and intellectual systems. This led to the connection being evident as participants referenced their personal and professional development in relation to their emotional and intellectual functioning. The following are illustrations of how each participant experienced the connection between their differentiation of self and emotional intelligence.

Participant A. . . . to find the thinking and the emotion that lay beneath that, and finding great relief, and understanding oh God . . . .

Participant B. Before ohm, I think that I would just react, I think it was all about emotional reactivity, I don't think there was any thought process.

Participant C. I would say that it's probably at a 8, 9, whereas before it was probably at a, before I would probably thought it was at a 8, 9, but now after studying I know that before it was probably at a 5, 6 . . . .

Participant D. I am now more thoughtful about my emotions, ohm, so before where I would just be reactive emotionally . . . .

Participant E. . . . now I would describe myself, like somewhat, like I would describe myself like more thoughtful about how to react . . . .

Participant F. I am a lot more logical, I am less reactive to them, ohm, more understanding for sure.

Summary

The data analysis for this qualitative study used the six steps of IPA to generate nine themes that represent the lived experiences of Marriage and Family Therapy students who study BFST. The nine themes are: (1) BFST impact on clinical work, (2) BFST impact on personal development, (3) Differentiation of self, (4) Emotional intelligence, (5) Anxiety, (6) Nuclear family emotional process, (7) Multigenerational transmission process, (8) Triangulation, and (9) Individuality and togetherness. Six of the nine themes are concepts from BFST and the other three also captured the essence of the participants' expressed experience of studying BFST. The three themes of BFST impact on clinical work, BFST's impact on personal development and emotional intelligence were expressed by all the participants.

The doctoral students reported an awareness and improvement in their differentiation of self, reduction in their anxiety, and an increased ability to help clients do the same. The doctoral students were also better able to remain detriangulated in their personal relationships and work relationships, along with embracing their sense of individuality and togetherness. These benefits have led to noticeable improvements in their functioning within their nuclear family emotional process and multigenerational transmission process. In essence, the doctoral students reported that the study of BFST has provided numerous intrapersonal, interpersonal and professional benefits including

the improvement of their differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. The Bowen Club has also provided a valuable support for the continuation of the discussion, understanding, and instituting of the BFST concepts for the doctoral students after the course ended.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The Impact of Studying Bowen Family Systems Theory

on Marriage and Family Therapists

There is some research concerning BFST, the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy, and MFTs, but I did not encounter any research on exploring the lived experiences of Marriage and Family Therapy students who study BFST, nor the role of differentiation and emotional intelligence in the practice of Marriage and Family Therapy. For that reason I chose to conduct this research study to explore the lived experiences of Marriage and Family Therapy students who study BFST, and relate those experiences to concepts of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. My interest in this lies in understanding how these students made sense and meaning from their experience of studying BFST, and also to see how their sense making related to differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. The purpose of this study was to highlight the benefits of studying BFST, and the importance of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence for MFTs. In this chapter I discussed the impact of studying BFST on Marriage and Family Therapy students, some limitations of the study, implications for future research, implications for clinical practice, implications for future training, and reflections and concluding remarks.

The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (2014) sets standards for the ethical practice of MFTs as described in their code. This is known as the code of ethics. The practice of Marriage and Family Therapy is governed by both law and ethics. This is the means by which the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) seeks to gain and honor the client's trust in MFTs. According to the

American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (2014), MFTs are defined by their "enduring dedication to professional and ethical excellence, as well as the commitment to service, advocacy, and public participation" (p. 1). "Professional competence in these areas is essential to the character of the field, and to the well-being of clients and their communities" (p. 1).

The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (2014) outlined aspirational core values for MFTs. These aspirational core values speak to the membership of the AAMFT as a professional association and also serve to advise the various practice and services of MFTs. The core values are different from the ethical standards that govern the profession. It is intended for these values to provide an aspirational framework within which marriage and family therapists may pursue the highest goals of practice" (p. 2).

The aspirational core values are:

1. Acceptance, appreciation, and inclusion of a diverse membership.

2. Distinctiveness and excellence in training of marriage and family therapists and those desiring to advance their skills, knowledge and expertise in systemic and relational therapies.

3. Responsiveness and excellence in service to members.

4. Diversity, equity and excellence in clinical practice, research, education and administration.

5. Integrity evidenced by a high threshold of ethical and honest behavior within Association governance and by members.

6. Innovation and the advancement of knowledge of systemic and relational

therapies. (American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, 2014, p. 2)

The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (2014) considers the ethical standards of the profession to be "rules of practice upon which the marriage and family therapist is obliged and judged" (p. 2). There are nine ethical standards in total. The ethical standards are: responsibility to clients, confidentiality, professional competence and integrity, responsibility to students and supervisees, research and publication, technology–assisted professional services, professional evaluations, financial arrangements, and advertising.

I believe it is of pivotal importance to highlight the fact that the first ethical standard is responsibility to clients. This is clearly the most essential duty of MFTs. According to the AAMFT (2014) "Marriage and family therapists advance the welfare of families and individuals and make reasonable efforts to find the appropriate balance between conflicting goals within the family system" (p. 2). In order to help clients, MFTs must first find their balance between their emotional and intellectual systems before they can help clients do the same. Responsibility to clients require that MFTs pay close attention to thirteen key matters: non-discrimination, informed consent, multiple relationships, sexual intimacy with current clients and others, sexual intimacy with former clients and others, reports of unethical conduct, abuse of the therapeutic relationship, client autonomy in decision making, relationship beneficial to client, referrals, non-abandonment, written consent to record, and relationship with third parties. The developmental processes of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence are the

essential abilities required to help MFTs fulfil their responsibility to clients as highlighted in these thirteen key areas.

Murray Bowen (January 1989) posited that "at its absolute optimum, theory and practice should be so well integrated that impersonal theory directs every step in therapy. A worthy theory has disciplined guesses about everything that has ever happened, that is happening now, or that will ever happen" (D. Papero, personal communication, January 17, 2014). For Bowen, his theory is not a theory about the way the world is, but a theoretic construct for understanding the world.

Noone (2015) posited that the concept of differentiation of self indicates "that the development of emotional autonomy is related to the differentiation of higher cortical systems and the capacity of an individual to utilize these systems in both regulating their emotional responsiveness and in assessing the environment more objectively" (personal communication, March 21, 2015). Differentiation of self is a developmental concept. The concept of differentiation of self describes developmental functioning and a person's ability to direct their life.

According to the data gathered in this study, the study of BFST led the students to an awareness of their families' values, norms, thoughts and patterns by way of examining their genograms. This multigenerational transmission process led them to think differently about the values, thoughts and patterns they want to maintain and transmit to their children. This speaks to defining of self. According to Kerr and Bowen (1988), if an individual has too much of the togetherness force this will create a fusion and hinder their individuality and the development of their own sense of self. In this same light, too much individuality can lead to distance and estrangement from one's family. For this reason,

there needs to be a balance between the forces of individuality and togetherness for the healthy development of one's sense of self. It is the sense of self that supports the differentiation of self.

Five of the six participants spoke about being less emotionally reactive since studying BFST. Emotional reactivity was categorized under the theme of differentiation of self. Based on their transcripts, this is what the participants expressed:

Participant A. . . . I had the absolute perfect trip, that's how I feel about it and I think it's ohm, it's partly because I was able to see what was happening and I guess really when I think about it, I didn't make a reactive decision, I didn't go one way or the other, ohm, because of what the other people's needs were, I balanced them as best as I could and I felt good about it.

Participant B. Before ohm, I think that I would just react, I think it was all about emotional reactivity, I don't think there was any thought process.

Participant D. Ohm, kind of like what I said before that I am now more thoughtful about my emotions, ohm, so before where I would just be reactive emotionally, and ohm, maybe I knew what the emotion was, or what another person's emotion was, now I can see a little beyond just the emotion . . . .

Participant E. I think like definitely before I would be, I was more reactive and less thoughtful, whereas now like I know what it means to be more thoughtful in hopes to be less reactive.

Participant F. I was very reactive to them, ohm, I entered this program I think in part to figure out my family, I was very reactive to them, now I have just accept them for who they are and I am a lot less reactive now.

It is evident here that the emotional reactivity was replaced by more thoughtfulness about emotions. This is an indication that emotional intelligence as in being intelligent with one's emotions has led to an improvement in differentiation of self.

Differentiation of self is basically demonstrating the ability to separate your emotions from your thought process. People who are undifferentiated experience a flood or fusion of feelings that prevent their ability to think clearly and logically. Papero discussed: "A major concept in the systems theory is developed around the notion of fusion between the emotions and the intellect. The degree of fusion in people is variable and discernable" (personal communication, January 17, 2014). Papero stated further: "The amount of fusion in a person can be used as a predictor of the pattern of life in that person." A person at the low end on the differentiation of self scale will have their emotions override their intellect in times of anxiety. Papero believed individuals at the high end on the scale will have some overlap of the emotions on the intellect, but there is still some distinction.

At the fusion end of the continuum "the intellect is so flooded by emotionality that the total life course is determined by the emotional process and by what 'feels right,' rather than by beliefs or opinions" (Bowen, 1985, p. 363). In this case the intellect operates as an attachment of the feeling system; the intellect is controlled by the emotions. People who are more differentiated are at the other end of the continuum-in terms of the separation between emotional and intellectual functioning. "Those whose intellectual functioning can retain relative autonomy in periods of stress are more flexible, more adaptable, and more independent of the emotionality about them" (Bowen, 1985, p. 362). These people cope better with stressful situations and have a more orderly

life course. They also experience success and "are remarkably free of human problems" (p. 362). Bowen stated further that "at higher levels of differentiation, the function of the emotional and intellectual systems are more clearly distinguishable" (p. 363).

It is key to note that this inability to separate one's own from others feelings also speak to the absence of emotional intelligence according to Salovey and Mayer's definitions for emotional intelligence. It is also essential to note that all the participants in the study made reference to how their role in their family changed after studying BFST, and their ability to think differently and be more thoughtful about their emotions. In essence, both their differentiation of self and emotional intelligence improved after studying BFST.

In response to question eight asking how would you describe your ability to identify emotions in yourself and others, and use that emotional state to facilitate your thinking after studying BFST, Participant B, C and D responded as follows:

Participant B. Yeah, it's actually the process of thoughtfulness and using what I now know with the eight concepts and tenets of Bowen idea.

Participant C. . . . right now it helps me to, this helps me to process things differently . . . .

Participant D. . . . before I couldn't see, identify a lot, ohm, and now I try to at least, ohm, push myself more thoughtfully, and like take a second, how does that make sense in this context and all that stuff, but yeah, so now I can be more thoughtful.

Emotional intelligence resembles this description as it is the ability to accurately perceive "emotions and use integrated, sophisticated approaches to regulate them as they proceed toward important goals" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 201). The ability to be

thoughtful and think differently speaks to being emotionally intelligent. Emotional

intelligence can be seen as the effective management of the emotional system. Bar-On

(1997) defined EI as a concept addressing

> . . . the emotional, personal, social, and survival dimensions of intelligence, which
>
> are often more important for daily functioning than the more traditional cognitive
>
> aspects of intelligence. Emotional intelligence is concerned with understanding
>
> oneself and others, relating to people, and adapting to and coping with the
>
> immediate surroundings to be more successful in dealing with environmental
>
> demands . . . . In a way, to measure emotional intelligence is to measure one's
>
> 'common sense' and ability to get along in the world . . . . (p. 1)

This is a thorough explanation of emotional intelligence and how it functions.

Differentiation of self is supported by an individual's ability to be emotionally intelligent.

An individual's ability to management their emotional system is known as

emotional intelligence. Goleman (1995) advocated that "there is an old-fashioned word

for the body of skills that emotional intelligence represents: *character*" (p. 285). It is this

character that regulates the emotional system and the intellectual system making the

individual adaptable to life and daily functioning with others. Based on personal

communication with Papero (January 17, 2014) there are two aspects of integration: the

emotion and intellect and maturity immaturity. For emotion and intellect Papero

advocated that there needs to be "awareness of each but separation with the ability of

intellect to direct emotion effectively". As for maturity and immaturity, Papero submitted

that there needs to be "awareness of each in self, and the ability to place the mature side

of self in charge of the immature side of self" (personal communication, January 17, 2014).

Based on the expressed lived experiences of the participants concerning how the functioning of their emotional and intellectual systems have changed, the connection between differentiation of self and emotional intelligence became visible. In terms of differentiation of self, they reported that the fusion between their emotions and intellect reduced significantly, stating they do not "make reactive decisions", become "emotional", nor "emotionally reactive" as they did in the past. The participants reported they have become "more thoughtful" about their emotions and reactions, "more thoughtful in hopes to be less reactive", "process things differently", and process their emotions. These excerpts indicate a difference in the functioning of these participants' emotional and intellectual system, which also speak to an increase in their differentiation of self as supported by their emotional intelligence, their ability to effectively manage their emotional system.

This connection was evident in that while emotional intelligence focuses on having the ability to be intelligent with one's emotions and the emotions of others, differentiation of self is the functional aspect of that ability. Their emotional system no longer functioned automatically, but became more regulated by the intellectual system, allowing the intellectual system to use the emotional system competently to support problem solving, goal attainment, and relationship management. This is how emotional intelligence supports an individual's ability to be differentiated, hence the connection between both concepts for these participants.

With these findings, new information has revealed the connection between differentiation of self and emotional intelligence as presented by these participants. The significance of the connection and relationship between differentiation of self and emotional intelligence were surprising for me as the researcher. Recognizing this significant connection I coined the term *Differentiated Intelligent Emotions* as a more accurate description of the outcome of the study. In essence, *Differentiated Intelligent Emotions* is the ability to use cognition to regulate emotions in oneself and others in order to create solutions and accomplish goals. This promotes an individual's ability to make distinctions between their emotional and intellectual systems. This awareness of distinction leads the intellect to direct the emotions more effectively. This manner of thinking that translates into a manner of daily functioning eventually leads to emotional and intellectual maturity that impacts everyone in relationship with this individual. This is an essential developmental process for the success and adaptation to life.

Differentiated Intelligent Emotions indicate that the intelligent emotions of the individual are not merely present, but functioning, hence the term 'differentiated' to describe the distinction between the intelligence and the emotions. The terms 'differentiated' and 'intelligent' were strategically placed in front of the term 'emotions' to describe the role and the operation of the emotions. Like differentiation of self and emotional intelligence, *Differentiated Intelligent Emotions* for the MFTs is a way of thinking and processing emotions that translates into a way of being intrapersonally, interpersonally, and professionally with clients in the therapeutic system.

The lived experiences of the participants in the study support the claim that learning is a process that can occur when there is application and practice based on the

knowledge gained. Learning ultimately leads to change in thought and behavior. In other words, the knowledge of BFST and its application led to learning for these six doctoral students. Studying one's own family can serve as a crucial learning experience. Kerr and Bowen (1988) postulated that

> a person with the ability and motivation can, through a gradual process of learning that is converted into action, become more of a self in his family and other relationship systems. This process of change has been called 'defining a self' because visible *action* is taken to which others *respond.* (p. 107)

These excerpts represent the evidence of the participants' learning from studying BFST.

Participant A. That's the last time I visited them ohm, last ohm, I guess last August, and then I took the class and just absolutely loved it, fell head over heels with the ideas ohm, found it has really changed my experience of the world and you know just kind of in general and myself ohm . . . .

Participant B. Yes, I absolutely do. Ohm, I feel like even just the last couple of weeks in the Bowen Club, ohm and meeting with Dr. Burnett, I learned about adaptation and manipulation and realizing that has just such a huge piece of how we deal with everything from working here at the school, with my studies, in dealing with people at my jobs, in dealing with my home life, I feel like those ideas have manifested and they continue to facilitate my further thoughts and understanding so as to the person I want to become and, ohm, how I'm moving forward in the future in a more thoughtful way.

Participant C. Ohm, and one of the things about the Bowen, the family, the Bowen Family Systems is that incorporating the family diagram and seeing how there is so many similarities of different generations, I thought I was so much different that my

mother, but I realize now that I'm not that different, and the way I do things is very

similar to her so in order for me to change some of the things that I don't necessarily like

a lot of stuff from my mom but the things that I don't like, that I didn't appreciate

growing up I can change from those things based off of the concepts that I have learned

in the program or in that class.

     Participant D. Everything, ohm, I kind of feel like Bowen Family Systems

Theory has given me the words and tools to describe what I have always already seen,

but didn't know what to see or what to call it, ohm, so I learned kind of ohm, what is

entailed when I am stuck in a triangle with my parents or whoever, and it's given me like

I would say tools, more tools than anything.

     Participant E. And it's been really helpful in understanding and conceptualizing

the cases that I work with and not being so ohm, oh this is the way it is, or they're not

making change or what I see or deem to be change doesn't necessarily they seem to like

deem it change, and like its allowed me to be more present and like be with my clients

and not focused so much on what I should be doing, or what should be doing in the

therapeutic like context but more so understanding how things work at like the larger

system.

     Participant F. I learn that you can fight your family and you can't run away from

things because running away keeps them there so pretty much dealing with it and just

trying to deal with it the best you can.

     It is safe to reason that these students could also be experiencing these lasting

impacts of studying BFST as a result of their active involvement in the Bowen Club. The

Bowen Club provides that continued avenue for discussion, reasoning, understanding and

learning of the theoretical underpinnings, practical applications and therapeutic

applications of BFST for these students. Hence their ability to experience the indelible

effects of studying BFST.

Limitations of the Study

This study has presented pertinent information concerning the lived experiences

of Marriage and Family Therapy students who study BFST; however, there were some

limitations. One limitation revealed the relative lack of awareness or discussion among

the participants about the specifics of emotional intelligence, and how as a construct it

too was affected by the study of BFST. Also, a more diverse sample of students from

another Marriage and Family Therapy programs would expand these findings, and add

diversity of other teaching and learning opportunities.

Implications for Future Research

This qualitative study explored the lived experiences of Marriage and Family

Therapy students who studied BFST, and related those experiences to concepts of

differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. A longitudinal study could also follow

about five years' time to assess if the essence of these participants' lived experience of

studying BFST has changed, and, if so, how. Perhaps their family members could also be

included in this study as witness to the change, and how such change impacted them and

their family system.

Further research could explore the experiences of these therapist's clients to see

how the techniques of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence in their therapists

impacted them, and their ability to develop their own differentiation of self and emotional

intelligence. This would add to the existing literature on the role of differentiation of self

and emotional intelligence in the therapeutic system and also the influence of the therapist on their clients.

Other possible research could assess the ability of these therapists' clients to develop their own differentiation of self and emotional intelligence to direct their life, create their own solutions and meet goals. This could be evident in things like their length of stay in therapy, and their repeat visits.

Implications for Clinical Practice

The implication of MFTs possessing healthy levels of differentiation and emotional intelligence is of paramount importance to the success of their therapeutic relationship with clients. Successful therapeutic relationships indicate that the clients meet their goal for therapy, and are able to build solutions for their presenting problem. BFST can be considered as a theory that encourages the development of the self of the therapist with its introspective concepts. This systemic introspection has the potential to increase the therapist's differentiation of self supported by emotional intelligence as they make the appropriate changes, and consequently become more emotionally intelligent and differentiated in their personal and therapeutic relationships.

Papero in his presentation on "The Theory in the Bowen Theory" advocated strongly that the therapist needs to demonstrate emotional objectivity and emotional neutrality (personal communication, January 17, 2014). This is where the therapist is able to separate fact from opinion and bias. This relates to differentiation of self and its ability to separate thoughts from emotions (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). Bowen believed the therapist can be emotionally objective by observing the case and not trying to fix the problem or get caught up in the content. Papero supported this view and submitted that the therapist

is to create a climate where people can exercise their emotional capacity and not have a corrective emotional experience (personal communication, January 17, 2014).

In order to maintain a non-anxious presence in the room with clients, restrain their emotions to be objective, non-judgmental, to reduce the client's anxiety, to remain detriangulated, to promote differentiation of self for clients, and think in terms of systems void of emotionality requires a high level of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence for the therapist. This ability to remain differentiated helps the therapist to separate their feeling from their thought and allows them to think clearly in helping the client to see the perpetuation of patterns in their family. Emotional intelligence provides the ability for the therapist to intelligently regulate their emotions and process the emotions of their clients. Without differentiation of self and emotional intelligence the therapist could become automatically led by their emotional reactions void of intellectual guidance that would create legal and ethical problems for the therapist.

The importance of emotional intelligence for MFTs cannot be overstated. Emotional intelligence is a crucial part of our emotional and intellectual systems. A MFT has to attend to their emotions in their process towards self-development. Emotional intelligence gives the therapist the ability to remain aware of their feelings, and be able to reflect on their feelings and use them to solve problems and regulate behaviors in themselves and others. Emotional intelligence gives the therapist the ability to demonstrate empathy, and insight into how others think, delay their gratification and remain optimistic for the well-being of their clients.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) informed us that individuals who are emotionally intelligent "can be thought of as having attained at least a limited form of positive mental

health" (p. 201). It is essential for MFTs to possess emotional intelligence as it will provide the ability to be aware of their feelings and the feelings of others, to be open to both positive and negative internal experiences and label them and communicate them when appropriate. This awareness can support efficient regulation of feelings within themselves and others. By this means, the emotionally intelligent therapist will find that clients take pleasure in their company and leave them feeling better. "Thus, emotionally intelligent individuals accurately perceive their emotions and use integrated, sophisticated approaches to regulate them as they proceed toward important goals" (p. 201). This is a vital skill and technique for MFTs.

Considering the exposure of MFTs to compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress and burnout, it is essential to examine the impact of these circumstance for the therapist and client, and how this problem can be alleviated. Compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burnout can have adverse impact on the personal and professional functioning of the therapist, the therapeutic system and consequently the treatment outcome. Negash and Sahin (2011) submitted that "the marriage and family therapist is responsible and ethically obligated to identify and implement ways in which he or she can prevent and remedy compassion fatigue" (p. 1). If "the best interest of the client is not exercised throughout the therapeutic process, it results in an unethical and substandard level of care" (Negash & Sahin, 2011, p. 6).

The American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (2014), Code of Ethics Subprinciple 3.3 stated the requirement that ''marriage and family therapists seek appropriate professional assistance for issues that may impair work performance or clinical judgment.'' The level of self-development, differentiation of self and emotional

intelligence of the therapist will affect how they function in the therapeutic system with clients. Their functioning will directly influence the emotional and intellectual state of the client, and help or harm the therapeutic process and goal attainment. Negash and Sahin (2011) posited: "Often, interface issues can be avoided with self-monitoring and the establishment of stable emotional boundaries; however, that can prove to be difficult if the marriage and family therapist suffers from compassion fatigue" (p. 7).

Figley (2002) advocated that "self-care is an indispensable defense mechanism and remedy (Figley, 2002a, 2002b). Self-awareness and self-monitoring are essential for recognizing when changes in behavior or work life are needed (Kramen-Kahn & Hansen, 1998)" (p. 9). This self-awareness and self-monitoring refers directly to the therapist's ability to exercise emotional intelligence in being differentiated from the therapeutic system. This state of coordination between the emotional and the intellectual system serves to promote self-care and wellbeing, consequently preventing compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and burn out. The application of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence can be considered as a self-care model.

Implications for Future Training

Considering the indelible impact and benefit of studying BFST for these students, it is recommended that all Marriage and Family Therapy programs incorporate BFST within their curriculum. The findings suggest that all MFTs, regardless of their model of practice, gain exposure to BFST in order to enhance their differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. This also speaks to the importance of the therapist's fluidity and flexibility to integrate various models as the need arise when working with a wide variety of client population in various contexts.

The incorporation of BFST training within corporate organizations is also recommended based on the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and professional benefits of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence, and the evidence from this study that both can be enhanced through training. This training could essentially lead to the development of self, greater team functioning, greater efficiency, higher productivity for employees, leaders, and all the stakeholders. Differentiation of self and emotional intelligence are necessary tools for the development of employees and leaders. The application of these tools can lead to an organization's employees possessing *Differentiated Intelligent Emotions*. In addition to their critical thinking, reasonable decision making, proficient performance, working collaboratively, and goal oriented team productive environment can also be enhanced through this training. This approach stands to save the organization time, money and resources that could have been used in addressing high turnover rates, high absenteeism, frequent sick leaves, low performance, low morale, motivating employees, frequent conflict management, problem resolution efforts, and even possible law suits.

Reflection and Concluding Remarks

This study provided me with the opportunity to explore the lived experiences of six Marriage and Family Therapy doctoral students who studied BFST and relate their experiences to concepts of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence. My interest in focusing on this phenomenon came from my impactful lived experience of studying BFST as well. The study of BFST led me through a transformative process where my intellectual system gained a more efficient regulation of my emotional system. This has consequently led to an increase in my level of differentiation and emotional intelligence,

and ultimately my *Differentiated Intelligent Emotions*. This has further created a significant reduction in my anxiety and ability to be triangulated. As a result I have also experienced greater efficiency in my clinical work, personal development, functioning in my nuclear family emotional process, multigenerational transmission process, and balance between my individuality and togetherness life forces. The very concept of being able to manage the fusion between my emotional and intellectual system (Bowen, 1985), and accurately assessing my emotions using rational approaches to regulate them and work towards my goal (Salovey & Mayer, 1990), helped me to complete this study. The application of these concepts allowed me to set my emotions of frustration and exhaustion aside so that they would not override my intellectual system and ability to reason through the various challenges to find appropriate solutions to meet my goal.

This study enhanced the understanding of how the study of BFST impacted differentiation of self and emotional intelligence in Marriage and Family Therapy students, how the study of BFST impacted their functioning in their family and other relationships, and thirdly, the essential role of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence for MFTs and the therapeutic system. Although I was familiar with the concepts of differentiation of self from my study of BFST, and the concept of emotional intelligence from other professional training, this study revealed new information about the significant connection between both concepts for these participants. Based on the participants' responses, it was revealed that differentiation of self is indeed supported by emotional intelligence. As such, I saw it fit to coin the term *Differentiated Intelligent Emotions.*

I believe the findings of this study can be extended to mental health professionals, social workers and others in the helping profession as differentiation of self and emotional intelligence are necessary abilities for their roles within the therapeutic system. Based on the findings and wealth of potential benefits of studying BFST, the concepts of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence, it is my hope that future research and training will continue to enhance the progression of the Marriage and Family therapy field, the well-being of clients and professional competence of MFTs.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Participant Consent Form

Consent form for Participation in the Research Study Entitled
Exploring the Lived Experiences of Marriage and Family Therapy Students who Study
Bowen Family Systems Theory, and Relating those Experiences to Concepts of
Differentiation of Self and Emotional Intelligence: An Interpretative Phenomenological
Analysis

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What is the study about?
You are invited to participate in a research study. The goal of this study is to explore the lived experiences of Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) students who study Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST), and relate those experiences to concepts of Differentiation of Self and Emotional Intelligence.

Initials: _____ **Date:** _____ Page 1 of 3

Why are you asking me?
We are inviting you to participate because you are a doctoral student in the Family Therapy program at Nova Southeastern University who has completed the Systemic Family Therapy 3 doctoral class with Dr. Burnett, and who has voluntarily chosen to participate in the Bowen Club led by Dr. Burnett. There will be six participants in this study.

What will I be doing if I agree to be in the study?
You will be asked to participate in an open-ended interview for about forty-five minutes with possible calls afterwards in case clarification is required. You will be called once in case clarification is required. This call will be take approximately 15 minutes to gain any necessary clarification. These calls will be made as soon as the need for clarification is identified in the transcript. You can decide if you want to be contacted or not in case clarification is required for your interview. You will be interviewed by the researcher, Mrs. Tracey-Ann Spencer Reynolds. Mrs. Spencer Reynolds will ask you questions about your experience of studying Bowen Family Systems Theory, and relate your experience to concepts of differentiation of self and emotional intelligence.

Is there any audio or video recording?
This research project will include audio recording of the interview. This audio recording will be available to be heard by the researcher, Mrs. Tracey-Ann Spencer Reynolds, personnel from the IRB, and the dissertation chair, Dr. Burnett. The recording will be transcribed by Mrs. Tracey-Ann Spencer Reynolds in her home office. Mrs. Spencer Reynolds will use headphones while transcribing the interviews to guard your privacy. The recording will be locked in a safe cabinet with key in Mrs. Spencer Reynolds's home office. The recording will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study. The recording will be destroyed after that time by deleting. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the tape as described in this paragraph.

What are the dangers to me?
Risks to you are minimal, meaning they are not thought to be greater than other risks you experience every day. Being recorded means that confidentiality cannot be promised. Sharing your experiences may make you anxious or bring back unhappy memories. If this happens Mrs. Spencer Reynolds will try to help you. If you need further help, she will suggest someone you can see but you will have to pay for that yourself. Your information will be kept with the strictest of confidentiality unless otherwise required by law. The IRB of NSU and the related agencies may review the research records. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your identity. If you have questions about the research, your research rights, or if you experience an injury because of the research please contact Mrs. Spencer Reynolds at (954) 534-6417. You may also contact the IRB at the numbers indicated above with questions about your research rights.

Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?
There are no benefits to you for participating in this study.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?
There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

Initials: _____   **Date:** _____

How will you keep my information private?

The interview process will not ask you for any information that could be linked to you. Pseudonyms such as Participant A, Participant B, and so on will be used to protect your identity and maintain confidentiality. The transcripts of the interview will not have any information that could be linked to you. As mentioned, the tapes will be destroyed 36 months after the study ends. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The IRB, regulatory agencies, or Dr. Burnett may review research records.

What if I do not want to participate or I want to leave the study?

You have the right to leave this study at any time or refuse to participate. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to participate, you will not experience any penalty or loss of services you have a right to receive. If you choose to withdraw, any information collected about you before the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the conclusion of the study and may be used as a part of the research.

Other Considerations:

If the researchers learn anything which might change your mind about being involved, you will be told of this information.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

By signing below, you indicate that

- this study has been explained to you
- you have read this document or it has been read to you
- your questions about this research study have been answered
- you have been told that you may ask the researchers any study related questions in the future or contact them in the event of a research-related injury
- you have been told that you may ask Institutional Review Board (IRB) personnel questions about your study rights
- you are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it
- you voluntarily agree to participate in the study entitled *Exploring the Lived Experiences of Marriage and Family Therapy Students who Study Bowen Family Systems Theory, and Relating those Experiences to Concepts of Differentiation of Self and Emotional Intelligence: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.*

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Participant's Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B

Recruitment Flyer

This research study is requesting the participation of Marriage and Family Therapy students who studied Bowen Family Systems Theory

Research question:

How do MFT students experience the study of BFST, and relate that experience to concepts of Differentiation of Self and Emotional Intelligence?

Would you be a good fit for this study?

- NSU doctoral students in the Marriage and Family Therapy program

- You have completed the Systemic Family Therapy 111 – Bowen Theory course

- A member of the Bowen Club

- Males and females

- English speaking students

- Students 18 years or older

- Students who are willing to participate in the study

- Students who are able to meet for 45 minutes to complete the interview

- Participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time

What will participants experience in this study?

- You will be asked to participate in an open-ended audio-recorded interview

- The interview will last for about forty five minutes

- Your responses will be categorized into themes for data analysis purposes

- Your identification will be kept confidential

If you are interested in participating in this research study, or you would like to gather more information, please contact NSU student Tracey-Ann at 954-534-6417

Appendix C

List of Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me about your experience studying Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST)?

2. How would you describe your functioning in your family and other relationships before studying BFST?

3. How would you describe your functioning in your family and other relationships after studying BFST?

4. Do you think your study of BFST has impacted you? And if so, how has it impacted you (a) personally, and (b) in your relationship with others?

5. Can you tell me what you learned from studying BFST?

6. Can you tell me about a recent time when you used BFST concept(s)?

7. How would you describe your ability to identify emotions in yourself and others, and use that emotional state to facilitate your thinking before studying BFST?

8. How would you describe your ability to identify emotions in yourself and others, and use that emotional state to facilitate your thinking after studying BFST?

9. Do you think your study of BFST has impacted your ability to process your emotions and use it to guide your thinking? And if so how?

10. Can you tell me about a situation when you experienced strong emotions and how you handled those emotions?

11. Is there any other relevant information you would like to share about your experience studying BFST?

Biographical Sketch

Tracey-Ann Spencer was born in Jamaica, West Indies and migrated to the United States in 2005. She graduated from the University of the West Indies in 2004 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and minor in Sociology. Spencer attended the Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship at Nova Southeastern University where she received a Master of Science degree in Human Resource Management. It was during this period that Spencer realized that her interest and desire to serve in the helping profession never decreased. As such she pursued further studies in Marriage and Family Therapy by attending the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences where she earned a Master of Science degree in Marriage and Family Therapy. Spencer's curiosity and thirst for greater understanding of the theoretical underpinnings, foundational concepts and therapeutic applications increased. This thirst led her to pursue a Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy at Nova Southeastern University's Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

As a Marriage and Family Therapist she attended multiple camps geared towards grief therapy for children, worked with clients in Nova Southeastern University's Brief Therapy Clinic, conducted anti-bullying training with students at Olson Middle School, and did group and individual therapy with clients at Broward Health-Behavioral Health Sciences department. Spencer also gained a wealth of administrative experience from her full time employment at Nova Southeastern University working with executives, vice presidents, deans, faculty and staff members. Her clinical skills include but are not limited to conducting grief therapy with children, psychoeducational training with children in school settings, conducting therapy with families, couples, groups, clients in

mental health institutions, and also women and families in religious organizations. Spencer developed a greater appreciation for Bowen Family Systems Theory and Solution Focused Brief Therapy over time, and incorporated both in her therapeutic work with clients. She considers herself an eclectic Marriage and Family Therapist based on the case, context and presenting problem.

Spencer has presented at the International Family Therapy Association's 21st World Family Therapy Congress, and local seminars like the NSU's Bowen Club–50 Shades of (mur) Ray: Variations on a natural systems approach to everyday clinical issues. Her future work include expanding an effective and efficient systemic dialogical context and therapeutic atmosphere for clients to build their solutions and skills to achieve their goals for therapy and life. Her research interests include issues and phenomena that affect the religious community, concepts of Bowen Family Systems Theory, emotional intelligence, and the functioning of human relationships. Spencer is interested in educating and training other professionals in the helping profession on these and other related topics. Spencer is a Marriage and Family Therapist Registered Intern in Florida. Her hobbies include reading, designing, baking, cake decorating, and millinery creations.