

Narrative practice: Encouraging preferred identities with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Alberta, 1999

Bachelor of Social Work, University of Calgary, 2001

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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### **Supervisory Committee**

Dr. Catherine Richardson, School of Social Work  
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## **Abstract**

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This thesis examines narrative practice in relation to identities of male youth (12-18) who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours. To answer the following research question: How do male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and participated in a treatment program narrate their experience of changes in their identity? I conducted semi-structured interviews, with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and are residing at Counterpoint House. I employ a narrative analysis and draw from White's re-authoring map for categories of analysis. Results are examined through a Foucauldian lens and demonstrate that the participants experienced a shift in their identity.

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## **Dedication**

To all of the educators who saw that this was possible. Thank you for finding creative ways to lay the foundation that helped to make this happen.

Mlle. G. Perreault

Mrs M. Petryga

Mlle. S. Arthurson

Dr. L. Anderson

Dr. L. Davis

## Introduction

In western societies, current therapeutic approaches with male youth who have perpetrated sexually abusive behaviours are largely predicated in practices that include diagnosing and modifying behaviours (Belsky, Myers & Bober, 2007; Jenkins, 2003; Myers, 2002, 2006; Ryan & Lane, 1997). Consequently, such practices pathologize and totalize youth's identities (Belsky, Myers & Bober, 2007; Dickerson, 2010; Klekar & Ting, 2004; Mahoney & Daniel, 2006). Moreover, youth's identities and their actions are deemed to be interrelated which mitigates youth's responsibility for their behaviours thereby rendering youth as agentless (Coates & Wade, 2004; Davies, 2000; Jenkins, 2003). However, narrative practice, which is informed by Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge, Bruner's literary theory, postmodernism, poststructuralism, and social constructionism, challenges "truth" claims and negative identities and creates opportunities for youth to take a position on their behaviours, demonstrate agency, and move toward a preferred identity. (Besley, 2002; Besley & Edwards, 2005; Brown & Augusta-Scott, 2007, Buckman, Kinney & Reese, 2008; Dickerson, 2010; Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Drewery, Winslade & Monk, 2000; Freedman & Comb, 1996; Freedman & Couchonnal, 2006; Foote & Frank, 1999; Furlong, 2008; Madigan, 1992, 2011; Milner, 2001; Nylund & Nylund, 2003; Tavano, 2006, 2007; Walsh 2010; White, 2004, 2007; White & Epston, 1990)

As a therapist who works with youth involved with the justice system and takes a narrative approach to my work, it is not unusual for me to hear youth make negative statements regarding their personhood. Based on these experiences, I wonder whether narrative practice encourages preferred identity with youth involved in the justice system. However, I do not have access to youth who are in conflict with the law and are strictly participating in narrative therapy. As such I developed the following research question: How do male youth who have engaged in sexually

abusive behaviours and participated in a treatment program narrate their experience of changes in their identity? To answer this question, I conducted interpretive, qualitative, semi-structured interviews with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and are residing at Counterpoint House. In the context of this research project, identity is fluid and formed in relation to our social world.

In chapter one, I describe my twelve year journey as a social worker. I explain how my work, with youth who are in conflict with the law, shifted from traditional practices into narrative practice. I also speak of my desire to gain a better grasp of narrative practice's theoretical orientations and how the theory translates into practice. I wrap up this section with a case example to demonstrate the kinds of conversations that I have been having with youth involved with the justice system, which will highlight how I have come to my research question. In the following section, I introduce Counterpoint House, a residential treatment program for male youth who have perpetrated sexually abusive behaviours. I also introduce Philip Naude, therapist with Counterpoint House with whom I consulted about Counterpoint House's programming and narrative practice in relation to male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours. I then discuss my rationale for conducting my research with the youth who are residents at Counterpoint House.

In chapter two, the literature review, I introduce narrative practice and provide an in-depth discussion of narrative practice's theoretical orientation and assumptions; followed by a close examination of the narrative maps, externalizing conversations and re-authoring conversations. I then provide an overview of the literature pertaining to narrative practice in relation to youth involved with the law with a focus on youth who have perpetrated sexually



abusive behaviours. I will conclude with an overview of the body of literature which is critical of narrative practice and provide counter-arguments to these critiques.

In chapter three I discuss my research aims, the ontology and the epistemology which informs my research, and the methods I intend to employ to explore and analyze my research question. Subsequently, I address the ethics of this project. In the following section I describe the recruitment and interview process. Following this I introduce my analytic framework, which is based upon White's (2007) re-authoring map. I conclude this chapter by outlining the sources I foresee influencing my analysis.

In chapter four I introduce my field texts. I begin by providing a brief definition of the term *field texts* and continue by discussing my choice in language. I then present, in detail, each field text. I end the chapter with a discussion regarding the purpose of my field notes.

In chapter five, I provide a summary of the project's results, followed by an examination of Reissman's (1993) concept of representation and the influence of power as they relate to the interviews. I then discuss my consultation with Philip Naude and examine the impact of his use of language and collaborative style on participants' identities. Following this, from a Foucauldian perspective, I examine the discursive and institutional practices that were involved in participants' choice to attend and participate in Counterpoint House's treatment program. I conclude this chapter by discussing the limitations of my project and provide recommendations.

## Chapter 1 Self-location

### *Introduction*

In this chapter I provide a brief overview of my journey as a social worker, which includes my own introduction to narrative practice and my endeavours to locate my work with youth involved with the justice system in narrative practice. I have found that by taking a narrative approach, I often hear expression of negative identities. To illustrate this, I provide a brief case example to exemplify the kinds of conversations I am having with clients. These experiences have made me wonder whether narrative practice encourages preferred identities with youth involved with the justice system. I was given the opportunity to explore these ideas at Counterpoint House, a residential treatment program for male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours. In the final section of this chapter, I will introduce Counterpoint House and my research question.

### *Self-location*

In July 2001, I was hired as a therapist at the Centerpoint Program, a government agency providing assessment and treatment to youth who are involved in the justice system and court mandated to attend counselling. Fresh out of school with a Bachelor in Social Work, I was eager to “help”. Given that both of my undergraduate practica were located in government agencies that provide mental health services to adults and youth in conflict with the law, and where psychiatric services, diagnosing and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) were the primary modes of practice, I did not question these methods in my place of employment. Rather, I engaged youth in conversations regarding their thoughts in relation to their criminal behaviours and considered youth in terms of diagnostic labels. It soon became evident that these practices were not very helpful - youth did not seem to be engaged in conversations regarding their

thoughts and feelings in relation to their criminal behaviours. Youth's responses were minimal and they frequently failed to attend their appointments, or stopped attending altogether.

Furthermore, these approaches left me feeling like an interrogator and disrespectful of youth's experiences. And, after attending a two-day workshop on narrative practice, I began to scrutinize these approaches.

As previously mentioned, in October 2004, I had the opportunity to attend a two-day workshop where Michael White, co-founder of narrative practice, presented the theoretical orientations of narrative practice and demonstrated how these theories could translate into practice. This two-day workshop was my first introduction to narrative practice. After the two days, I was confused and inspired. On the one hand, I was puzzled by White's discussion of Michel Foucault's ideas regarding *disciplinary power* and *power/knowledge*. On the other hand, I was struck by the respectfulness that imbued narrative practice and I was taken by how engaging narrative conversations were. I was intrigued by narrative practice and began incorporating the narrative practice of externalizing conversations into my work. In doing so, I noted the following: youth seemed interested in discussing the problem(s) that he or she was experiencing as an entity which was separate from him or her, although, highly influential over them. Additionally, I noted that my days were significantly busier, as youth were regularly attending their appointments. Furthermore, I felt like I was engaging youth in conversations that were much more respectful, which is in accordance with my values.

Although youth were engaged, it seemed to me that I was only able to take conversations so far; I was able to engage youth in conversations which externalized the problem, discuss the effects of the problem, thereby allowing youth opportunities to take a position on the problem. This being said, I struggled with formulating questions which would lead to rich story

development thereby highlighting neglected aspects of their lives. Emphasising neglected aspects of youth's lives is crucial, as stories that counter the problem story can lead to preferred identity, subsequently helping youth to see that they can lead lives that do not include harming others and themselves. Despite my ongoing participation in workshops and readings related to narrative practice, I realized that I struggled to fill the gap between theory and practice and thus decided that pursuing a Master in Social Work informed by critical social theory would give me an opportunity to study narrative practice's epistemology. Fortunately, I was invited to study at the University Of Victoria's School Of Social Work.

Through my course work and readings, I have gained a greater understanding of the theories which inform narrative practice. Additionally, my concerns with dominant therapeutic practice were not only solidified, but heightened. On the one hand, I became very concerned about how subjugating dominant therapeutic practices are, and, on the other hand, held hope as it seemed to me that narrative practice could offer mandated youth who are in conflict with the law liberation from negative identities.

#### *Case example*

I recall working with one young man, who was in an open custody facility, however, his anger put him under constant threat of being returned to the young offender centre. Initially, I tried to treat him with CBT; however, this treatment seemed to be unproductive and ultimately created frustration for us both. After being introduced to narrative practice, I began to question my thinking regarding "treatment" and changed my approach. Through the narrative practice of externalizing conversations, this youth and I uncovered the kinds of situations that would provoke anger, which allowed space for him to speak of the injustices that were occurring in the facility, the anger these injustices evoked, his preference for anger to not get the better of him,

and the meaning that he ascribed to these experiences. Prior to our conversations, this young man concluded that given his criminal behaviours and angry reactions in the group home, he was a “bad” person and saw little hope of being any other way. The more I engaged youth in narrative conversations, the more I heard expressions of negative identities, such as “I am a bad kid/person”, “I am a loser”, and/or “I am useless”.

Due to these experiences, I believe that adolescents who are in conflict with the law generally are not feeling very positive about how they and others, such as parents, have come to know them as people. The experience of being in trouble with the law, combined with other life experiences, has left them with negative ideas regarding their personhood. Yet, it seems to me, that through externalizing conversations, young people seem to be able to take a position on the problem, responsibility for their actions, and step into a more preferred identity. However, this assumption is based on my observations. To learn more, I decided to conduct research that examines narrative practice in relation to the identity of youth who are in conflict with the law.

Although I make efforts to locate my work in narrative practice, I did not think it was appropriate for me to conduct research with my clients. I was in a position of power and subsequently, youth may feel that they cannot be honest with their responses and, as a result, provide answers that they I might be seeking (Gaddis, 2004). Thus, in the fall of 2009, I approached my colleague Philip Naude, a psychologist at several adolescent, forensic settings, including the residential group home Counterpoint House. Naude has extensive training in narrative practice and locates the majority of his work in narrative practice. Naude was supportive of my research ideas and felt that residents at Counterpoint House would be receptive to participating in my research.

### *Counterpoint House*

In the following section I introduce Counterpoint House. As an Alberta Health Services employee I have basic pre-existing knowledge of the program, such as the demographics of the population. However, to obtain more in-depth information about the program and to gain insight into Naude's work, I consulted with Naude. Prior to the interview, I developed a list of questions. On the day of the consultation (July 16, 2013) I interviewed Naude at my office for approximately two hours. With Naude's permission I audio recorded our conversation, thereby ensuring accurate information. To avoid any biases, I consulted Naude after I conducted my interviews with George and Darren.

Counterpoint House, a residential treatment facility with Alberta Health Services, provides services to male teenagers (12-18 years old), who have been convicted under the Youth Criminal Justice Act (2001) of a sexual offence. Residents of Counterpoint House are serving legal disposition, including probation and custody. Most often, youth are court-mandated to attend counselling and are referred to the program by probation officers or staff from a youth custody facility. However, to attend Counterpoint House youth must agree to reside at the facility and participate in the program for a minimum of nine months. The programming at Counterpoint House consists of individual sessions, family sessions, group sessions, and public school. Staff are comprised of Forensic Counsellors, Edmonton Public School teachers, a psychiatrist with Alberta Health Service and Philip Naude, psychologist. According to Naude (personal communication, July 16, 2013), the overriding therapeutic approach at Counterpoint House is cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). Naude, who facilitates two groups and meets with residents for individual and family sessions, subscribes to CBT, however, his work is situated in narrative practice and draws heavily from Alan Jenkins' work, particularly *Invitation to*

*responsibility* (1990). Despite the philosophical incongruencies, what is apparent in speaking with Naude is that his world view is highly influenced by narrative practice's philosophical foundations.<sup>1</sup> Naude's language is not individualizing, pathologizing or totalizing, but rather, externalizing. For example, he does not refer to residents as "sex offenders," but as "youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours." Moreover, he seeks alternatives, such as a youth taking responsibility, to the problem stories. Lastly, Naude describes his work with residents as being collaborative and, when need be educational. Even though Counterpoint House's programming is not premised on narrative practice I would argue that residents were regularly exposed to narrative practice, particularly in individual and family sessions. As such, I feel that Counterpoint House is a good site to examine my research question: How do male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and participated in a treatment program narrate their experience of changes in their identity?

#### *Chapter summary*

Over the past decade, my worldview has undergone a transformation. This shift began with the introduction to narrative practice, and was followed by efforts to engage in narrative practice, and on-going professional development. It was not until my pursuit of a Master in Social Work that I gained a greater understanding of the differing ontologies and the implications of these worldviews. Through my course work I have gained a greater understanding of narrative practice's theoretical orientations. With this knowledge, I strive to locate my work in narrative practice. By engaging youth in conversations predicated on narrative practice, I have come to wonder whether narrative practice can encourage preferred identity with youth in conflict with the law. I have been giving the opportunity to conduct research at Counterpoint House. Given

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<sup>1</sup> This will become apparent when I go into detail about narrative practice in my literature review.

that Counterpoint House is not entirely predicated in narrative practice and the fact that residents at the group home have been convicted of sexual offences I developed the following question: How do male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and participated in a treatment program narrate their experience of changes in their identity? In the following chapter I will provide an in-depth discussion of narrative practice's theoretical orientations and how theory translates into practice.



## Chapter 2 Literature review

### *Introduction*

In this literature review I provide an in-depth examination of narrative practice's theoretical orientations and assumptions. I will then focus on two maps of narrative practice; *externalizing conversations* and *re-authoring conversations*. I have chosen these two maps as they are the two practices that I am attempting to learn. Following this discussion of theory and practice, I will provide an overview of the literature which addresses narrative practice with youth who are in conflict with the law, with a focus on male youth who have committed sexualized assaults. I finish this chapter by providing a review of literature that is critical of narrative practice, and provide counter-arguments.

### *Narrative practice*

Since the late 1960s, the idea of narrative has gained popularity in a variety of disciplines including history, psychology, anthropology, sociology, nursing, and social science research, to name a few (Riessman & Quinney, 2006). In this study, I am referring specifically to narrative practice as the therapeutic practice that was developed by Michael White and David Epston (Besley, 2002; Madigan, 2011; White & Epston, 1990). In the book, *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*, White (1990) dedicates a portion of the first chapter to present Jerome Bruner's work on literary text analogy and Michel Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge, concepts that have remained prominent in the development of narrative practice (Besley, 2002; Besley & Edwards, 2005; Brown & Augusta-Scott, 2007, Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Comb, 1996; Foote & Frank, 1999; Furlong, 2008; Madigan, 1992, 2011; Milner, 2001; White, 2004, 2007; White & Epston, 1990). In addition to the writings of Bruner's and Foucault's work,

narrative practice draws from postmodernism, with an emphasis on social constructionism and poststructuralism (Besley, 2002; Besley & Edwards, 2005; Brown & Augusta-Scott, 2007; Buckman, Kinney & Reese, 2008; Dickerson, 2010; Drewery, Winslade & Monk, 2000; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Freeman & Couchonnal, 2006; Milner, 2001; Madigan, 2011; Nylund & Nylund, 2003; Tavano, 2006, 2007; Walsh 2010).<sup>2</sup>

### *Theoretical orientations*

#### *Text analogy*

In developing narrative practice, White and Epston (1990) drew from Jerome Bruner's analysis of literary texts, more specifically Bruner's *text analogy* (Carey & Russell, 2003; Madigan, 2011; White & Epston, 1990; White, 2007). According to White and Epston, text analogy proposes that "in order to make sense of our lives and to express ourselves, experience must be "storied" and it is this storying that determines the meaning ascribed to experience" (White & Epston, 1990, p. 9-10). In other words, our lives are arranged into a story, which consists of events that are sequenced across time (past, present and future) and organized according to plots or themes (Carey & Russell, 2003; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Madigan, 2011; Tavano, 2006, 2007; White & Epston, 1990). By performing these stories we express selected aspects of our lived experiences and neglect other parts. These selected stories become dominant stories which shape our own, and others', conclusions regarding our identities (Carey & Russell, 2003; White & Epston, 1990; White, 2007). These dominant stories are neither neutral, nor do they naturally occur, but rather are discursively shaped.

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<sup>2</sup> I acknowledge that this is not an exhaustive list of Narrative practice's theoretical underpinnings, however I am limiting my focus to the theories I have found to be most frequently addressed in the literature.

*Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge*

In his book *Discipline and punish*, Foucault (1977) examines western society's history of power. Foucault suggests that since the sixteenth century, power has shifted from *sovereign power* to *disciplinary power*. Sovereign power is often centralized, possessed only by a few and developed and implemented from the top down. Sovereign power's purpose was to oppress, impose upon, prohibit, and coerce its subject. For example, if someone behaved in a manner deemed to be criminal, punishment was decided and executed by the few, inflicted directly onto the perpetrator's body, and carried out in a public manner, as a means to enforce social control. However, over the past three centuries or so, power has shifted from the public sphere, where the goal is to inflict pain on the body, to a private matter, with the intent to cure the soul (Foucault, 1977; White, 2004). Foucault refers to this power as *disciplinary power*, whereby individuals are being shaped by social norms, while simultaneously constructing and circulating social norms. In order to accomplish assent, disciplinary power relies on the following technologies: *hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and the examination*.

Foucault (1977) describes *hierarchical observation* as a “technique of multiple and intersecting observation, of eyes that must see without being seen; using techniques of subjection and methods of exploitation, an obscure art of light and the visible was secretly preparing a new knowledge of man” (p. 171). In other words, hierarchical observation is a network of intersecting, yet anonymous observations, which we are all subjected to, and by which we are shaped. Foucault (1977) refers to Jeremy Bentham's *Panopticon*, an architectural design for a prison, as a metaphor for hierarchical observation in society. The building is circular in shape, with the prisoners' cells occupying the circumference; each cell has two windows. At the centre of the panopticon is a glass tower. As the cells are lit up by the exterior windows, the people in

the tower are able to observe the occupants of the cells, however, from the occupant's position, the observers are obscured (Foucault, 1977). According to Foucault (1977), the panopticon is

an architecture that would operate to transform individuals; to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them to alter them (p. 172).

In order for disciplinary power to achieve this goal of knowing and altering individuals it requires *normalizing judgement* and *the examination*.

*Normalizing judgement*, a technique of disciplinary power, is the technique most frequently referenced by White (1990; 2004; 2007). White (2004) interprets Foucault's idea as follows:

modern power acts through normalising judgement to constitute life – that is to form lives, to fashion lives, to shape lives, or to manufacture lives that reproduce the constructed norms of contemporary culture. In participating in this normalising judgement, people are active in the policing of their own and each other's lives, and are deeply implicated in the mechanism of social control that are characteristic of modern power (p. 169).<sup>3</sup>

In other words, normalizing judgement is predicated on the idea that individuals' behaviours are measured and quantified in relation to social standards, and, to one another; value is placed upon individuals' abilities, while simultaneously being differentiated from one another. Additionally, as normalizing judgement defines socially acceptable behaviours, it also defines abnormal behaviours, thereby reflecting what Foucault refers to as *dividing practices*. For example,

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<sup>3</sup> White refers to disciplinary power as modern power, hence I will refer to disciplinary power as modern power from this point onwards.

categorizing an adolescent as a paedophile creates and/or emphasizes the differences between the youth and his peers, thus labelling him to not be “like-us” (Myers, 2002).

Normalizing judgement is an effective technique of modern power as it encourages individuals to meet normative standards “through a variety of discursive and institutional practices...they come to desire the rewards that meeting these standards make possible” (Adams, 2003 p. 96). Therapy is an example of discursive and institutional practices. Adams suggests that therapeutic practices produce “subjects who are “normal”, who live normality”, and most importantly, who find it hard to imagine anything different” (p. 95). In other words, therapeutic practices are meant to encourage youth to believe that they *want* to fit with the social norms (Adams, 2003). In short, through the recruitment of individuals into the process of normalization, they contribute to their own making, which ideally is in line with social norms.

The final technology of modern power is the combination of the hierarchical observation and normalizing judgement. Foucault (1977) refers to this combination as *the examination*. The examination requires individuals to subject themselves to interrogation. In the context of therapy, this is often referred to as an assessment. Individuals' responses to the questions make them knowable to therapists, who in turn employ a normalizing gaze, in which he or she compares and contrasts individuals' information to a predetermined set of standards, such as those outlined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* (1994). In short, the examination situates individuals as observable, measurable objects, which individualizes and constructs truths about his or her identity. In the case of adolescents convicted of perpetrating sexualized violence, the examination constructs a truth which fixes the nature of youth's identity as a paedophile and/or abuser (Myers, 2002). Moffatt (1999) suggests that “within this simple technique lies a profound interrelationship of knowledge and power” (p. 222).

From a Foucaudian perspective power and knowledge are inseparable and subsequently one produces the other and vice a versa (Brock, 2003; Foucault, 1980). Foucault perceives truth as a product of this interrelationship. The interplay between power/knowledge and truth is maintained through the creation and dissemination of discourses, thereby producing universal truths. We are constantly experiencing the constitutive effects of power. Consequently, disciplinary power goes unquestioned and dominant discourses are internalized thereby rendering ourselves as subjects. Foucault referred to this process as *subjectification*, whereby individuals are actively involved in their self-formation. In other words individuals monitor their thoughts and behaviours, and act in manners that conform to his or her understanding of social norms; however, individuals may seek out guidance from therapists. In the case of youth at Counterpoint House, it is often the courts that mandate counselling. Regardless, whether individuals actively seek out guidance or are court mandated, therapists' knowledge and advice are socially constructed (Madigan, 1992).

Furthermore, through disciplinary power's techniques of normalization and surveillance, homogeneity is encouraged. Representation of knowledge and experiences are limited to a set of available discourses. As such, modern power encourages people to construct their lives, relationships, and identities in accordance with social norms. As a result, individuals are an effect of power, while simultaneously an agent of power (White, 2004). As a matter of course, individual knowledges and experiences that do not fit with dominant discourses are discounted and obscured, particularly in a therapeutic setting. In this context, therapists are deemed to be experts who possess the knowledge that will assist clients to discover his or her "true" selves and resolve clients' problems. Knowledges possessed by clients are deemed as naive, low-ranking, or local, which consequently are dismissed (Foucault, 1980).

Foucault (1980) argues for the restoration of disqualified knowledges through what he refers to as *genealogy*: “A genealogy should be seen as a kind of attempt to emancipate historical knowledges from that subjection, to render them, that is capable of opposition and of struggle against the coercion of a theoretical, unitary, formal and scientific discourse” (Foucault, 1980, p. 85). In doing so, the effects of dominant discourses are examined and challenged; subsequently granting space to alternative knowledges.

Rather than be discouraged by Foucault's analysis, White (2004) writes that Foucault's work “opened up new avenues of inquiry into the context of many of the problems and predicaments for which people routinely seek therapy” (p. 155). White argues that modern power's reliance on people to enact and circulate dominant discourses render it a fragile structure. Rather than uncritically accept modern power, people can position themselves to change his or her role by questioning and subverting modern power. By refusing modern power, people are not reproducing culturally constructed norms in his or her relations and self-formation, and are positioned to contribute to social change. White (2004) suggests that professions, such as social work, psychology, medicine/psychiatry, and criminology, which have played a significant role in the influence of modern power, can engage in social change by practicing in manners that oppose modern power. For therapists, White and Epston (1990) offer narrative practice as a means to engage in a counter-therapy. In addition to being inspired by Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge, and Bruner's text analogy, narrative practice's theoretical orientations are also informed by *postmodernism*, *social constructionism*, and *poststructuralism*.

### *Postmodernism*

*Postmodernism*, a philosophical movement that emerged in the 1960s, and is associated with French philosophers such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Gilles Deleuze (Dickerson, 2010; Pocock, 1995). Postmodernism is a critique of modernist notions that knowledge is objective, external to the knower and waiting to be discovered and that once discovered, knowledge is deemed to be the ultimate truth, thereby rendering it reality or fact (Freeman & Couchonnal, 2006; Pocock; 1995). Notions of “truth”, “fact” and “reality” are contested. Rather there are multiple truths and realities; knowledge is relational and shaped through cultural contexts (Dickerson, 2010). For example, youth who have perpetrated sexualized offences may have also be described as caring and/or compassionate, good at school, protective - other ways of being which negates the totalizing effects of their sexually abusive behaviours. Lastly, postmodernism is a “top-down” (Walsh, p. 274, 2010) approach which examines how dominant ideologies shape individual’s worldviews (Walsh, 2010).

### *Social constructionism*

*Social constructionism* is a philosophy, which takes a critical view of our taken-for-granted ways of understanding of the world (Gergen, 1985). It encourages us to question our perceptions and assumptions about the way the world appears to be. Put in other terms, social constructionism is a philosophy that questions claims of truth, thereby challenging notions of essentialism, realism, and ontology, and in the therapeutic context, individualism. Knowledge is considered to be historical, specific to, and negotiated through, culture. (Besley, 2002; Dickerson, 2010; Gergen, 1985). As per Walsh (2010), social constructionism is a: ““bottom-up” perspective that considers how individuals and groups “create” their social worlds...We apply our beliefs from prior experiences to new input received from the environment” (p. 276). In



other words, truth is derived through social relations. As such, there is not one set of values, norms or ideologies that is established as the “truth,” rather there are multiple discourses (Gergen and Gergen, 2008). In a therapeutic realm, therapists are mindful that clients’ problems are contextual.

### *Poststructuralism*

Dickerson (2010) suggests that *poststructuralism* is encapsulated “within the postmodern, social constructionist philosophy. It is a distinct response to and a critique of structuralism” (p. 354). Poststructural philosophers challenge structuralism's scientific notions of realism, rationalism, totalizing vocabulary, and meta-narratives (Besley, 2002; Drewery, Winslade and Monk, 2000). Furthermore, poststructuralists proposes that “texts are open to multiple interpretations” (Besley, 2002, p. 131). Additionally, poststructuralists are interested in the idea of how a “state of affairs came about, at *this* time, *these* places” (Drewery, Winslade & Monk, 2000, p. 249). In other words, individuals who adopt a poststructuralist worldview are curious about history in relation to the development of the subject (Besley, 2002). According to Besley (2002), a more recent development in poststructuralism is the criticism of enlightenment values, “particularly of the way modern liberal democracies construct political identity on the basis of a series of binary oppositions...that excludes 'others' or some groups of people. In this sense poststructuralism can be seen as a deepening of democracy” (p. 131). Such an analysis of identity allows for differences to be taken into consideration, contextualized, and acknowledged thereby enhancing notions of social justice (Young, 1990). Lastly, identity is not seen as an internal, static state, but rather, is continuously being shaped by our social context, in relationship to others, the meanings we ascribe to life events, as well as our intentional states, such as: purposes, hopes, dreams, values and commitments (Tavano, 2006).

*Narrative practice's assumptions*

Predicated on the aforementioned philosophies, narrative practice's assumptions include the following: individuals do not embody the problem, therapeutic conversations are collaborative, and narrative therapists are self-reflexive (Besely, 2002; Brown and Augusta-Scott, 2007; Buckman, Kinney, & Reese, 2008; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Madigan, 1992; Morgan, 2000; Nylund & Nylund, 2003; Tavano, 2006; White & Epston, 1990; White, 1995; Winslade, 2009). Firstly, narrative therapists assume that when people come to therapy, they arrive with the belief that the problem is a "true" reflection of their identity, others' identities, or the identity of their relationship (White & Epston, 1990). In other words, the problem is internal and representative of the person's true nature. However, narrative therapists take the position that the problem is discursively and socially constructed. They recognize that language is not neutral, thus take into consideration the effects that discursive practices have in shaping clients' identities (Freedman & Combs, 1996; Nylund & Nylund, 2003; White & Epston, 1990), such as the totalizing effects of the label paedophile.

Secondly, given narrative practice's epistemology, therapists do not take the position of expert. Rather, the therapist positions him or her self, and those who consult with them, as conversational partners who are willing to learn from one another: "Narrative therapists are interested in an ongoing collaborative conversational process of learning about clients stories than interpreting, intervening, or imposing therapists' views or theories on them" (Buckman, Kinney, & Reese, 2008, p. 378). Given that therapeutic conversations are held in partnership, narrative therapists do not assume to know "how the world is, how life works, who each person is, which identities are legitimate, and which are marginal" (Winslade, 2009, p. 336). Furthermore, Buckman, Kinney and Reese (2008), suggest that narrative approaches denounce

notions of therapeutic *intervention* and *strategies*, as these ideas imply expert knowledge that can only be possessed and implemented by therapists. Rather, narrative therapists assume “that people have many skills, competencies, beliefs, values, commitments, and abilities that will assist them to reduce the influence of problems in their lives” (Morgan, 2000, p. 1). In short, narrative therapists and clients equally possess knowledges, thus developing a therapeutic alliance where knowledge is joined in the telling and re-telling of stories and clients’ local knowledge is encouraged (Brown and Augusta-Scott, 2007).

Lastly, narrative therapists do not adopt a neutral position (Brown, & Augusta-Scott, 2007; Buckman, Kinney & Reese, 2008; Madigan, 1992). As previously mentioned, narrative therapists’ positions are informed by Foucault’s analysis of power/knowledge. According to White and Epston (1990),

power and knowledge are inseparable – that a domain of knowledge is a domain of power and domain of power is a domain of knowledge – and if we accept that we are simultaneously undergoing the effects of power and exercising power over others, then we are unable to take a benign view of our practices (p. 29).

In other words, narrative practice promotes a rigorous theoretical and therapeutic stance of accountability and responsibility. For example, White is cognisant of the power that has been ascribed to him as a result of gender, position, and education (Madigan, 1992). Besely (2002) proposes that it is an ethical priority for narrative therapists to be transparent and open regarding power relations, as well as their social locations. Furthermore, therapists are in a position to be attentive to the real effects that their biases can have on conversations with clients (White & Epston, 1990; White, 1995). According to Buckman, Kinney, and Reese (2008), “narrative therapists’ ability to look at their own looking and to be aware of the dominant culture’s

influence of their worldview is integral to their practice” (p. 386). In other words, therapists assume a self-reflexive position.

In summary, inspired by the works of Foucault and Bruner and drawing on theoretical orientations such as postmodernism, poststructuralism, and social constructionism, White and Epston developed narrative practice. Therapists who adopt narrative approaches do not assume that problems are totalizing of clients’ personhood. They do, however, assume that clients have knowledges that can assist in addressing the problems. As such, therapeutic relationships are collaborative. Lastly, therapists are not only critical of dominant discourses and the effects of these practices on clients, but endeavour to consider the effects of dominant culture on their own life and practice. In the following section, I will describe how these theories and assumptions translate into practice.

### *Maps of narrative practice*

Although the mapping metaphor can be traced back to White and Epston’s (1990) first book *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*, it is in the introduction of *Maps of narrative practice* (White, 2007) that White writes of his experiences with maps from a young age and the on-going role that maps played in his life. White writes (2007):

(...)my lifelong fascination for maps has led me to look at them as a metaphor for my work with people who consult me about a range of concerns, dilemmas, and problems. When we sit down together I know that we are embarking on a journey to a destination that cannot be precisely specified, and via routes that cannot be predetermined. I know that we will probably take some extraordinary scenic routes to these unknown destinations. I know that as we approach these destinations we will be stepping into other worlds of experience (p. 4).

In response to requests to provide frameworks for narrative conversations, White drew on the map metaphor and developed at least six maps to assist therapists with deconstructing dominant discourses and examining power relations within the therapeutic context. These maps of therapeutic enquiry include *externalizing conversations*, *re-authoring conversations*, “*remembering conversations*”, *definitional ceremonies*, *conversations that highlight unique outcomes*, *scaffolding conversations* and *the absent but implicit* (White, 2007). White (2007) does not use these maps as means to predetermine his responses to individuals’ answers. And, although these maps help shape therapeutic enquiry, White does not support the idea that these maps be taken up uncritically by therapists as he does not wish for these maps to be taken for granted practices. White also acknowledges that the map metaphor may not resonate with everyone: “I welcome efforts to translate the practices described in this book into terms associated with alternative metaphors” (White, 2007, p. 6). In order for me to gain an understanding of new ideas and practices, I generally require information to be laid out in a fairly clear and concrete manner. The maps laid out in *Maps of narrative practice* provide me such a foundation. As I am interested in, and intend to draw on, *externalizing conversations* and *re-authoring conversations*, I will focus my discussion on these two maps.

### *Externalizing conversations*

*Externalizing conversations* can be helpful particularly in situations where individuals' experiences of the problem are totalizing. Externalizing conversations “attempts to de-classify and dethingify...Through externalizing problems discourse, he [White] liberates those *counter-discursive practices* of a person’s local knowledges; in other words, different stories about the subject can emerge which highlights preferred outcomes” (Madigan, 1992, p. 272). In other words, externalizing conversations allow people to separate his or her identity from the problem

story. Narrative therapists encourage this separation by asking *relative influencing questions* (White & Epston, 1990). Individuals are asked to consider the problem's influence on his or her, and others', behaviours, emotions, attitudes, interactions, and physical states, as well as their own influence on the problem. For example, "Where does trouble show up? At school, home, work?", "What does trouble get you to do?", "What does trouble get you to think?", "What does trouble convince you of about yourself?", "How does trouble affect your mum?", "What does trouble convince others to think about you?", "When is trouble at its biggest/smallest?". By investigating the problem's influences in multiple spheres, there is a greater opportunity for people to see when and how the problem affects their lives and take an informed position on the problem. In other words, given the effects of the problem, are people comfortable with the problem's influence on their lives and the lives of others, or would they prefer something else? Lastly, enquiries into the problem also highlight what White and Epston (1990) refer to as *unique outcomes*, which are:

aspects of lived experience that fall outside the dominant story... Although the existence of these unique outcomes can never be predicted by a reading of the "social strand" of the dominant story of a person's life, they are always present. They include the whole gamut of events, feelings, intentions, thoughts, actions, etc., that have a historical, present, or future location and that cannot be accommodated by the dominant story (p. 15-16).

Unique outcomes can be rendered significant by inviting individuals to attribute meaning to them. Just as dominant stories are plotted across time, unique outcomes are also plotted across time leading to *alternative stories* as a means to counter the dominant story, thus transforming the self (White & Epston, 1990; Nylund & Nylund, 2003). According to White (2007), externalizing conversations

make it possible for people not only to redefine their relationship with the problems of their lives, but also to redefine their relationships with each other in ways that acknowledge each other's voices in the development of their sense of identity. This type of redefinition fosters a more relational sense of identity (p. 59).

In summary, externalizing conversations encourage people to examine the dominant, internalized discourse which shapes their perceptions about their own identity and their relationships with others. Through the examination of the effects of the dominant discourse, individuals can take a position on the problem and their local knowledges are brought forth, revealing unique outcomes which provide individuals the opportunity to shape their identity, and their relationships in accordance to alternative stories. (White & Epston, 1990).

#### *Re-authoring conversations*

When a unique outcome is articulated, narrative therapists take note of these moments that differ from the dominant story, as it is these instances that can provide opportunities to engage clients in *re-authoring conversations*. It is with the re-authoring map that we see the influence of Bruner, as White borrows Bruner's concept of *dual landscape: the landscape of action* and *the landscape of consciousness* as the premise for categories of enquiry in re-authoring conversations (Carey & Russell, 2003; White, 2007).

Landscape of action questions can be posed when an event/action differs from the dominant story is mentioned. In other words, landscape of action questions can be asked when a unique outcome is articulated. Rather than point out the contradiction that a unique outcome presents, narrative therapists see these moments as an entry point into re-authoring conversations (Carey & Russell, 2003). For example, narrative therapists might ask the following questions in relation to unique outcomes: "Can you tell me a bit about what happened?", "What steps did you

take to prepare yourself?”, “Was there anything that you said to yourself?”, “Is this the first time you have done something like this or have there been other times?”. These kinds of questions help link events into a story-line, thereby tracing a thread from what was originally perceived as an isolated incident. Significance is then ascribed to these events through landscape of identity questions.

Although Bruner used the expression *landscape of consciousness*, to avoid confusion regarding the meaning ascribed to the word, White “substituted the term *identity* for *consciousness*” (White, 20007, p. 81). White (2007) feels that the word *identity* underscores the significance of the work individuals undertake in counselling and highlights the responsibility ascribed to therapists. According to White (2007),

Any renegotiation of the stories of people’s lives is also a renegotiation of identity.

Awareness of this encourages a fuller engagement on behalf of therapists with the sort of professional ethics that are associated with an acknowledgement of the life-shaping aspects of therapeutic practice and a greater awareness of the responsibility that we have for what we say and do in the name of therapy (p. 82).

In other words, White hopes that the word *identity* reminds therapists that therapeutic conversations are not neutral acts. Rather, therapists should be mindful that these conversations have real effects on the people who consult them.

Landscape of identity questions generally follow landscape of action questions. According to Carey and Russell (2003), landscape of identity questions encourage people to explore a different territory. They relate to the implications that this alternative story-line has in terms of the person’s understanding of their identity.



Landscape of identity questions invite people to reflect differently on their own identities and the identities of others (p. 55).

Therapists summarize responses to landscape of action questions and then pose landscape of identity questions such as “By taking this step, what do you think this says about you as a person?”, “What might this action say about what you are hoping for in your life?”, “What does this say about what you care about?” (Carey and Russell, 2003).

It should be noted that landscape of identity questions can elicit responses that reflect *internal state understandings*, whereby actions are understood to be as a result of a specific, essential aspect of the self, which are considered to be central to personhood. In other words, actions occur due to “unconscious motives, instincts, needs, desires, drives, dispositions, personality traits, personal properties (like strengths and resources), and so on” (White, 2007, p. 101). Although personal qualities have the potential to be a positive part of people's lives, they are limiting in re-authoring conversations. For example, to suggest that someone acted because he or she is a strong or courageous person leaves little room for meaning-making and story development (Cary & Russell, 2003; White, 2007).

Working from internal state understandings stymies story development, as working from this premise obscures personal agency<sup>4</sup>, isolates individuals, and discourages diversity (White, 2007). When people's actions are deemed to be a result of an essential aspect of the self, such as strength, there is no room for discussions regarding how actions are shaped by individual's intentions, values, and beliefs, thereby reducing any sense of agency. Moreover, White (2007) suggests that internal state understandings can be isolating as

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<sup>4</sup>Although White does not define agency with regard to narrative practice, I think that it is safe to assume that he subscribes to the poststructural definition of agency, which I will discuss further on.

human expression is conceived as one of a singular self, not as an expression of life that is the outcome of the story of one's life being linked with stories of the lives of others around shared and valued themes ( p. 105).

For example, it is difficult to link being “strong” with people, whereas, purposes, intentions, and values that elicit strength can be linked to people around them.

Finally, internal state understandings limit diversity as these states represent and promote the socially constructed norms of the ideal self (White, 2007). In our current western social context, White (2007) suggests that the ideal self is “self-possession, self-containment, self-reliance, and self-actualization” (p. 105). For example, there are social expectations about what it means to be a male: he *should* be strong physically, emotionally, and mentally. Rather than link unique outcomes to internal states, unique outcomes can be rendered significant by tracing the history of qualities and linking them to *intentional states understanding*. According to White (2007),

intentional state conceptions of identity are distinguished by the notion of “personal agency.” This notion casts people as active mediators and negotiators of life’s meanings and predicaments, both individually and in collaboration with others. It also casts people as the originators of many of the preferred developments of their own lives: People are living out their lives according to intentions that they embrace in the pursuit of what they give value to in life; they are going about the business of actively shaping their existence in their effort to achieve sought-after goals (White, 2007, p. 103).

In other words, by examining intentional state understandings individuals are considered to be active authors of their lives. To connect people to intentional state understandings, therapists

invite people to speak of their intentions/purposes, values/beliefs, hopes/ dreams, principles for living, and commitments (Carey & Russell, 2003).

The sequence of questions related to intentional state understandings is deliberate as each question/response provides a platform for the next question. When a unique outcome presents itself, therapists take note and pose landscape of actions questions, followed by enquiry about intentions or purposes that influenced this particular action. Once these intentions or purposes are identified, therapists enquire about values and beliefs that support these purposes. Subsequently, therapists pose questions about the hopes and dreams that the person associates with the values that influenced their actions, which are then followed by questions which pertain to principles for living. Finally, therapists enquire about the individual's life commitments. Carey and Russell (2003) suggest that

if someone can clearly articulate their principles of living and what it is they are standing for in life, the more likely it is they will know what future steps they can take in order to act in accordance with these commitments (p. 57).

Take the following anecdote as an example of a conversation based on landscape of identity questions:

A youth is attending counselling because it is a condition of his probation. When confronted by youth who are reticent to engage in conversation, I will often ask why they showed for the appointment. I often hear, "Because I have to." I respond to this kind of statement with the following question: "Do you always do what you are told?". Not surprisingly, the answer is frequently "No.". "So if you do not want to be here and you do not always do as you are told to do, why did you attend today?", "Don't want to go to jail."(*purpose/intention*), "Oh, you do not want to go to jail?", "Nope.", "Why not?", "Who wants to go to jail?", "Some

people don't mind going to jail.”, “I don't mind being in jail, I just don't want to go.”, “Why don't you want to go to jail?”. I often receive responses similar to the following, “I like to be able to do what I want. Come and go as I please. Go to the fridge and grab food whenever I want.”, “I see. It sounds like freedom is important to you. Would I be right in stating that?”, “Sure is.” (*value*) When I ask the following: “What is it that you hope to do with your freedom?”, I often hear “Get on the right track” (*hopes and dreams*), “The right track? What does the right track look like?”. This question often elicits responses that include hopes and dreams, such as graduating from high school, finding a job. When I ask the question: “What does this say about what is important to you?”, I often hear “A good life.” (*principle of living*). I usually encourage more detail here, “So freedom would include not going to jail, getting an education and a job so that you can have a good life. What is it that you think you stand for in life?” (*commitment*).

Although I have presented the re-authoring map as being linear, it should be noted that these conversations can go back and forth between landscape of action questions and landscape of identity questions, thereby linking events across time, including predicting the future, as well as building on individuals’ intentions/values/hopes/dreams, eventually arriving at one’s life commitments.

In summary, landscape of identity questions which highlight intentional state understandings illuminate notions of personal agency. According to White (2007), “Re-authoring conversations provide the context for the generation of many identity conclusions that contradict those associated with the dominant storylines of people’s lives” (p, 107). In short, re-authoring conversations can lead to a preferred sense of identity.

Given that the narrative practice of externalizing conversations separates the person from the problem and re-authoring conversations can lead to a preferred sense of identity, these

practices provide youth an opportunity to step into a preferred sense of self, they provide youth space to take responsibility for their actions, and agency becomes apparent (Jenkins, 1990; White, 2007).

Although I have discussed only two maps of narrative practice, what is clear is that narrative practice encourages both responsibility and agency in youth. Through the detailed examination of the problem, youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours are able to see the effects of their behaviours and are subsequently invited to take a position on the problem. As narrative practice does not totalize and pathologize identities, youth who have committed sexualized offences are not considered to have inherently flawed characters, nor are they identified solely by the dominant story of 'sex offender'. Rather, youth are seen as being capable of assuming responsibility for their actions. Narrative practice offers opportunities to discuss alternative stories which youth can pursue, should they choose to do so, thus affording them control of their identity, hence agency. It is my opinion that narrative practice would be a beneficial way of working with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours. In the following section I examine the literature on narrative practice in relation to youth who have committed sexual offences. I also include a review of articles which discuss narrative practice with youth in a custodial and a residential setting to further my discussion of narrative practice in relation to identity of youth who are in conflict with the law.

*Narrative practice with male youth who have committed sexualized offences.*

The literature pertaining to narrative practice with male youth who have committed sexual offences is limited to a handful of authors who examine either community and/or custodial treatment programs that employ narrative practice (Augusta-Scott, 2007; Augusta-Scott and Dankwort, 2002; Ayland and West, 2006; Jenkins, 2005; Klekar and Ting, 2004; Mahoney

and Daniel, 2006; Milner and Jessop 2003; Myers, 2002, 2006; Walsh, 2010). Several of the programs employ the narrative practice of externalizing conversations as a therapeutic technique; however, programs' theoretical orientations are not located in poststructuralism. Other programs combine externalizing conversations with other therapeutic approaches. I have included works from Denborough (1996, 2002) and Sanders (1997), as I feel that the authors' discussions regarding narrative practice with incarcerated youth and youth who have misused substances add to the conversation of narrative practice in relation to youth and preferred identities. It should be noted that the existing body of literature largely centres the voices of the authors' and youth's knowledges are not given priority.

In their article, *The Good Way model: A strengths-based approach for working with young people, especially those with intellectual difficulties, who have sexually abusive behaviour*, authors Ayland and West (2006) suggest that many of the treatment programs for adolescents who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours are largely founded upon knowledge and practices associated with treatment programs for adults who have committed sexualized offences. However, there has been a recent shift toward a "holistic, development approach which integrates offence-specific techniques and takes context and differential diagnoses into account" (Ayland and West, 2006, p. 190). *The Good Way* model, a treatment program for young people with intellectual difficulties who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours, exemplifies the aforementioned changes through the use of externalizing conversations. The authors found that externalizing "Good Side and the Bad Side" (p. 191) to be a helpful technique, as youth are able to recognize their strengths, move away from their negative identity conclusions, and take responsibility for their behaviours. Although externalizing conversations are occurring, the therapists are centred as they name the problem

and alternative storyline, which is not in keeping with narrative practice. Furthermore, narrative practice is not the Good Way model's sole approach. The treatment program also includes relapse prevention and psycho-educational groups.

Walsh (2010) provides an overview of the theoretical foundations of narrative practice, followed by three case examples of narrative practice, which include an overview of *Daybreak*, "a residential juvenile sex offender treatment program" (p. 291) for adolescents aged 11 to 17. According to the author, Daybreak's treatment program is primarily predicated upon cognitive behaviour therapy, however, "the narrative approach is present in a 14-objective treatment module that begins with "My Life Story" (p. 292). The author concludes this case study by describing the successful use of metaphors with a 15-year-old male client.

Myers (2002) specifically discusses the *Sheffield Project for Young Sexual Abusers*, a treatment program for young males who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours. Myers examines the effects that dominant discourses have had on the program's philosophy and therapeutic approaches. According to Myers, a great deal of the literature identifies characteristics of adolescents who committed sexualized offences through comparisons with adolescents considered to be 'normal'. Myers suggests that labels, such as paedophile and abuser, highlight the difference between that person and others, thereby creating a dichotomy of "them versus us." Additionally, labels generate a set of explanations about behaviours and therapeutic approaches, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, which reveal the "inner truth" regarding adolescents who engage in sexually abusive behaviours. Youth identities are considered to be fixed and can only be understood through constructed ideas regarding the nature of an abuser (Myers, 2002). Myers (2002) states that,

the 'reality', 'objective truth' and 'certainty' of dominant discourses about these children

and young people, when explored, were found to be wanting and therefore the claims of absolute truths and expert status to these holding those dominant ideas were also questioned (p. 339).

Myers' analysis prompted the program to undergo a paradigm shift, which is reflected in examples such as the program's name change to *The Junction*, and the staff adopting poststructural practices.

Myers (2006) follows up his first article with *Positive practices: Solution-focused and narrative therapeutic techniques with children with sexually harmful behaviours*. In this article, as with the first, Myers is critical of CBT, the dominant therapeutic response to sexual offending. Following his critique, the author briefly reviews the theoretical underpinnings of narrative and solution-focused approaches. The remainder of the article focuses on a case example of a young male who engaged in sexually harmful behaviours and which illustrates practices of narrative therapy, such as externalizing conversations, unique outcomes, and solution-focused practices of miracle and scaling questions. The author suggests that narrative and solution-focused practices "allow for the development of local knowledge that assist in promoting safety and responsibility for the individual" (p. 192). Although the author seems to take a poststructuralist approach and supports the use of narrative practice as a means to encourage responsibility with youth who have engaged in sexually harmful behaviours, the article does not reflect youth's experience.

In his article, *Making it fair: Respectful and just intervention with disadvantage young people who have abused*, Jenkins (2005) discusses the *invitational model of engagement and intervention*, a therapeutic approach of working with adolescent males who have committed sexual offences. The invitation model is premised on Derrida's conceptualization of justice and Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge. Jenkins takes the position that the therapeutic context



should promote fairness. Moreover, “this invitational model promotes the discovery and co-construction of a sense of identity, which is informed by qualities and practices of responsibility and respect, as opposed to an identity of ‘sex offender’” (Jenkins, 2005, p. 98). Prior to discussing the invitational model in detail, Jenkins examines the political contexts in which interventions are entrenched. He suggests that interventions mitigate fairness and justice and promote the colonization of young people. Consequently, interventions add “to the sense of marginalisation and to a sense of identity which may serve to foster greater risk of harm to self and others” (Jenkins, 2005, p. 101). Jenkins spends the remainder of the article discussing the theoretical framework of the invitational model. Although Jenkins does not refer to his work as narrative practice, his work is located in poststructuralism. Additionally, Jenkins advocates externalizing conversations as a means to engage youth and to provide an opportunity to separate the person from the problem, thereby promoting accountability and responsibility.

Denborough (1996, 2002) suggests that prison culture encourages individuals to view themselves as a criminal who are prone to committing further criminal offences, which limits possibilities of agency. According to Denborough (2002), “We totalise the identities of those the courts convict and in the process close down the possibilities for them to step into territories of sorrow, of regret, of the desire to restore the harm that they have done” (p. 75). The author suggests narrative practice as a counter-therapy for the totalizing effects of prison culture. To support his argument, Denborough provides the example of “Externalising ‘crime’ and ‘drugs’” (p. 132), which describes the work of a therapist who practices in an Ottawa Youth Detention Centre and situates his work in narrative practice. To further his position, Denborough (2002) provides transcripts of externalizing conversations, outsider witnesses, and consultation between youth and therapist. The transcripts demonstrate how externalizing conversations invite an

adolescent to separate him or herself from the label *offender*, to take responsibility for the effects of his or her actions, to uncover histories of resistance to the problem, and alternative identities. The author suggests that these practices “all seem to be powerful forces that work against the culture of the institution and create opportunities for the young people to create and step into new preferred ways of being” (p. 142). Denborough’s example supports the use of the narrative practice as a means to separate youth from negative identity conclusion.

Sanders (1997) provides a brief overview of *Peak House*, initially a traditional substance dependence program for voluntary youth aged 13-19, that has since adopted poststructuralism as a means to inform the program. The author reflects upon his experience with young people who have misused substances and suggests that many of the young people, with whom he has had conversations, hold negative conclusions about their identity. The author provides several transcripts of externalizing conversations he has had with young people, which exemplifies the collaborative nature of narrative practice and the possibilities for alternative identities.

All of the aforementioned authors suggest that externalizing conversations are a helpful way of separating youth from the problem, and creating possibilities for alternative stories which create a positive shift in youth’s identity. Furthermore, these conversations promote personal responsibilities, thereby providing youth with a sense of agency. Although the authors support and encourage the use of narrative approaches with youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and/or are in conflict with the law, there is an absence of literature which reflecting the local knowledges of youth regarding their experiences with narrative practice in relation to their identity. Given this absence in the literature, there is a need for research that reflects the adolescent voices.

Although the literature I have reviewed is supportive of narrative practice, there is a body

of literature that is critical of narrative practice. In the following section I will present these critiques, as well as counter-arguments to these critiques.

### *Critique of narrative practice*

The body of literature that is critical of narrative practice addresses four distinct areas. To begin, Fish (1993) and Luepntiz (1992) are critical of Michael White's application of Foucault's ideas. Secondly, Amundson (2001), Doan (1998), and Walsh (2010) examine narrative practice in relation to evidence-based practice. Thirdly, Amundson and Doan suggest that narrative practice is intolerant of other therapeutic approaches. Finally, Walsh raises concerns regarding the practicality of narrative approaches.

Fish (1993) and Luepntiz (1992) suggest that White and Epston's understanding of Foucault's work does not contribute to resolving problems associated with power, but rather perpetuates the problems. Fish suggests that White and Epston's (1990) externalization of individual and/or family problem stories, and the subsequent alternative stories, are shaped by, and limited to, cultural discourses. As such, changing the negative narrative to a positive narrative does not liberate the individual and/or family from the dominant discourse:

Changing the story is not the same as changing the discourse. Foucault might point out, were he alive, that if people in a family become clients of a therapist, even one working in a narrative/conversational mode who helps them change some of their personal stories, they and the therapist are still operating out of discourse (about "therapists," "clients," "families," and so on) which their individual intentions and behaviours are unlikely to affect, at least not in any way they might plan (Fish, 1993, p. 225).

Redekop (1995) provides a counter-argument to Fish and Luepnitz's criticism and demonstrates the utility of a Foucauldian framework to address power relations in a therapeutic

context. To begin, Redekop suggests that Foucault was interested in personal stories; take for example the individual stories of Herculine Brabin and Pierre Riviere. The author states that “perhaps it is not so much that Foucault was uninterested in personal stories... (but, rather) the context in which these stories are found, and the relations among them” (p. 311). By contextualizing Herculine’s story, alternative stories emerge, thereby providing different opportunities. In Herculine’s case this provided the opportunity to speak for herself. Redekop suggests that “it would be a mistake to polarize the notion of *personal story* and *cultural discourses* in either White’s or Foucault’s work” (Redekop, 1995, p. 313).

Secondly, Redekop suggests that by being aware of technologies of the self and technologies of power, narrative practice addresses power relations in local settings. Redekop quotes White’s (1993) definition of the former as:

the subjugation of self through the discipline of bodies, souls, thoughts and conduct according to specified ways of being... [and the latter as]... the subjugation of others through techniques such as isolation and surveillance, and through perpetual evaluation and comparison (p. 54) (p. 313).

From this perspective, there is an interrelationship between personal stories and dominant discourses, which is in keeping with Foucault’s analysis of power and poststructuralism.

Lastly, narrative therapists “confront their own position regarding their practice: are they following techniques of identification which disqualify speculation, or are they willing to examine their own presuppositions and the grounds of their questions” (Redekop, 1995, p. 316). In other words, narrative therapists question their own beliefs, values, and biases; narrative therapists make efforts to avoid perpetuating power relations by taking a self-reflexive stance.

In short, narrative practice does not simply change the story from a bad story to a good story, but rather problems are examined within the context that they occur, which often includes an examination of power. Given the contextualization of problems, narrative therapists take care not to individualize problems. I do agree with Fish's point that narrative therapists are also influenced by dominant discourses, however, as Redekop indicates, narrative therapists are mindful of this point and endeavour to be self-reflexive.

Several authors (Amundson, 2001; Buckman, Kinney & Reese, 2008; Doan, 1998) suggest that narrative therapists adopt theories and practice approaches that have not yet been proven to be effective, nor possess empirically validated guidelines. Amundson (2001) suggests that therapies with an emphasis on specific treatment outcomes instil confidence in the practitioner, as they are able to answer the question "how will we know when we are done?" (Amundson, 2001, p. 182). Furthermore, Amundson (2001) believes that narrative practice can only be considered a useful form of therapy if it is "empirically informed" (p. 180). The second critical point is that due to narrative practice's position as a counter-therapy to empirically validated therapies, therapists who approach their work from a narrative standpoint are at risk of being ineffectual in managed care settings which are based upon evidence-based practice and the medical model (Amundson, 2001; Buckman, Kinney & Reese, 2008).

Narrative therapists oppose this argument by suggesting that evidence-based practice is too restrictive, as this practice focuses on observable behaviours and diagnostic categories, thus tending to be pathologizing. As such, evidence-based practice does not allow therapeutic conversations to be tailored to individuals, contextualize the problem, or focus on meaning (Buckman, Kinney, & Reese, 2008). However, despite this stance, there is a growing body of

evidence-based research regarding narrative practice (Dulwich Centre website, 2012; Duvall & Beres, 2011; Madigan, 2011).

Thirdly, Doan (1998) and Amundson (2001) suggest that narrative practice rejects other therapeutic styles and that this intolerance goes against narrative practice's philosophical foundations. However, I would argue that narrative therapists draw from other therapeutic styles. Take for example, narrative therapist Angel Yuen (2007), who has drawn from *Response-Based Therapy*<sup>5</sup> as a means of working with children who have experienced trauma. It should, however, be noted that these therapeutic styles are epistemologically congruent. Narrative therapists are cognizant of differing worldviews which inform therapeutic styles. For example evidence-based practice and narrative practice; facts vs. social construction, whereas the authors fail to do so.

The final area of criticism is from a practical perspective. Walsh (2010) suggests that narrative practice is not suitable for clients who are having trouble meeting basic needs such as food, shelter, safety, and so forth. Additionally, the author notes that narrative practice has been criticized by some social activists for not paying attention to social problems and not advocating collective action. However, the Dulwich Centre website cites several collective projects such as the *Tree of life: collective narrative approach to responding to vulnerable children*, *Team of life: responding to trauma through sport* and *Collective narrative documents*, just to name a few. Furthermore, given narrative practice's worldview, it is a therapeutic approach designed to address social issues: "Narrative therapy embodies a lifestyle and a political project that involves speaking and listening respectfully and is concerned with disrupting dominant cultural norms that are disqualifying of people's lives" (Nylund, 2006, p. 36). In other words, narrative practice opens up space in therapeutic conversations to name social problems and the effects of these

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<sup>5</sup>See the work of Dr. Linda Coates, Dr. Catherine Richardson, and Dr. Allen Wade

problems, thereby examining social injustices. Through these conversations, individuals and therapists can be positioned to make efforts to address social issues.

Walsh (2010) goes on to suggest that therapists may have difficulty abandoning modernist ideas, such as psychosocial development, universal characteristics, and life stages. In other words, therapists may not be able to engage individuals without a guiding set of principles or assumptions about the “nature” of people. I interpret this to mean that Walsh believes that therapists cannot, or are unwilling to, make a paradigm shift and that they will continue to practice in an uncritical and taken for granted ways. Lastly, Walsh suggests that therapists may have difficulty adopting a neutral stance, however, as previously discussed, narrative practice does not encourage therapists to be neutral, but to be self-reflexive. In doing so, therapists strive to recognize their biases, beliefs, values, ethics, social location, as well as the implications that these biases can have on conversations with clients. Additionally, narrative practice is a paradigm shift, which allows therapists to access knowledge outside the realm of psychology and to be cognizant of multiple realities.

In summary, there is a body of literature that suggests that narrative practice perpetuates power relations, ignores social problems, is intolerant of other therapeutic approaches and, from a practical standpoint, is ineffectual, particularly in settings that are informed by evidence-based practice and the medical model. Moreover, narrative therapists ignore social problems and do not promote collective activism. However, I have presented positions that counter the aforementioned arguments. In short, narrative practice examines dominant discourses by contextualizing and individualizing problem stories. In doing so, therapists are self-reflexive, considered advocates for the people that consult them, and to engage in social change.

Additionally, narrative therapists are interested in therapeutic approaches that are epistemologically congruent.

### *Chapter summary*

Based on the theoretical orientations of narrative therapy, as well as the literature regarding narrative practice with youth who have committed sexualized offences, it seems to me that narrative practice can assist youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours to move toward a preferred identity, while simultaneously allowing the individual to take responsibility and according them a sense of agency. As such, I would like to explore the question: How do male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and participated in a treatment program narrate their experience of changes in their identity? In the following chapter I will discuss the methodologies which will inform my research project, as well as how I intend to collect and analyze my data.



## Chapter 3 Methodology

### *Introduction*

In this chapter I delve into the aims of this project. I discuss the methodologies that inform my research; feminist: interpretative qualitative semi-structured interviews with a framework informed by narrative analysis with a focus on Riessman's discussion of representation. I also explain how these methodologies are congruent with narrative practice. In the second section I present my methods and discuss how the narrative practice of re-authoring conversation informed my interview guide and my decision to write research summary letters for each participant. The third section examines the ethics of this project and outlines the institutional bodies from which I required approval in order to proceed. In the fourth section I describe how the recruitment and interview process went. Following this I introduce my analytic framework, which is based upon White's (2007) re-authoring map. I conclude this chapter by outlining the sources I foresee influencing my analysis.

### *Methodology*

Crocket (2004) wrote: "it is my wish to practice research in ways that are congruent with the values that informed my counselling work" (p. 63). Likewise, it is my hope that my research will reflect the principles which inform my work.<sup>6</sup> Given my interest and my efforts to locate my work in narrative practice, it is only fitting that my methodologies reflect the philosophical foundation of narrative practice. The aim of this research is to answer my research question: How do male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and participated in a treatment program narrate their experience of changes in their identity? I proceeded with this

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<sup>6</sup> Please see chapter 1 for a description of my work.

investigation through a feminist lens, by conducting semi-structured interviews. I employed a narrative analysis framework and drew from Riessman's (1993) discussion of representation.

After an examination of Merriam's (2002) discussion of interpretive, qualitative research, it is evident that it is congruent with the philosophical approach of narrative practice. In the next few paragraphs I will examine some of the many similarities between qualitative research and narrative therapy. Firstly, qualitative researchers are interested in how people come to derive meaning from their experiences, relationships, identities, and the worlds in which they live (Merriam, 2002; Padgett, 1998); meaning is socially constructed, contextual, fluid, and multiple (Merriam, 2002). Moreover, "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding what those interpretations are at a particular point in time and in a particular context" (Merriam, p. 4, 2002). Similarly, narrative therapists are interested in how people derive meaning from their experiences addressing questions such as: "What is the problem?", "What social contexts, such as cultural ideas/beliefs/practices, support the problem?", "How do these ideas/ beliefs/practices affect and shape individuals' identities?".

Secondly, both qualitative researchers and narrative therapists encourage rich description. In other words, researchers and therapists encourage participants/clients to go into great detail when describing their experiences. Lastly, given that the aim of qualitative research is to gain understanding, Merriam sees the researcher as "*the primary instrument [sic]* for data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 2002, p. 5). According to Merriam, "the human instrument" (p. 5) is the ideal tool to gather and analyze data, as the researcher can gain greater understanding by inquiring about non-verbal and verbal communication, can clarify participants' responses and/or check with participants about accuracy of interpretation (Merriam, 2002). Although I do not equate narrative therapists with human instruments, there are, however, similarities with regard

to the role of researchers and narrative therapists. For example, therapists take a stance of curiosity, summarize what was said, and ask such questions of clarification as: “What kind of anger is it?”, “Can you tell me what the tears are about?”, “I notice a smile; can you speak to what was just said that brought this smile about?”. In short, therapists, like qualitative researchers, make efforts to avoid assumptions and ask questions that will help produce meaning and understanding.

Merriam (2002) points out that each researcher has his or her own set of values, beliefs, biases, and skills which can have an impact on the research. By adopting a stance of self-reflexivity, the researcher acknowledges the influence of his or her subjectivity (Hoskins, 2001; Merriam, 2002; Padgett, 1998; Strega, 2005). Strega (2005) cautions that “while we need to locate ourselves and continuously interrogate our perceptions, these matters of self-location and reflexivity must not take center stage” (p. 229-230). Likewise, narrative therapists are encouraged to be mindful of, and consider the implications of, his or her subjectivity regarding therapeutic conversations, while simultaneously taking a decentred, but influential, position (Tavano, 2006).

In order to take a decentred position, I am drawing from the narrative idea of *co-research* whereby “the person consulting the therapist is an equal partner in the process of exploration and it is *their [sic]* knowledge and skills about their own life and relationships that are the focus of conversation” (Dulwich Centre Publication, 2004). In other words, the practice of co-research decentres therapists’ knowledge thereby creating space for local knowledges to enter the conversation. This concept of co-research is applicable to my research, as it is my intent to represent not only my own knowledges, but participants’ knowledges. Despite this desire to engage in co-research, I need to be mindful of the hierarchical nature of research interviews,

particularly with youth in conflict with law.

Oakley (1990) suggests that research interviews tend to be situated in a masculine paradigm, which is fundamentally hierarchical. This hierarchy is maintained through what Oakley refers to as “pseudo-conversations” (p. 32). In other words, the interviewer engages in social niceties, such as demonstrating warmth and interest as means to build rapport with the intention of gaining access to data. However, the expectation is that respondents will not ask the interviewer questions. Should a respondent transgress this expectation, the interviewer is to engage in strategies of avoidance, such as responding with a question, or claims of ignorance such as “That’s a hard one” (Oakley, 1990, p. 36). Alternatively, Oakley suggests that by conducting interviews located in feminism, interviewers can gain greater understanding of people. This can be achieved by the interviewer bringing her or his own personal identity to the relationship, thereby contributing to a non-hierarchical situation. Ideally, I would like to approach my research and work in a non-hierarchical manner, however, in both cases, I am engaging with youth are involved with the justice system,<sup>7</sup> while I am a privileged caucasian woman, pursuing graduate studies, and working as a therapist. Thus, regardless of how I approach my research interviews, power relations will exist. However, taking this into account, I made efforts to narrow the gap through my choice of methods and by taking a self-reflexive and decentred position. Before discussing the aforementioned methods, I will now present my research design; narrative inquiry.

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<sup>7</sup> By working with youth who are involved in the justice system, I am keenly aware of the discourse of “boundaries”. However, the discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this paper.

## *Research design*

### *Narrative analysis/inquiry*

As mentioned in my literature review, the concept of narrative has been adopted by many disciplines (Riessman & Quinney, 2005). In my literature review, I examined the notion of narrative as it relates to the therapeutic practice developed by Michael White and David Epston (Besley, 2002; Madigan, 2011; White & Epston, 1990). In this section, I discuss definitions of narrative in relation to social science and delineate my working definition. This will be followed by an examination of Riessman's five levels of representation. I will then highlight the challenges of representing participants' experience. I conclude this section with a brief discussion regarding my choice of narrative inquiry as my framework.

### *Definition*

The idea of narrative, as a working tool for the social sciences, was developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and has roots in postmodernism, realism and constructionism (Riessman & Quinney, 2005). The term narrative is synonymous with 'story,' however, scholars disagree over the origin and the definition of narrative, resulting in several definitions which tend to be discipline specific (Larsson & Sjoblom, 2010; McAllister, 2001; Riessman, 1993; Riessman & Quinney, 2005). Within anthropology and social history, narrative examines entire life stories. Within the tradition of sociolinguistics, however, narrative signifies stories which are organised around character, setting and plot (Larsson & Sjoblom, 2010; Riessman & Quinney, 2005). In the middle of this spectrum, psychology and sociology define narrative as segments of conversation that are co-produced between the participant and the interviewer (Larsson & Sjoblom, 2010; Riessman & Quinney, 2005). Despite the differences in approach for example, there are some elements of narrative that are commonly agreed upon. Firstly, there is the consensus that

narrative refers to events that have social significance, hold meaning, tend to be organized in a chronological manner, and are evaluated with an audience in mind (Larsson & Sjoblom, 2010, Riessman & Quinney, 2005). Secondly, the structure of a narrative is either based upon temporally and spatially, or thematically and episodically, structured (Larsson & Sjoblom, 2010).

From a completely different discipline, Clandinin & Connelly (2000) offer a definition of narrative in relation to educational research. The authors take the position that social science research is interested in humans, and their relations with themselves, and their environment. In short, social science research is interested in human experience. Drawing upon the work of, John Dewey, the authors take the position that experience is two-fold (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin, Pushor & Orr, 2007). First, *experience* is the interaction between the individual and his/her social environment. Secondly, they focus on the idea of “*continuity [sic]*” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.2), meaning that experience is born out of other experiences, which subsequently leads to more experiences. In other words, consideration is given to the past, the present, and the future. Wanting to emphasize the importance of experience, Clandinin and Connelly developed the following definition of narrative: “It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 20).

For my research, I draw from the middle of Riessman and Quinney’s (2005) continuum, and Clandinin and Connelly’s concept of narrative. Thus, my working definition of narrative is: sections of conversation that are co-produced, reflective of selected events/experience that are meaningful, contextual and are organized chronologically, thematically and temporally.

## *Frameworks*

### *Riessman*

In her book *Narrative Analysis*, Riessman (1993) outlines five levels of representation in the research process. I draw upon these five levels of representations as a framework for my research.

The first level of representation is *attending to experience*. By focusing on a certain experience, I make that phenomenon meaningful (Riessman, 1993). For example, the way I have crafted my interview guide attends to a specific experience: how male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours construct their identity. As a result, certain events are emphasized. Additionally, I choose the particular responses I take note of, encourage further discussion about, and conversely, the responses to which I do not attend to.

The second level of representation is *telling about experience*. Although my interview guide is intended to focus on a particular subject matter, youth have choices as to how they respond and speak about their experiences. That being said, I cannot ignore the fact their responses to my questions may be influenced by the immediate audience (me) and potential future audiences (such as staff from the group home), as well as the context in which the interview occurs (i.e. in an office of a group home for youth who are mandated to attend counselling). Riessman (1993, 2003) points out that in the moments of speaking about an experience, the teller is creating a desired representation of self; however, the construction of one's best self does not occur in isolation, but is influenced by contexts. I can only imagine how a male youth who has engaged in sexually abusive behaviours, who has agreed to participate in a research project with an adult female they know very little about, would want to be perceived in those moments of being interviewed, as well as in the final representation of the conversation.

Thirdly is the level of *transcribing experience*. The act of transcribing is informed by our ideological positions, as well as the arguments for which we intend to provide support. By presenting text in a certain way, we constitute meaning in a very particular fashion (Riessman, 1993). For example, my transcripts reflect the participant's side of the conversation, as well as my own; I have included all the lengthy pauses, hums and stammers. In doing so, the reader is able to read the entire interview experience, which will likely influence the meaning that they derive from said interview. Although I include, as appendix, each transcript in its entirety, I am picking specific excerpts to present in the body of my thesis.

*Analyzing experience*, the fourth level of representation, is based upon the researcher's decisions regarding how experience will be represented (Riessman, 1993). I have chosen to use the re-authoring map as a means to order, and present, selected sections of the interviews.<sup>8</sup> However, as Riessman suggests, what I include and exclude in my analysis is influenced by what I perceive as possible responses to my work. For this particular project, my primary audience will likely be professors from the University of Victoria, and as result, I feel free to be critical about my findings. However, I cannot ignore that I am concerned about possible responses from professionals who work in forensic settings and do not situate their work in narrative practice.

The final level of representation that Riessman discusses is *reading experience*. This final stage refers to readers' engagement with the text. Readers of this thesis have the potential to be vast. Ranging from editors, my committee members, other students, other professionals, program managers of forensic youth treatment programs, and possibly the research participants, the audience for this project is a diverse and eclectic one. All readers have an influence on the representation of experience. For example, the editors are from diverse backgrounds and provide

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<sup>8</sup> I will discuss the re-authoring map in the analysis section of this chapter.



varying and, at times, unexpected feedback. My committee members' suggestions and comments have largely been incorporated into my work. Through these suggestions and edits, the text changed, thus creating subtle shifts in the meaning. In the final copy, the text does not structurally change, however readers' ideologies and experiences will shape the meanings that they derive from the project. For example, a therapist who does not subscribe to poststructuralism, might not find the notion of multiple realities to be a useful concept and ultimately not find any value in the project or participants may review the transcripts and wonder how I came to certain conclusions. In short, the meaning of the text is fluid. To quote Riessman (1993) "Written texts are created within, and against, particular traditions and audiences, and these contexts can be brought to bear by readers. The point is that all texts stand on moving ground; there is no master narrative" (p. 14-15).

I like the idea of representation, as it denotes that as the researcher, I am actively making choices. However, I am aware that in addition to my agency as the listener, transcriber, and analyst, the agency of the teller and the reader are also present in the interpretation of experience thereby creating multiple meanings (Riessman, 1993). From this perspective, meaning is indefinite, fluid, and contextual. However, as Riessman points out: "...awareness of levels of representation presses us to be more conscious, reflective, and cautious about the claims we make" (p. 16).

I am conscious of issues raised in the literature regarding the representation of experience. First research which represents experience is not meant to be a confessional. Secondly, said research should include an examination of power relations (Alcoff, 1995; Allen & Cloyes, 2000). Going into this project, I felt confident that research interviews would not consist of confessions, as participants had already engaged in a great deal of therapeutic work in relation

to their offences. Furthermore, by structuring the interviews on the re-authoring map, the interviews highlight participants' intentions, values, and knowledges, rather than a discussion of the offences. Lastly, Alcoff (1995) cautions: "anyone who speaks for others should only do so out of concrete analysis of the particular power relations and discursive effects involved" (p. 111). I followed Alcoff's suggestion, by taking a self-reflexive position throughout the project.

*Why narrative analysis?*

I have chosen narrative analysis for several reasons. First, narrative practice and narrative analysis are closely aligned philosophically; narrative practice and narrative analysis examine identity, subjectivity, agency and practices of power. Moreover, attention is paid to individual experience, relationships, context and temporality (Besley & Edwards, 2005; Brown & Augusta-Scott, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Drewery & Winslade, 1997; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Foote & Frank 1999; Furlong, 2008; Larsson and Sjoblom, 2005; Madigan, 1992, 20011; Milner, 2001; Nylund & Nylund, 2003; Riessman, 1993, 2002; White, 2004, 2007; White & Epston, 1990). Finally, narrative analysis is an approach that is well-suited to a small sample size, keeping participants' central (Riessman, 1993, 2002; Larsson and Sjoblom, 2010). Given that my research has a small sample size and examines narrative practice in relation to identity with a youth forensic population, I feel that narrative analysis is well-matched to my research.

In this section, I presented my methodologies, and the framework that informs my research. Following this, I briefly looked at related concerns regarding the use of representation of experience in research. I concluded this section by providing my reasons for using narrative analysis. In the following section I introduce the methods I employed in my research.

## *Methods*

To conduct my research, I developed an interview guide that was informed by the narrative practice of re-authoring conversations. Keeping in the vein of narrative practice, I also elected to write participants' summary letters. In this section I present these methods and my rationale for these selections.

### *Interview guide*

In keeping with narrative practice, I drew from the work of Amanda Redstone (2004), author of *Researching people's experience of narrative therapy: Acknowledging the contribution of the 'client' to what works in counselling conversations*. Redstone is interested in finding "ways of inquiring into what works for people who have come to consult with me in therapy that will acknowledge their contributions to these conversations" (p. 57). To guide her enquiry, Redstone developed an interview guide which is premised on the narrative practice of re-authoring conversations. Through a case example, Redstone demonstrates how this particular interview elicited the consulting person's experience with therapy, as well as a preferred identity that emerged as a result of the consultations. As I am interested in youth's perspectives on their identities, particularly after engaging in narrative conversations, I am inspired by Redstone's use of re-authoring conversations as a format for an interview guide and chose to base my interviews on the narrative practice of re-authoring conversations.

To assist me in maintaining my focus, I developed an interview guide informed by re-authoring conversations (Appendix A). In developing this interview guide, I was cognizant of the fact that in my work experience, it can often take several conversations before I find the language and/or phrasing of questions that resonate most with the youth. In an effort to avoid overly complex questions, to assist in reducing responses such as "What do you mean?", and to

ensure that my interview guide reflects the re-authoring conversations map, I consulted with two sources of “insider knowledges”.

My first source of “insider knowledge” is Ninetta Tavano. Tavano is the Director of The Narrative Project and has her Master in Social Work; she works with individuals, families, and couples. She also teaches on the subject of narrative therapy. Given Tavano’s knowledge in narrative practice, I consulted with her about my interview guide. The benefits of this consultation were twofold: it assisted me in ensuring that my interview guide was premised on the re-authoring conversations map and I increased my own knowledge and skills. My second source of “insider knowledge” is Allison Hay, a colleague and social worker with the Centerpoint Young Offender Outpatient Services. Hay has worked with youth in conflict with the law for approximately 20 years and is interested in narrative practice. Given her experience with working with youth, and her knowledge of narrative practice, it was beneficial to have Hay edit my interview guide.

### *Summary letter*

In addition to conducting interviews with youth, I wrote and sent them each a letter summarizing the interview. My intention with the letter is threefold. First, letter writing is in keeping with narrative practice. According to White and Epston (1990), the main purpose of a letter is to render lived experience into a story. My hope is that the summary letter will help provide participants’ a glimpse at their stories. Secondly, in my work with youth involved with the justice system, I have written some clients summary letters of our sessions, to which the feedback has been largely positive. Clients have mentioned that these letters have been helpful with recalling what was talked about in the session and solidifying their commitment to stand up against the identified problem. Some youth reported that they have referred back to these letters

when they felt like their commitment was waning or being challenged. It is my hope that the interview summary letters will be similarly useful to the research participants. Finally, the summary letters allowed for validation.

### *Validity*

By receiving a summary letter, participants had the opportunity to read my thoughts on our conversation. By taking this step, I engaged in member checks, a form of validity (Seale, 2006). Members check is in keeping with narrative analysis. Riessman (1993) refers to this approach of validity as *correspondence*, whereby the researcher takes results back to the individuals who participated thus providing them an opportunity to respond to the researcher's work. In this case, participants were given the opportunity, should they choose, to clear up any misunderstandings, or express their agreement or disagreement with my summary of our interviews. Riessman cautions that meanings ascribed to experiences are not static. Moreover, participants may not even agree with my interpretation of the interviews. As such, Riessman encourages researchers to be very clear in distinguishing participants' views from their own.

In summary, I developed an interview guide that is premised on the narrative practice of re-authoring conversation. To ensure the guide was sound, I consulted with two practitioners. Keeping with narrative practice, I decided to write participants summary letters. In writing these letters, my hope was that participants found these letters useful, while simultaneously helping me engage in a measure of validity. In the following section, I will examine ethical issues related to this project and access to participants.

### *Ethics and access*

Researching youth, particularly youth involved with the justice system, raises several ethical questions. In this section, I begin by addressing this subject with an in-depth discussion

related to issues of consent and confidentiality. Following this, I will address the implications that power relations may have on youth, and their decisions to participate in this research. Subsequently, I speak to my status as an insider and outsider to Counterpoint House. Finally, I present the institutional bodies from which I required approval, prior to proceeding with my research.

As the aim of this research is to gain insight into whether or not narrative practice with youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours can encourage preferred identity, several ethical issues were taken into consideration, particularly consent and confidentiality (Alberta College of Social Workers, 2007; Ali & Kelly, 2006; Brody & Waldron, 2000; Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005; Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1998; Government of Alberta, 2000; Plays, 2003; Province of Alberta, 2003; Waldram, 1998). Consent and confidentiality were considered in the context of the agency providing treatment, as well as obtaining consent and maintaining confidentiality for this research.

### *Consent*

With respect to consent and limits of confidentiality in relation to Counterpoint House, agency practice is that upon the commencement of counselling, therapists address issues of consent and limits of confidentiality with youth. Consent is required to release information to third parties such as Edmonton and Area Child, Youth, and Family Services and Alberta Solicitor General. If a youth is 18 years of age or older, consent to release information to parents/guardians may also be requested. Additionally, youth are cautioned of the limits of confidentiality. For example, therapists legally cannot keep information regarding immediate

threats to harm self, or others, confidential (Alberta College of Social Workers, 2007). Moreover, youth are advised, prior to commencing counselling, that should he disclose incidents where he perpetrated sexual assault that are unrelated to his current sentence or he discloses situations where he has been subjected to neglect, physical or sexual abuse, the information will be disclosed to the appropriate authorities, such as Edmonton and Area Child, Youth and Family Services (Government of Alberta, 2000).

With respect to my research, consent was obtained on a voluntary and informed basis (Alberta College of Social Work, 2007; Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005; Province of Alberta, 2000; Tri-Council Policy Statement, 1998). According to Brody and Waldron (2000), voluntary consent “requires a climate relatively devoid of coercive influence, where individuals have the capacity to act autonomously and believe that an autonomous choice exists” (p. 220). For my research, obtaining voluntary consent is complicated by the fact that participants are adolescents who are serving legal dispositions. Based on these factors, the participants are considered to be a *captive*, and possibly a *dependent* population. According to Waldram (1998), the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), define a *captive* and *dependent* population as “individuals or groups in a relationship where a power differential could operate to their disadvantage as subjects: for example, students, minors, prisoners, employees, military personnel, minority groups, incapacitated people and the socially-deprived” (SSHRC 1994:25)” (p. 1). Given these factors, obtaining voluntary consent can be tenuous.

Secondly, there is the issue of the potential for abuse with a captive population (Ali & Kelly, 2006). Given the power relations, youth may feel that they have to agree to participate in this research project. For example, a youth may fear that by not consenting to participate in the research project, I may have influence over whether or not he can participate in the treatment

program. For youth serving custodial sentences, losing the opportunity to participate in the treatment program could mean that he is transferred back to the Edmonton Young Offender Centre (EYOC), where youth who have perpetrated a sexual offence(s) are at risk of being physically assaulted by other incarcerated youth. In addition to their personal safety, youth may also consider other factors such as the overall differences in environment. For example, at Counterpoint House, youth have access to a larger quantity of food and they are able to wear street clothes rather than the sweat suits required by EYOC. Alternatively, for youth who are serving probation, the fear may be that if he does not participate, he will breach his conditions of his sentence thus acquiring a new charge, court dates, and possibly a new conviction. These potential fears may persuade a youth to consent to his participation in this research.

Alternatively, a youth may decide to agree to participate with the hopes of appearing cooperative to staff (Waldram, 1998). Either scenario suggests that a youth is considered whether his sentence and/or access to treatment will be affected based upon his decision to accept or decline the invitation to participate in this research.

In order to mitigate these concerns and to obtain voluntary and informed consent, youth were advised that those individuals who decline, or who consent to participate and later decide to withdraw their participation, will not suffer any legal repercussions or be denied access to this treatment program. Additionally, youth were informed in detail of the rationale of the study and participant criteria (Ali & Kelly, 2006). Thirdly, I informed them about the steps taken to protect them from any potential risks; these risks might include discussion of sensitive topics which youth have not yet addressed in counselling. However, given the format of my interview guide, I feel that the interviews pose very little risk to the participants. Moreover, I arranged for Philip Naude and a key worker to check in with participants after the interview and after receiving the



summary letter (Province of Alberta, 2000; Plays, 2003). Lastly, youth were advised of the possible benefits of participating in my research, such as the opportunity to reflect upon their efforts and experiences in counselling, and to contribute to knowledge development. In short, this process ensured that consent was informed as youth were made aware of potential risks and benefits of their participation, thereby enabling them to decide for themselves (Ali & Kelly 2006).

### *Confidentiality*

Confidentiality is paramount. Although participants were aware that retracting their consent would not negatively impact their sentences or their access to treatment, youth may have been concerned that the information provided during the interviews may be disclosed to third parties, such as probation officers, Child, Youth and Family Service case workers, and/or parents. Consequently, youth may not have been willing to be open and honest during the interviews. Youth were informed that the consent to release information to a third party that was obtained by their therapist was not applicable to the research, thus no information provided during the interviews was released to a third party. However, there are mandatory reporting laws (Alberta College of Social Workers, 2007; Government of Alberta, 2000).

Youth were told that should information pertaining to harm to individuals under the age of 18, including any unreported sexual offences or immediate threats to harm self or others, be disclosed during either interviews that the information, legally, cannot be kept confidential and appropriate steps would be taken to address the matter(s). More specifically, Naude would be informed and Child, Youth and Family Services would be contacted. To address immediate threats of harm to self or others, Naude and the psychiatrist who works with the agency, would

be advised of the situation. If neither were available, local authorities would be informed of the matter. No such information was disclosed, thus the aforementioned steps were not necessary.

With respect to confidentiality, participants were assigned pseudonyms and any other identifiable information, such as participants' age, date of admission, and names of key workers were either changed or omitted. However, despite pseudonyms and these omissions, Counterpoint House staff, should they choose to read my thesis, may be able to guess participants' identity. Additionally, steps were taken to ensure the security of data, such as tapes and paper transcripts; the data is stored at my residence will be destroyed according to Alberta Health Services Research Ethics Board's guidelines (5 years after the completion of my program). In the meantime, any computer files related to this research project are password protected and paper data are locked in a filing cabinet.

An additional ethical issue involves minimizing harm to youth (Alberta College of Social Workers, 2007; Canadian Association of Social Workers, 2005; Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Science and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 1998; Province of Alberta, 2000). The goal of the interview is to obtain youth's perspectives and experiences of narrative therapy, not to engage youth in therapy. Should conversations shift to any therapeutic issues, I planned to encourage youth to speak with Naude. However, specific therapeutic issues never came up during the interviews.

Lastly, I will be discussing the issues of access to participants, as well as my status as an insider and an outsider. On the one hand, I am an employee with Alberta Health Services, Centerpoint Program, a sister program to Counterpoint House. I work in the capacity of a therapist with youth involved in the justice system and prefer to locate my work in narrative

practice. Additionally, I have a working relationship with Naude, the therapist who works with the participants of this research. That being said, I have not worked with male youth who have specifically engaged in sexually abusive behaviours, nor have I worked at Counterpoint House. As such, I am an outsider to this residential treatment program and, in many respects, lack knowledge regarding the experiences of youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours. Naude and my program manager were very supportive of my research and granted me access to the residents of Counterpoint House. However, prior to proceeding with my research, I required Operational Approval and ethical approval.

As a student at the University of Victoria, I received ethical approval from The University of Victoria's Human Research Ethics Board (HREB). In order to conduct research at an Alberta Health Services facility, I required Operational Approval from The Northern Alberta Clinical Trials and Research Centre (NACTRC) and ethical approval from The University of Alberta Health Research Ethics Board. NACTRC approved my access to the facility and The University of Alberta Health Research Ethics Board granted me ethics approval. Once I obtained these approvals I was able to move forward with my research.

Although I conducted research with a captive population, I feel that youth who opted to participate made an informed decision and consent was obtain on a voluntary bases. Secondly, steps were taken to safeguard participants' identity. Moreover, I feel that by obtaining ethics approval from two different institutions, my research is ethically sound.

### *Recruitment/Interviews*

In this section, I discuss the research process. I include details regarding participation criteria, the recruitment process, how consent was obtained, the interview process, and the exchange of the summary letters.

For this research I engaged in purposeful sampling. Participants were selected based upon the fact that they had a significant relationship with the research topic (Tonkiss, 2006). In other words, youth were invited to participate in this research due to the fact that have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and are serving their sentence at a particular facility: Counterpoint House. When I first embarked on this research project, I proposed, that over a two month period, Philip would recruit between three to eight participants who had participated in at least eight months of the program. If a youth expressed interest in participating, Naude would let me know. I would then meet with the youth at the group home, review the research with him, and gain consent. If the youth was under the age of 18, I would obtain parental/guardian consent. However, both ethics boards and Naude had some helpful suggestions regarding number of participants and the recruitment process. In the end, I received approval for a sample size of two to five participants who engaged in a minimum of six months of the program and I revised the recruitment process.

In November 2012 I went to the group home and spoke with some of the house staff about my research; specifically regarding the recruitment and interview process. For those that were unable to make it to the meeting, I sent an email outlining the aforementioned information. In mid-December 2012, I visited the group home where, as a group, I met with five residents and two male staff members. I read the recruitment script and introduced myself and my research to the group<sup>9</sup>. The group was informed that should they decide to participate, and then terminate their involvement with this research, or they decline to participate, neither their treatment, nor their sentence would be affected. Youth who agreed to participate in the research were asked to consent to, and participate in, one 60 to 90 minute face-to-face semi-structured interview, which

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<sup>9</sup> Please see Recruitment script (Appendix B).

occurred at the house. They were also invited to review and provide feedback to a summary letter. After I finished reading the recruitment script, I asked the group if there were any questions. I was initially greeted with silence, however with staff encouragement, two residents asked questions about the purpose of the research and who the research would serve. Following the questions, a staff member asked the group whether anyone would be eligible for my research. Concerned about the undue pressure the residents might have felt, I said that it was not necessary for them to identify themselves, however, hands were already raised. At this point, there were two boys who already met the criteria and several others who would meet the criteria prior to the study closing. I left the potential participants to think about participating and reminded the group that if anyone was interested in participating, that they could obtain my phone number from staff and were welcome to call me to schedule a time to go over the consent form, and possibly schedule an interview. Several days later, I received a voice mail from a male staff member advising me that two residents were interested in participating in the research. I followed up with staff and scheduled a meeting with both of them. Staff scheduled me to meet both boys, separately, on the same day. On the agreed upon day, I went to Counterpoint House and set myself up in one of the offices typically occupied by staff. I met with one youth, reviewed the research, which included possible risks and benefits of participating in the research, and an explanation of the interview process.<sup>10</sup> He agreed to participate and provided written consent<sup>11</sup>. However, in order for him to participate, I required his parents' consent. There was some difficulty in scheduling a meeting with his parents. As a solution, Naude, who was working with the family, offered to provide them an information sheet and a consent form at their next

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<sup>10</sup> I outline possible risks and benefits in chapter 4.

<sup>11</sup> Please see Consent form and HREB checklist (Appendix C & D).

meeting<sup>12</sup>. I accepted Naude's offer. Unfortunately, due to pressing treatment issues, Naude was never able to speak with the parents about the research. I did, however, receive a call from staff who indicated that the parents would not permit their son to participate in my research. I tried to ascertain with staff as to how the parents gained information about the research, but no one was able to shed any light on this. Ultimately, despite the youth's expressed interest in participating, I could not interview him.

With regard to the second person that I met with, I again, reviewed the research and gained consent. Following these steps, I proceeded with the interview. The interview took place in the same office and ran just over an hour. I audio recorded the interview and took notes. Following the interview, I reviewed my notes and wrote a summary letter, which I dropped off at the house for the participant. I included my contact information in the letter and asked the staff to inform me if the participant chooses to provide feedback and let me know when the letter was ready for pick-up. Unfortunately, the letter, in a sealed envelope, turned up in my work mail box. I am assuming it was delivered via the inter-departmental mail.<sup>13</sup>

A third youth expressed interest in participating in my research, unfortunately he was transferred to another Alberta Health Services facility prior to me being able to meet with him. The fourth youth declined the invitation to participate. The fifth youth agreed to participate in the research. I met with him at the group home, obtained his consent and then arranged to meet with his guardian. Several days later, I met with the participant and his guardian at the group home. I reviewed the research with the guardian and obtain permission for him to participate. I returned to the group home several days later and conducted the interview, which took approximately 50 minutes. Again, the interview was audio recorded and I took notes. I followed up with a

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<sup>12</sup> Please see Parental Recruitment script and Consent form (Appendix E & F).

<sup>13</sup> Please see Appendix J for the letter

summary letter and dropped it off at the house for the youth to review. After several days, I contacted staff to see if the participant had provided or intended to provide feedback; there seemed to be some confusion regarding what I was asking. After about a week and half, I was told by staff that the participant did provide feedback. I asked that the letter not be sent in the inter-departmental mail and arranged to pick up the letter. Unfortunately, I was not able to pick up the letter as the program, for reasons I do not know, unexpectedly closed down. A staff member at the group home suggested that our shared program manager bring the letter back to my office. My manager agreed to do this. The letter was in a sealed envelope in my mail box. Due to the program closing, as well my own time constraints, I closed the research at the end of July, 2013.

In summary, although there were five Counterpoint House residents eligible to participate, four residents volunteered to partake and one declined the invitation. Despite four possible participants, in the end, only two were actually able to partake in my research. Due to my time constraints I was not able to keep the study open. With the interviews complete, I transcribed the interviews and coded them in accordance with the coding system that I developed. In the next section, I will go into detail about my coding schema and speak to the factors that will influence my analysis.

### *Analysis*

In this section, I introduce the framework that I used to derive categories of analysis and the sources of influence on my analysis. I begin by introducing the re-authoring map; this map informs my categories and subcategories of analysis. Secondly, I discuss how excerpts of the transcripts will be plotted on the re-authoring map as a means to provide a visual representation

of the interviews. For a point of reference, I provide a chart of the categories of analysis. Lastly, I discuss the factors that will influence my analysis.

*White/Re-authoring map*

As I used the re-authoring conversations as a template for my interview guide, to maintain congruency, I drew from the re-authoring map as outlined by White (2007) in *Maps of narrative practice* as a means to inform my analysis. I used the re-authoring map as a means to provide categories of analysis, as well as to chart my conversations with youth, thereby providing readers a visual representation (Appendix G). The re-authoring map is a diagram that “consists of two horizontal timelines – a landscape of action and landscape of identity”<sup>14</sup> (White, 2007, p. 83). The bottom line represents the landscape of action. For the purpose of my research, it serves as the category of analysis (Landscape of Action -- **LA**). This line encompasses events, circumstances, sequences, time, and plot. Subcategories of Landscape of Action represent time; Remote History (**RH**), Distant History (**DH**), Recent History (**ReCH**), Present (**P**), and Near Future (**NF**). In short, this bottom line highlights actions/events from the past, present, and future. It is here that I placed excerpts of transcripts that have been categorized as Landscape of Action (**LA**) and the appropriate temporal subcategory. In other words, youth’s accounts of an event and the steps taken were coded (**LA**) and plotted according to time.

The top line represents the second category of analysis (Landscape of Identity -- **LI**). Subcategories are: intentional understanding, understanding about what is accorded value, internal understandings, realization, learning, and knowledges (White, 2007). Another way of thinking about landscape of identity is that it reflects intentions, values, dream/hopes, and commitments (Carey & Russell, 2003; White, 2007). Above this line are transcript excerpts that

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<sup>14</sup> Concepts related to re-authoring conversation, such as Landscape of Action and Landscape of Identity, were discussed at length in the literature review. As such I will avoid going into detail here.



correlate with the corresponding Landscape of Action (**LA**) and demonstrate the subcategories of analysis Landscape of Identity (**LI**), intentional understandings, understanding about what is accorded value, internal understandings, realization, learning, and knowledges. In the space between Landscape of Action and Landscape of Identity is corresponding selections of transcripts that are coded (**LI**) and portray the participant's ideas about his identity and/or other's account of him.

In summary, categories of analysis were derived from the re-authoring map as discussed by White (2007) in *Maps of narrative practice*. Categories of analysis are: Landscape of Action (**LA**), with temporal subcategories of Remote History (**RH**), Distant History (**DH**), Recent History (**RecH**), Present (**P**), Near Future (**NF**), and Landscape of Identity (**LI**), with subcategories of intentions, values, hopes, dreams, and commitments, and are plotted across time.

Category of analysis	Codes
- Landscape of Action Subcategories -Remote History -Distant History -Recent History -Present -Near Future  -Landscape of Identity Subcategories -intentional understandings -understanding about what is accorded value -internal understandings -realization, learnings, knowledges	<b>(LA)</b> Subcategories <b>RH</b> <b>DH</b> <b>RecH</b> <b>P</b> <b>NF</b>  <b>(LI)</b> Subcategories <b>intentional understandings</b> <b>understanding about what is accorded value</b> <b>internal understandings</b> <b>realization, learnings, knowledges</b>

*Foucault/Naude/Flower*

I entered into the research wondering, “What would Foucault say about narrative practice with male youth who have committed sexual offences?” Given this question, my analysis will be influenced by Foucault’s work regarding modern power, since I discussed this concept in my literature review, I will refrain from going into detail here, other than to say that I am mindful of normalizing judgement. As previously mentioned in Chapter 1, I consulted with Philip Naude. I specifically inquired with Naude as to whether or not he expects there to be a shift in youth’s identity. I will draw upon Naude’s responses when analysing the transcripts. Lastly, I am cognisant that the audience, the participants, and my identity as a social worker practicing in a forensic context, will have an effect on my analysis (Alcoff, 1995; Hoskins & Stolz, 2005).

In this section I presented the re-authoring map, the source that I drew from to inform my analysis’ coding schema. I discussed how the coded transcript excerpts will be plotted on the re-authoring map, thereby providing a visual representation of my analysis of the field texts. I concluded by listing the sources that have influenced my analysis.

*Chapter summary*

To help me answer my research question: How do male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and participated in a treatment program narrate their experience of changes in their identity, I had the pleasure of interviewing two residents of Counterpoint House. The interview guide was premised on the narrative practice of re-authoring conversations, which I feel is methodologically sound with interpretative, qualitative research through a feminist lens and a framework of narrative inquiry. In addition to the interviews, I composed summary letters of the interviews, which again is in keeping with narrative practice, but it also provided an opportunity for me to engage in members check. In addition to discussing my methodologies and

methods, I presented how I intend to conduct my analysis. Prior to discussing my analysis, I will present the results in the following chapter.

## Chapter 4 Field texts and results

### *Introduction*

In this chapter I introduce my field texts, which I use to examine my research question: How do male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and participated in a treatment program narrate their experience of changes in their identity? I begin by providing a brief definition of the term *field texts* and continue by discussing my choice in language. I then present, in detail, each field text. I then proceed with my interviews with Darren and George, and follow with a discussion of the summary letters. I end the chapter with a discussion regarding the purpose my field notes.

### *Field texts*

Following in the footsteps of Clandinin and Connelly (2000), I refer to what is typically called data, as field texts. This change in language denotes that the field texts are not waiting to be discovered by the researcher, but rather are co-creations between the participant and the researcher, which reflect aspects of field experience. I think this choice in language reflects not only the philosophical underpinnings of narrative analysis but of narrative practice as well.

### *Sources of field texts*

#### *Research interviews*

My primary sources of field texts are the research interviews. In both cases, the participants allowed for the entire interview to be audio recorded, which I then transcribed in its entirety. In the transcripts, George is identified by the letter G, Darren by the letter D and myself, the interviewer, by the letter J. As previously noted, identifying information such as the participants' and key workers' names have been changed, as well as the date each participant began the program. It should be noted that George's interview was recorded with a tape recorder.

The quality of this recording is poor. Consequently, I frequently had difficulty hearing my side of the interview, and at times, George was inaudible. Due to the poor quality of the tape, I acquired a digital recorder for the second interview. The quality of this recording is much better and is apparent in the transcript. As previously stated, all of the interviews were transcribed in their entirety. Once transcribed, to ensure accuracy, I listened to the recording three times while simultaneously editing the transcript. With each round, I made note of questions and thoughts that I had in response to the interviews<sup>15</sup>. When I was done editing the transcripts, I coded them according to my coding schema. I looked for statements that either entailed Landscape of Action (**LA**), or Landscape of Identity (**LI**), and correlating subcategories. I reviewed participants' transcripts three times thereby ensuring that I did not miss any excerpts that required coding. Following this, I plotted the coded excerpts onto the re-authoring map.

In the following section, I present the coded sections of the transcripts<sup>16</sup>. As previously noted, I am working from the premise that the participants' decision to attend the group home is the unique outcome. Additionally, I hold the assumption that youth involved with the justice system tend to hold negative identities. Based on these ideas, I begin the interviews by asking the participants about what I have identified as an event (**LA**) that occurred in recent history (**ReCH**), the participant's decision to attend the group home, and about how he saw/felt about himself at that point in time (**LI**).

*George*

I begin the interview by asking George how he decided to come to the group home. Initially, he states that he did not have any say in the matter, however, while speaking with me, he realizes that he did have a choice (Lines 55-67 of the transcript):

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<sup>15</sup> I will provide further details about these notes later in the chapter.

<sup>16</sup> For full transcripts please see Appendix H (George's interview) & Appendix I (Darren's interview).

J: Okay. Um, so did you have any say as to whether or not you would come here?  
Can you think that far back?

G: Um, I don't think I had any say about [inaudible].

J: Okay.

G: But, I guess I did because Counterpoint interviews the residents to see if they  
wanna [*sic*] have therapy or not...

J: Okay.

G: ...and I said I was okay with it. (**LA – RecH**)

George figures he agreed to participate in the program as he did not want to disappoint his mother or sister. He also expresses a position of wrong-doing and a desire for help (Lines 135-143 of the transcript):

J: Okay. Um, so this is a bit of a repeat but why would it have been important to  
come to Counterpoint? Was there any other reason other than not wanting to be a  
disappointment to your mom?

G: Um, because I knew what I did was wrong. (**LI – RecH, internal  
understanding**)

J: Okay, okay. What were you sort of hoping Counterpoint would sort of help out  
with...?

G: I thought it would cure me. [Smiles]

I ask George about how he felt about himself when he first came to Counterpoint House. This question moves us from the recent history to the remote history, as George held some longstanding beliefs about himself (Lines 179-207 of transcript):

J: ...Um, you knew what you did was wrong. Um, but I am wondering about how did you kind of feel about yourself back then or how were you thinking about yourself back then? Did you feel okay, not okay, like yourself, not like yourself?

G: Ah, I didn't like myself. Not – not at all. (**LI – RecH, internal understanding**)

J: Okay.

G: Pretty low self-esteem. (**LI- RecH, internal understanding**)

J: Okay [pause] Um, okay can you say a little bit more about why you were not liking yourself or there might be low self-esteem or...

G: Um I got bullied at school a lot... (**Account - RH**)

J: Okay.

G: ...and I kind of believed them. I didn't have very many friends [inaudible] few friends.

J: Okay.

G: Um, I was bitter. I don't really know what I was bitter about, but I just was mad all the time.

Pause

J: How long had you been feeling this way, the low self-esteem and not liking yourself?

G: Um, I guess ever since kindergarten. (**LI – RH, internal understandings**)

I move the conversation to the present and ask George to think about his time at the group home and his views about himself (Lines 223-224 of the transcript):

G: I don't think I am a bad person. Um, I don't know. That's a hard question. It's hard to know what you think of yourself. I just know I don't think bad [*sic*] of myself anymore **(LI – P)**

Given George's comment, I bring the conversation back to George's identity in recent history (Line 234-251 of the transcript):

J: Um, when you came here you thought you were a bad person?

G: Ah, a little bit.

J: Yeah.

G: I didn't really [inaudible] I was a good person. I thought I was kind of worthless and kind of useless. **(LI – RecH, internal understanding)**

J: And was this um, going back to kindergarten or was this more to do with what had happened with what brought you to Counterpoint?

G: Ever since kindergarten. **(LI-RH, internal understandings)**

J: That sense of low self-esteem since kindergarten. Okay. But over the past year sounds like there has been a sense of "I am [inaudible] not a bad person"...

G: Uh-uh.

I return to my prior question and ask George about how he sees himself now. George lists off several characteristics (Line 279-292 of the transcript):

G: Ah. I think – I think I am a good person. **(LI – P, internal understanding)**

J: Okay.

G: Um, and funny... **(LI – P, internal understanding)**

J: Yeah?



G: ...um, smart, and um, um, likeable, um, [pause] happy, um, [pause]. Yeah. (**LI – P, internal understanding**)

J: Okay. So in the past year you have come to this idea that you are a good person, you're funny, you're smart, you're likeable and you're happy.

G: Uh-uh.

George feels that these characteristics are a new way of thinking about himself. He goes on to talk about what it took for him to feel this way about himself, an account of hard work (Lines 329-344 of the transcript):

J: Yeah. Um, but I guess on a serious note, you're saying you're the one who did all the hard work here?

G: Yeah.

J: Yeah? Okay. So, um, can you say more about that? What did it take, or what kind of hard work you did?

G: Um, I had to choose that I want to – to ah, to be a better person. And I had to ah, keep catching myself doing things I am not supposed to and telling myself “No I can't do that”. (**LA – P**)

J: Okay.

G: And it's really hard to catch yourself if you don't notice it or if you don't wanna [*sic*] notice it.

George speaks about why it was important for him to make the choice to “catch” himself. With these new ideas about himself and the knowledge of his efforts, George brings the conversation to his commitment to never re-offend, a possible future account (Line 457-458 of the transcript):

G: Um. I think it's that and that I know – now I have the tools and the want to never re-offend. **(LI – P/F, intentional understandings, realization and learnings)**

George talks about why, for him, it is important to never re-offend. His reasons are partly for himself, which reflect his values of freedom and relationships, but they are also, in part, to avoid behaviours that impact society and an identity associated with these behaviours (Lines 505-512 of the transcript):

J: You have already kind of answered the [inaudible] I guess what I am wondering about is why was it [*sic*] important to you to put in all this work and to – we have talked already about improving relationships and your freedom um, and not coming back to place like this. Um, would there be other reasons why it might be important for you to have done all this work here and to start to see yourself as a better person and to [inaudible]

G: Hmm. [pause] Cause, um I was a danger to society... **(LI – RecH, internal understanding)**

George explains that people are important to him, particularly friends and family. This assertion brings the conversation to his long-held hopes for his future (Lines 608-625 of the transcript):

G: What do I hope for myself in the future?

J: Yeah.

G: Well, I hope to be married and have kids. And have good relationships with other people. **(LI – F, understandings of what is accorded value)**

Pause

J: How long have you had these hopes?

G: I have always had them.

J: You've always had them? [pause] And do these hopes say anything about how you want to live your life?

G: Ah, better than I was. **(LA – F)**

With some questioning, George describes what his last statement means (Lines 653 -654 of the transcript):

G: Yeah. I guess if I had to answer it would be a functioning person in society. To help people and ah [inaudible]. **(LI - F, internal understandings)**

I ask George how the conversation has been for him. Holding true to his desire to be a helpful person, George expresses his hopes regarding his participation in my research (Lines 761-767):

J: Okay. Um, okay. How's this conversation been for you today?

G: Good.

J: Yeah? What's been good about it?

G: Um, I know I can help – this might help other people.

The interview wraps up with me wondering what staff members, or George's family, might have thought about our conversation. George responds with a statement about a long-held belief he has about himself (Lines 794-825 of the transcript):

J: I still think you are being polite. But thank you. Hmm, okay. What do you think other people might say about this conversation today, if they overheard it? If Philip or John was in the room or your mom or your sister or...

G: Hmm. That I am being honest...

J: Okay.

G: And – and. [pause] I guess it just would be honest.

J: Yeah. How would they know, I mean I don't know you! I just assumed you were being honest...

G: Yeah.

J: ...so how would they know you were being honest?

G: Because all that I have told them in the past year...

J: Okay.

G: ...but – I am actually – in my opinion I am a really honest person. (**LI – internal understanding**)

J: Okay!

G: I find it really hard to lie.

J: Has that always been the case?

G: Yeah.

In summary, George's interview takes us back and forth in time. He is fairly clear on the views he held about himself before, and during his residence at the group home. He reveals his longstanding beliefs about himself, such as he was "worthless and kind of useless." These longstanding ideas seem to have developed on account of being bullied, however, by taking the steps to attend the group home, with "hard work," choosing to "want to be a better person," and support from staff and fellow residents, George's beliefs about himself changed. He left the program with the ideas that he is "a good person," "funny," "smart," and "likeable" and with the intention to never re-offend.

#### *Darren*

As I did with George, I ask Darren to speak about how he made the decision to attend the group home (Lines 13-19 of the transcript):

J: Okay. Okay. And can you tell me how you decided to come to Counterpoint House?

D: I was given the offer.

J: You were given the offer?

D: Yeah, thought about it a little bit. And yeah and just decided to come. **(LA – RecH)**

Darren provides an account of making his decision, he “weighed the pros and cons” of attending the program. Darren figured that even though he would be away from “important people,” this would only be for a short period of time and that it was more important to access help (Lines 51-67 of the transcript):

D: Just weighed the pros and cons.

J: Yeah?

D: Yeah.

J: So the pros out weighed the cons?

D: Ah, you can get help. **(LI – RecH, intentional understanding)**

J: Okay. Okay.

D: It's only for around a year. It's not a big part of my life.

J: Okay. Any other pros or any cons you might want to mention about being here?

D: Cons would be I am away from family and friends.

Despite stating the desire to get help, Darren was not clear with respect to what specifically he was hoping to get help with. Moreover, Darren initially described himself in terms that would make one wonder why he was hoping for help (Lines 148-151 of the transcript):

J: Okay. Before you met Jason, or your probation officer suggested you come here, how did you kind of think or see yourself back then?

D: As a normal kid. (**LI – RecH, internal understanding**)

I questioned Darren's views about himself. Darren's response reveals that a small part of him does not identify as "normal" (Lines 167-186 of the transcript):

J: Yeah? Okay... So, even kind of being in trouble with the law didn't change any of that?

D: Nah [*sic*], not for the most part.

J: Not for the most part?... Sounds like there's a small part.

D: Hm. Changed how I thought about myself a little bit, but nothing really more than that.

J: Yeah? Can I ask about that small piece about how you saw yourself back then?

D: I thought I was kind of weird (**LI – RecH, internal understanding**)

J: Okay. Is it okay that I am asking about this?

D: Yeah.

Unlike George, Darren's view of himself had a short life span. However, similar to George, this view about himself has changed since participating in the program (Lines 194-210 of the transcripts):

J: Five?... Thanks. Hum. So, this thinking that this small part of you that thought that you were "kind of weird," how long had you been feeling like that for?

D: Couple of months. (**LI – RecH, internal understanding**)

[pause]

J: Okay. So, that smaller part of you that was feeling – feeling kind of “weird” about yourself, but a larger part of you was feeling kind of “normal”, hum, if you think back about that and you think about today hum, is there still a small part of you that is feeling kind of “weird” or has that changed?

D: That's changed.

J: Yeah? Is it – is that, is that part of you bigger now, or smaller, or...,

D: It's gone.

Darren states that his belief that he is “kind of weird” has changed (Lines 252-260 of the transcript):

J: Anyone else? I don't think that there is anyone else..., Okay. Hum, and so if now you're feeling at a nine what would you call that now? How you're feeling about yourself or see yourself now?

D: Positive. **(LI – P, internal understanding)**

J: Positive? Okay..., Would you call it anything else? You don't have to.

D: No.

Darren provides an account of “warming-up,” referring to the efforts he puts in at the group home, which largely entail him getting to know staff and other residents. Darren describes how he realized that he could trust and rely on the people working or living in the group home. With these trusting relationships, Darren began to see himself in a positive light (Lines 387-411 of the transcript):

J: Okay. Hum and, and by “warming up to here” what did that make possible for you then?

D: I got to know other people, and I could trust them. **(LA – P)**

J: Trust them?... , Hum, and by trusting them, hum did that make it easier for you to kind of achieve your goal to get “help”?

D: Yeah.

J: Yeah? Okay. Did it do anything else to trust them?

D: Ah, I was able to tell them more about myself.

J: Okay. And what was that like, to be able to tell them more about yourself?

D: It was a relief cause then I can start to use them as supports.

J: Okay...,Okay. Anything else at all or if there's not that's okay.

D: No.

J: Okay. Hum...,And by using them as a support and knowing that you could, did that kind of influence how you saw yourself then as well?

D: Yeah.

I ask Darren why it was important for him to take these steps. His answer reveals his intentions

(Line 432 of the transcript):

D: To benefit me in my treatment, to have..., some – something to rely on. Hum, yeah. **(LI –P, understanding about what is accorded value)**

I turn the conversation towards Darren’s hopes for his life (Lines 444-458 of the transcript):

J: Yeah? Can I ask, what you're hoping for – for yourself out of life?

D: Just to be successful in..., almost everything I do. Not just everything because I don't wanna be perfect... **(LI – R, understanding about what is accorded value)**

J: Hmm,

D: ....just want to be close to it.

[pause]



J: Hum, any ideas of things that you might like to be successful at? Or that you are hoping to be successful at?

D: Hum, treatment for one. **(LI – P/F – intentional understandings)**

I ask if there is anything else at which Darren is hoping to be successful at. He states that he hopes to be successful at whatever he is doing for a living. The conversation leads to Darren expressing what I describe as a possible philosophy on life (Lines 527-529 of the transcript):

D: Well, cause [*sic*] if you're optimistic, you set yourself up for success. But, where if you're pessimistic, you're going to set yourself up for failure. If you tell yourself you're going to fail, you're probably going to fail. **(LI – P, knowledges)**

As a closing question I ask Darren how the conversation was for him (Lines 585-592 of the transcript):

D: I learned a little bit about myself today.

J: Oh, did you?

D: Yeah.

J: Can I ask what you learned? Or you don't have to share that if you don't want to.

D: Just learned..., some..., beliefs about myself. **(LI – P, realization, learnings)**

Darren suggests that these realizations might be helpful in treatment (Lines 602-605 of the transcript):

J: Both? Okay. And can that make any difference towards your success in treatment?..., Or might it get in the way of treatment?

D: Ah, might give me a little boost.

Similarly to George's interview, I end the conversation by asking about what others might say about our conversation. Darren figures that staff would notice changes in him since he started at

the group home. With some further consideration of the question, Darren gives an account of what others might have noticed (Lines 650-669):

D: Yeah, I guess they'd notice improvements in my attitude...

J: Your attitude?

D ...Yeah. And – yeah. Just..., like..., overall skills, I guess you could say. **(LA)**

J: Okay. And what do you think they would have noticed you hum, I guess maybe doing that would have helped you change your attitude, your overall improvement in your attitude and your skills?

D: Sorry?

J: What do you think they might have noticed you doing that would have helped lead to an improvement in your attitude and your skills?

D: Ah, I guess trying new things like..., instead of letting people come to you, go to them. **(LA)**

J: Okay. Anything else?

D: Hum, not right off the top of my head.

Darren's story is bracketed by recent history and the near future, however, it is largely situated in the present. Arriving at the group home, Darren held the idea that he "was kind of weird," however, this belief about himself was short-lived. By making the effort to "warm up" to staff and residents, Darren began to trust and rely on others and to feel "positive" about himself. According to Darren, feeling "positive" about himself is a fairly new impression. Darren adds that this new view that he holds of himself might help him reach his goal of being successful at treatment. Moreover, through our conversation, Darren gained some insight into the beliefs he holds about himself. Darren felt that this realization might give him a "boost" in treatment.

In summary, both Darren's and George's notions about their identity changed over the course of their time at the group home; they both developed more positive views about themselves. However, this did not occur without work on their part. Their efforts included developing relationships with staff and other residents. With these new ways of seeing themselves, George and Darren foresee ways of living that do not include engaging in sexually abusive behaviours, but rather one focus on success, freedom and relationships.

### *Letters*

My next source of field texts is the letters I wrote to each participant. Darren and George each received a copy of the letter. They were invited to keep a copy and to return a copy, which would include their feedback to me. My intention with the letters is threefold. As previously mentioned, letter writing is an aspect of narrative practice. Secondly, I hope that Darren and George find the letters to be useful. The letters summarize their participation in the program and highlight the changes in how they see themselves from when they first entered the program, to the day of the interview. Lastly, the letters provide Darren and George an opportunity to read what I was thinking about our conversations. George and Darren were invited to clear up any misunderstandings or express their agreement or disagreement with my summary of our interviews. Thus the summary letters allowed me to engage in member checks (Riessman, 1993; Seale, 2006).

Both participants responded to their letters. Neither participant expressed any concerns with my summary of their interview, nor did they add anything to the letters. It is not clear to me whether George and Darren responded to the letters of their own volition, or if they were persuaded by staff to participate in this aspect of the research. George sent me a brief handwritten letter, which he signed with his real name. Darren wrote one line on the top of a

copy of his letter and also signed it with his real name. Additionally, I used the participants' real names in their letters. To preserve participants' anonymity, I have included scanned copies of the letters; participants' names are blacked out (Appendix J & K).

### *My notes*

I am not entirely sure how Clandinin and Connelly (2000) would classify my notes. They do not document my experience of the actual interview as *field notes* do, nor do they reflect *journal writing* but are a blend of field notes and my reflections on the field notes (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). For this research, I took two sets of notes: the notes I took during each interview and the notes I took in response to the transcripts. During the interview, I often wrote down participants' answers; these notes are participants' words and do not include any other details. During the interviews, these notes helped me keep track of participants' answers, to which, at times, I referred. I also drew from those notes while I composed the summary letters. The second set of notes was taken while I was transcribing the interviews. These notes are a reflection of my thoughts and feelings about aspects of the interview. Take for examples, the following selections.

Given the context of these interviews, I was concerned about participants' comfort. I think, at times, this apprehension influenced how I conducted the interview. For example, I try to elicit from George what he was hoping to get out of coming to the group home (Lines 135 -164 of the transcript):

- J:     Okay. Um, so this is a bit of a repeat, but why would it have been important to come to Counterpoint? Was there any other reason other than not wanting to be a disappointment to your mom?
- G:     Um, because I knew what I did was wrong.

- J: Okay, okay. What were you sort of hoping Counterpoint would sort of help out with...
- G: I thought it would cure me. [Smiles]
- J: Okay, I am curious about the – the smile or “the cure me part”.
- G: Well, well I know now that there is no cure for...
- J: Okay.
- G: ...sexual um, deviance...
- J: Okay.
- G: [inaudible]
- J: Yeah. Okay. So, it sounds like you had some hopes when you first came here.
- G: Uh-uh.
- J: Yeah. Okay, um, okay, um. And so what – so you were hoping “to be cured” to use your words. Um, and then – were you hoping for anything else?
- G: Hmm, not really...

I asked George about his smile when he made the statement “I thought it would cure me”.

George spells it out for me, however, I avoided using the same language; “sexual deviancy”. A similar situation occurred with Darren when I asked him what he was hoping to get help with. However, I quickly gave him the opportunity not to answer the question (Lines 126-133 of the transcript):

- J: Yeah? And, are you hopeful about that the program?
- D: Yeah.
- J: Okay. Anything in particular you were hoping it to be helpful with? Or – you don't necessarily have to answer that if you don't want to.

D: Not in particular.

I think, with Darren I was more anxious about his comfort than I was with George. In retrospect, my anxiousness comes across as condescending. For example (Lines 374-375 of the transcript):

J: Newer thing? Okay. Thank you. There is no right or wrong answer. Thanks for kind of choosing a direction.

Additionally, I made assumptions about participants' responses. Consequently, I did not explore some of their answers. George, for example, often made statements like (Line 311 of the transcript):

G: Um, trying to – trying to get better at being who I am supposed to be.

He also made references to being a “bad person” or a “good person”. I never asked him to say more about who he is supposed to be or how he defines a “bad person” or a “good person”. Had I done so, I think there would have been more opportunities to elicit meaning from George. I also noted that, at times, my language was pathologizing (Lines 534-535 of the transcript):

J: Yeah. Um, um I am curious who kind of gave you the idea that you are a danger to society? Is that you talking or other people talking?

My notes also include comments regarding how I formulated questions when I did not follow the interview guide. I frequently asked more than one question at a time; take for example the following question I asked Darren (Lines 46-49 of the transcript):

J: ...hum, and you decided to come. So, can I ask about – about hum, what – what did it take to make that decision to come here? Like, what might have been some of the things you thought about that would – that would make you come or were there people telling you, you had to come? Or hum, was there pressure to come?

Lastly, my notes reflect my thoughts related to my analysis. For example, when George stated that he to “choose,” to want to be a better person, I considered notion of agency in relation to humanism and poststructuralism. This is merely one example of the notes that will help me organize my discussion of the field texts. However, I will go into greater detail in the following chapter.

#### *Chapter summary*

In this chapter, I presented the field texts that will assist me in my examination of my research question. The interview transcripts demonstrate that Darren and George held negative identities when they started the program at Counterpoint House, yet, with their hard work, both participants noted a change in the way in which they viewed themselves, subsequently giving them hope about their futures. In addition to the interviews with George and Darren, I wrote summary letters to both participants and invited them to provide me with feedback. Neither George, nor Darren, expressed any concerns and each provided brief feedback. Lastly, I discussed the purpose of the notes that I took during the interviews and in response to the transcripts. I will draw on the latter set of notes in my discussion of the field texts in the following chapter.

## Chapter 5 Discussion

### *Introduction*

In this final chapter I summarize the results of this project, followed by a discussion of Reissman's second level of representation and the influence of power in the interviews. I then refer to my consultation with Philip Naude and discuss the impact of his use of language and collaborative style on participants' identities. Following this, I examine, through a Foucauldian lens, the discursive and institutional practices that were involved in participants' choice to attend and participate in Counterpoint House's treatment program. More specifically, I examine notions of choice in a forensic setting, where narrative approaches are put into practice. I conclude this chapter by discussing the limitations of my research and provided future recommendations.

### *The map*

For this research, I drew from the re-authoring map (White, 2007) to assist me in answering my research question: How do male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours and participated in a treatment program narrate their experience of changes in their identity? The map is intended to highlight unique outcomes; by tracing a history of the unique outcome individuals are able to see that the unique outcome is not an isolated incident. For this particular project, I defined the unique outcome as attending Counterpoint House, which I used as the starting point to trace histories of participants' identities.

### *Summary of the interviews*

For this research, I had the opportunity to interview two residents of Counterpoint House. In chapter four, I presented the results of these interviews, by providing excerpts of the transcripts. In the following section, I provide a brief summary of each interview<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> For George and Darren's maps please see Appendix L & M



George was clear that when he first came to Counterpoint House he did not like himself and was experiencing low self-esteem. Since kindergarten, George felt “worthless” and “useless”. In general, he did not think that he was a good person, by choosing to want to be a better person and working hard toward this goal, George came to the conclusion that he is “smart,” “funny,” and “likeable”. Moreover, he intends to never re-offend. These thoughts are in stark contrast to how he perceived himself for numerous years.

Darren entered the program with the idea that he was “kind of weird”. However, this feeling was short lived. After spending time with the staff and residents of Counterpoint House, Darren began to feel positively about himself, which gave him the confidence to strive for success, not only in his treatment, but in life in general.

While both participants described changes in their identities, I must recognize that these reports come from their own personal accounts and therefore I must be mindful of Riessman’s (1993, 2003) discussion regarding the second level of representation.

### *Representation*

Riessman’s second level of representation; *telling about experience*, encourages researchers to consider that while be interviewed, participants attempt to put their best self forward. In that case, there is a possibility that George and Darren wished for their preferred selves to be presented during the interview. Due to some of George’s responses, I wondered about this more so with George than Darren. Take for example the follow excerpt (Line 794 – 825 of the transcript):

J: I still think you are being polite. But thank you. Hmm, okay. What do you think other people might say about this conversation today, if they overheard it? If Philip or John was in the room or your mom or your sister or...

- G: Hmm. That I am being honest...
- J: Okay.
- G: And – and. [pause] I guess it just would be honest.
- J: Yeah. How would they know, I mean I don't know you! I just assumed you were being honest...
- G: Yeah.
- J: ...so how would they know you were being honest?
- G: Because all that I have told them in the past year...
- J: Okay.
- G: ...but – I am actually – in my opinion I am a really honest person. (**LI – internal understanding**)
- J: Okay!
- G: I find it really hard to lie.
- J: Has that always been the case?
- G: Yeah.

I frequently ask clients what they surmise other people, such as friends and family, might think of our conversation. I often pose this question because it can remind clients of their community of supporters, subsequently having the effect of boosting clients' confidence in the alternative story. By remembering that they have supporters, clients have expressed an increase of confidence in their ability to take steps towards a life that does not include harming others or themselves. I was surprised by George's response to my question, as I have not encountered such an answer before. His response reminded me to consider the context of the interviews.

*Power*

Given that these interviews occur in a forensic setting, there exists a power dynamic that likely influences both myself (the interviewer) and the participants. Given my position as a therapist in a forensic setting, I have been trained to ask personal questions and to expect clients to answer.<sup>18</sup> Based on my work experience, I believe that Darren and George are accustomed to being asked personal questions by a variety of strangers in positions of authority, such as lawyers, probation officers, therapists and researchers. I believe by the time that I met with George and Darren they were both used to sharing details about their personal lives, and/or they had developed strategies of resistance, such as telling the inquirer what they think the inquirer wanted to hear, thereby mollifying the person in the position of authority. However, I am assuming that Darren and George were being honest about their experiences, which resulted in changes in their ideas about their identities. My consultation with Philip helped confirm this belief.

*Naude's version*

After I completed all of the interviews, I consulted Naude, a psychologist with Counterpoint House. The consultation included an overview of Counterpoint House's practices and programming, as well as narrative therapy in relation to male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours. I specifically asked Naude whether he thought participants had undergone a change in self-perception from the beginning of their stay at Counterpoint House, to that point at which I interviewed them. Naude (personal communication, July 16, 2013) believes that participants will experience changes in their identities during their stay at Counterpoint

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<sup>18</sup> I think that in a forensic setting, therapists are expected to ask personal/intrusive questions. Over the years, as I have become more familiar with narrative practice's philosophical foundations, I have become uncomfortable with intrusive approaches.

House. He suggests that if residents did not experience shifts in their identities over the course of their involvement at Counterpoint House, it is unlikely that their attitudes and behaviours will change. The likelihood of a resident feigning change is low, as it would be difficult to sustain these attitudes and behaviours for the duration of the program (a minimum of nine months).

According to Naude,

You see it in their reaction that they show – they're more likely to show their emotions. Especially emotions that they typically would not show before. Hum, you find more consistency in what they say and what they do is more the same. You find them taking more initiative in making things happen rather than them just reacting to their environment (personal communication, July, 16, 2013).

With this statement, I immediately thought of my interview with Darren.

I left my interview with Darren wondering if he felt pressured to agree that he held a negative identity about himself when he first moved into Counterpoint House (Lines 176- 186 of the transcript):

- J: Okay. So were you feeling okay about yourself, not okay about yourself, somewhere in between?
- D: Okay about myself.
- J: Yeah? Okay..., So, even kind of being in trouble with the law didn't change any of that?
- D: Nah [*sic*], not for the most part.
- J: Not for the most part?..., Sounds like there's a small part.
- D: Hm. Changed how I thought about myself a little bit, but nothing really more than that.

J: Yeah? Can I ask about that small piece about how you saw yourself back then?

D: I thought I was kind of weird. **(LI – RecH, internal understanding)**

J: Okay. Is it okay that I am asking about this?

D: Yeah.

Although Darren stated it was “okay” that I was asking him how he felt about himself, I wondered how Darren was experiencing the interview. Later in the interview, Darren indicated that, through our conversation, he gained some insight into how he sees himself and that this newfound knowledge might give him a “boost,” thus helping him achieve his goal to be successful in treatment. I regret not asking Darren more about these beliefs. I think, had I done so, it might have led to rich story development, thereby strengthening his beliefs about himself. However, it was Naude’s comments about the noticeable changes in attitudes and behaviours in a resident that suggest changes in identity, particularly, Naude’s observations about residents taking initiatives, that assured me that Darren had experienced a change in how he views himself. Take for example (Lines 645 – 668 of the transcript):

J: Yeah? Okay. Hum. Do you think hum..., do you think they've noticed that when you came in here you were probably at a five since you started at Counterpoint and now you are at a nine? Do you think they would have noticed anything?

D: Yeah, I guess they'd notice improvements in my attitude...

J: Your attitude?

D ...Yeah. And – yeah. Just..., like..., overall skills, I guess you could say. **(LA)**

J: Okay. And what do you think they would have noticed you, hum, I guess maybe doing that would have helped you change your attitude, your overall improvement in your attitude and your skills?

D: Sorry?

J: What do you think they might have noticed you doing that would have helped lead to an improvement in your attitude and your skills?

D: Ah, I guess trying new things like..., instead of letting people come to you, go to them. (LA)

J: Okay. Anything else?

D: Hum, not right off the top of my head.

Through their participation at Counterpoint House, both Darren and George experienced changes in how they saw themselves. However, given that the overriding therapeutic approach at Counterpoint House is CBT, I realize that I cannot attribute these changes to narrative practice alone, however, I think that Darren and George's exposure to Naude's choice in language and his collaborative approach had a positive influence on their identity.

With respect to language, George, at one point, states that he was a danger to society. However, when I ask him specifically about this idea, he changes his response from an identity conclusion and labels his actions (Lines 537 – 540 of the transcript):

J: Yeah. Um, um I am curious who kind of gave you the idea that you are a danger to society? Is that you talking or other people talking?

G: Um, well I know that sexual offending is – that is a danger to society.

This is merely one example of George avoiding pathologizing language and labelling his behaviours rather than his identity.<sup>19</sup>

Secondly, I wonder about the influence of Naude's collaborative style as both Darren and George spoke of the importance that relationship played in their participation at Counterpoint

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<sup>19</sup> Please see the full transcript for more examples.

House and ultimately, the changes in their identity. George shares that the friendships he developed at Counterpoint House and the encouragement he received from staff and residents helped him feel better about himself (Line 391 – 418 of the transcript):

J: Um, okay, so, this “feeling good about yourself”, this self-esteem has been, um, a slow work in progress. A lot of work, um and trying to get better. Trying to become the person you are supposed to be is the way you put it...

G: Uh-uh.

J: ...um, okay. So, I – I'm still kind of wondering about um, were there things you had to tell yourself to make this happen? Um, were there certain steps you had to take to – to – to participate in this slow and a lot of work to help bring this self-esteem around?

G: Ah. I was being encouraged by residents and staff here. (**Account – P**)

J: Okay.

G: Um, being able to make friends here with the – the residents and kind of with the staff.

J: Yeah.

G: Um, um. [pause] I don't know.

J: That's fair. Um, ah, I am kind of – I am kind of getting this idea that you have [inaudible] comfortable by being here...

G: Uh-uh.

J: ...was that helpful with this process for you?

G: Uh-uh.

Darren also shares the effects of developing relationships at Counterpoint House (Lines 379 – 437 of the transcript):

J: Okay. [pause] We have actually answered a bunch of these that's why I am kinda [sic] of jumping ahead. I didn't realize we had already moved that far forward. Hum. [pause] Okay. So, one of things that I am wondering about though is that really what's helped you move to a nine and to feel positive about yourself is to – is that you made the effort to get to know other people here hum, and that helped you “warm up” to the place.

D: Yeah.

J: Okay. Hum and, and by “warming up to here” what did that make possible for you then?

D: I got to know other people, and I could trust them. **(LA – P)**

J: Trust them?... Hum, and by trusting them, hum did that make it easier for you to kind of achieve your goal to get “help”?

D: Yeah.

J: Yeah? Okay. Did it do anything else to trust them?

D: Ah, I was able to tell them more about myself.

J: Okay. And what was that like, to be able to tell them more about yourself?

D: It was a relief cause then I can start to use them as supports.

J: Okay..., Okay. Anything else at all or if there's not that's okay.

D: No.

J: Okay. Hum..., And by using them as a support and knowing that you could, did that kind of influence how you saw yourself then as well?



D: Yeah.

J: Yeah? Okay..., So, what I am wondering about then, is to “warm up” to them, to trust them, to achieve your goals [inaudible] to tell them more, which was a relief, so you could use them as a support, why was this even important for you to do?

D: Can you repeat the question please?

J: Yeah, sure. You made the effort to come here. You made that big choice to come here, to leave friends and family. You said “important people,” I shouldn't say friends and family, sorry. Hum and then you came here and you made the effort to “warm up” to people, which meant that you made the effort to talk to people, which was a little bit hard to do...

D: Yeah.

J: ...and by doing that you started to feel like you could trust people which, helps you achieve your goals of getting help here. Hum, to feel relief and to use them as a support. Why was it important to take all of those steps?

[pause]

D: To benefit me in my treatment, to have..., some – something to rely on. Hum, yeah. **(LI –P, understanding about what is accorded value)**

J: Okay. Can I ask what you mean by “something to rely on”?

D: Like, I have supports.

Despite the fact that I subscribe to the notion that identity is shaped in relation to our social world, I was not expecting to hear about the influence of relationships when I undertook this project. Darren and George felt supported thereby making it possible to meaningfully engage in the programming at Counterpoint House, subsequently encouraging preferred identities. Naude

(personal communication, July 16, 2013) raises the point that residents who complete the program are more likely to experience a change in their views about themselves, however, these changes are situational. Environment plays a key role in supporting the preferred identity.

According to Naude,

The more comfortable it feels, the more it fits in with their environment they are going to be living in the ah the longer it [preferred identity] will last...If they live in an environment that is contrary to these identity conclusions; if these identity conclusions is [sic] not going to be supported in fact going to be judged, or ignored, or dismissed, or laughed at, or whatever I doubt that it's gonna [sic] last. Ah, so that's why where we place kids is so important.

I think that Naude's comment sheds light on how fragile preferred identities can be and the importance of on-going support. Moreover, Naude's comment emphasises that identity is not fixed, but rather fluid, relational, and contextual.

In this section I summarized the interviews and demonstrated, based on George and Darren's accounts, that they each experienced a change in their identity conclusion – from a negative one to a preferred one. I also considered how power may have influenced the interviews and discussed how my consult with Naude validated the results. I finished this section by discussing the importance of relationships and the effects relationships have on identity. In the following section, I will examine the discursive and institutional practices that constructed Darren and George's preferred identity in the context of Counterpoint House.

*Discourse of Counterpoint House*

In this section, I examine the discursive and institutional practices that influence participants' choice to attend, and participate in Counterpoint House's treatment program. I begin by suggesting that in the context of a forensic setting, choice reflects humanist notions of agency, and that the theme of the preferred story is predetermined. Following this, I discuss how narrative practice provides participants the opportunity to choose their identity, thereby taking on a poststructuralist's definition of agency.

*The story around choice – Agency in a forensic context*

From a Foucauldian perspective, there were discursive and institutional practices that influenced participants' decisions to receive treatment at Counterpoint House. By accepting the invitation to attend the group home for a minimum of nine months, George and Darren submitted their subjectivity to the discourses of Counterpoint House. Counterpoint House is not Bentham's panopticon, but youth are agreeing to make themselves knowable to staff in order to be transformed (Foucault, 1977). By residing at, and participating in, Counterpoint House's treatment program, youth are seen as choosing to construct their identities in relation to Counterpoint House's discourses; particularly in relation to notions of responsibility and self-control.

I think the notion of choice with youth involved in the justice system is somewhat limited, and based on Davies (2005) definition, reflect humanist notions of agency:

A person entails an obligation to take oneself up as knowable, recognizable identity, who "speaks for themselves" and who accepts responsibility for their actions. Such responsibility is understood as resting on a moral base and entailing personal

commitments to the moral position implied in their choices. It is this discursive placing of responsibility that makes us, in a legalistic sense, agents by default (p. 56).

According to Naude (personal communication, July 16, 2013), youth are not volunteering to attend Counterpoint House and are likely feeling pressure from family or the justice system to attend. However, as previously mentioned, a youth must agree to participate in the program.<sup>20</sup> Naude states that “by the time they come [to Counterpoint House] they’ve seen the sense of it and they understand that there might be some benefit and they’re willing to try”. As an example, take George’s decision to attend Counterpoint House. He states that his probation officer directed him to attend Counterpoint House and that he did not have any choice in the matter, however, he eventually came to realize that he *did* have choice in the matter as he agreed to attend Counterpoint House to please primarily his mother and sister (Lines 55 – 81 of the transcript):

- J: Okay. Um, so did you have any say as to whether or not you would come here?  
Can you think that far back?
- G: Um, I don't think I had any say about [inaudible].
- J: Okay.
- G: But, I guess I did because Counterpoint interviews the residents to see if they  
wanna [*sic*] have therapy or not...
- J: Okay.
- G: ...and I said I was okay with it. **(LA - RecH)**
- J: Okay.
- G: Yeah.

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<sup>20</sup> I did not ask Naude what happens when a youth does not agree to participate in Counterpoint House. Based on my work experience with youth involved in the justice system, I can only assume the matter goes back to the referring party, typically a probation officer, to decide how/if the counselling condition will be enforced.

J: So, um, what – why – what brought around this thinking that it was okay to come?

G: Um. Um, let's see. [pause] I guess I – I was – was doing it for my mom and sister.

J: And, why would that be important to do something like that for your mom and your sister? Can I ask you about that? Or maybe [inaudible] idea.

G: Um, cause they kind of – um, I knew they loved me and I really didn't care at the time, but I didn't want to, ah, just be like a disappointment.

Despite George “choosing” to attend Counterpoint House, I think his rationale for attending the program; for his mother and sister confirms Naude’s comments that youth might be feeling some pressure to attend the program.

With respect to Darren, he was looking for help, but did not hint at what might have influenced him to decision to attend Counterpoint House (Lines 46 – 59 of the transcript):

J: ...hum, and you decided to come. So, can I ask about – about hum, what – what did it take to make that decision to come here? Like, what might have been some of the things you thought about that would – that would make you come or were there people telling you, you had to come? Or hum, was there pressure to come?

D: Just weighed the pros and cons.

J: Yeah?

D: Yeah.

J: So the pros outweighed the cons?

D: Ah, you can get help. (**LI – ReCH, intentional understanding**)

Perhaps if I had asked Darren what, or who, made him think that he needed help, we might have gained insight into the factors influencing his decision. Regardless of the influence, by agreeing

to attend Counterpoint House, Darren and George, ultimately agreed to make themselves knowable to Counterpoint House staff and adopt an alternative story: one of responsibility and self-control.

*The alternative story - Discourses of Counterpoint House*

Narrative practice makes it possible for youth to see alternative stories to the dominant story. However, when working with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours, the alternative story is a predetermined one: accepting responsibility (Jenkins, 1990; 2005 P. Naude, personal communication, Jul 16, 2013). Ideally, youth choose a story-line that includes responsibility and self-control. In short, they choose alternative stories that are in line with social norms (Chambon, 1999). However, prior to constructing an alternative story to the problem story, the behaviours and the corresponding identity that led to trouble with the law need to be examined. One could argue that by working from this premise, a therapist is engaging in an intervention. As noted in my literature review, authors Buckman, Kinney and Reese (2008) suggest that narrative therapists do not engage in interventions, as doing so indicates expertise on the therapists' part. In a forensic context, if therapists do not examine the problem, they are being negligent to the youth and to the community (P. Naude, personal communication, July 16, 2013).<sup>21</sup> However, I suggest that the ways in which a therapist goes about engaging in interventions and strategies is critical. To quote Allan Jenkins (2005),

If a young person experiences our intervention as a form of colonisation, with accompanying practices of psychological invasion and benevolent bullying, we only serve to provide yet another experience of 'being done to'; one which is very familiar to

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<sup>21</sup> I think that is difficult for narrative therapist working in a forensic setting to stay "true" to narrative practice. There is a tension between the philosophical foundations of narrative practice and the discourses of a forensic setting. I feel that there is merit in examining these ideas, however, it beyond the the scope of this project.

most disadvantaged young people. The effect on identity is to confirm the young person's marginalised state and a sense of judgement that he really is a worthless 'loser' (p. 101).

I think interventions that are informed by the philosophical approaches of narrative practice can have the opposite effect and encourage a preferred identity.

With Naude taking a narrative approach, George and Darren were able to examine the effects of their sexually abusive behaviours and to take a position regarding their behaviours. In so doing, they opted to pursue other ways of being, thereby liberating their identities from the totalizing effects of the label *sex offender*. In short, narrative practice encourages alternative stories and preferred identities that youth may not have before considered. For example, Naude encourages Darren and George to consider a life with the identity of *sex offender* (the problem story), and a life with an identity of someone who accepts responsibility and behaves accordingly (the alternative story) (P. Naude, personal communication, July 16, 2013). George accepts the alternative story, as he expresses responsibility for his actions and makes statements related to self-control. Take, for example, the following excerpts (Line 139 of the transcript):

G: Um, because I knew what I did was wrong. (**LI – RecH, intentional understandings**)

And (Lines 337 – 339 of the transcript):

G: Um, I had to choose that I want to – to ah, to be a better person. And I had to ah, keep catching myself doing things I am not supposed to and telling myself “No I can't do that”. (**LA – P**)

Moreover, George often made statements about his desire to be normal and functioning (Lines 369 – 379 of the transcript):

G: Um, so I can talk with them, have fun with them. Um, be a normal – normal person.

J: Okay.

Pause

J: This idea of being a normal person, what does that mean to you?

G: Um, I don't know. Just like, normal, like society's normal. Being able to talk to people and um, being able to make friends. And not one of those people who acts crazy on the street. [Laughs].

From a Foucauldian perspective, Darren and George successfully engaged in practices of normalization and accepted the predetermined preferred identity. George expressed a desire to be normal and to never re-offend and Darren hoped to be successful in treatment and life in general, which is in line with social norms. Yet, given that Darren and George had the opportunity to engage in therapeutic conversations predicated on narrative practice, I would argue that they did not passively agree to the alternative story.

*Choosing the preferred identity – Agency in relation to narrative practice*

Through their efforts and participation in treatment that includes narrative practice, George and Darren saw that there is a different story-line available to them, one that does not include harming others. According to Naude, residents of Counterpoint House can choose to continue to think a certain way which leads to more trouble or they can choose to change that to something that fits with hopeful, more healthy preferred identity that is accepting responsibility for their own – their past and for their future (July 16, 2013).

In this sense, I think that the notion of agency falls more in line with narrative practice's philosophies. According to Davies (2005), from a poststructural perspective, the shaping of



identity is never free from modern power. However, understanding how identity is being acted upon and to seeing that there are multiple stories within the scope of modern power, allows one to take control of one's identity. As an example George, who, since kindergarten held a very negative view of himself, choose to consider other ways to live his life. He could have chosen to continue to feel negatively about himself and to harm people, but instead George made the choice to be a better person.

Each for their own reasons, George and Darren opted to engage in treatment and adopt the discourse of Counterpoint House. With Naude's work informed by narrative practice, Darren and George were able to examine the dominant story and the alternative story, thereby giving them the opportunity to decide whether they would like to maintain the dominant identity of sex offender or construct a preferred identity of a person who takes responsibility for his behaviours (Foote & Frank, 1999). George and Darren both rejected the identity of sex offender and chose an identity that includes responsibility. Additionally, through this process, George discovered an identity that also included the ideas of "good", "funny," "smart," "likeable," "happy," and "worthwhile". Likewise, Darren found himself feeling positively about himself and subsequently felt that he could achieve his goal being successful in treatment. With these changes in self-identity, Darren and George are hopeful about their futures.

#### *Narrative practice – a vote of confidence*

Based on my interviews with Darren and George, relationship is vital to a preferred identity. As previously mentioned, both Darren and George commented on how relationships with staff and residents played a significant role by encouraging them to participate in Counterpoint House's programming, which ultimately led them to preferred identities. I did not ask George and Darren to describe the nature these relationships. However, I think that Naude's

response to my inquiry regarding strengths of narrative practice at Counterpoint House sheds some insight into the type of relationships Darren and George experienced.

Naude identifies the collaborative style of narrative practice as being a strength in the context of Counterpoint House. He suggests that a collaborative approach places “the merit in the kids’ ability to construct a new reality and a new identity. It gives them a vote of confidence as opposed to a vote of no confidence” (personal communication, July 16, 2013). Reflecting back to narrative practice’s theoretical foundations, I surmise that by Naude taking a decentered position, his use of non-pathologizing language, and his acknowledgment of Darren and George’s personhood outside of their sexually abusive behaviours gave George and Darren a sense of respect as well as the ability to see multiple stories in relation to their identity. In short, narrative practice gave George and Darren the “vote of confidence” to step into a preferred identity.

#### *Collaborative relationships in a forensic context*

A collaborative approach is a hallmark of narrative practice. As discussed in the literature review, a collaborative approach positions therapists and clients as conversational partners who learn from one another and co-construct alternative stories. However, such a partnership requires therapists to be self-reflexive; more specifically therapists need to acknowledge that they do not assume neutral positions and to consider how they take up and circulate power (Besly, 2002; Madigan, 1992; White & Epston, 1990; White, 1995; 2011). Regrettably, I did not ask Naude to go into detail about how he fosters a collaborative therapeutic relationship and how he sees his approach in relation to narrative practice, more specifically, whether or not he examines power relations in this context. If he does adopt a self-reflexive stance, does he address power relations and if so, how? As I noted in the literature review, narrative therapists should make it an ethical

priority to be transparent and open about power relationships. However, speaking from my own work experience, I am not exactly sure how transparency translates in a forensic setting.

As I previously mentioned, therapists are culturally conferred power, particularly in a forensic context. Speaking from my own work experience, I make efforts to reflect on the power that I am ascribed and the effects this power has on clients. However, I struggle with the tension that exists between the discourses of a forensic context and being completely transparent about the power relations that exist. Given this, I will continue to be critical of the effects of power in my professional and personal world. However, now that I have a better understanding of narrative practice's theoretical orientations, I hope to find a creative way to work through the aforementioned tension as doing so will allow for my practice to be ethically aligned with narrative practice. Nevertheless, I think that it would be interesting to hear from other narrative therapists who work in a forensic context about their thoughts on this subject matter. I am curious as to whether or not other therapists struggle with being "true" to narrative practice.

In conclusion, despite narrative practice's philosophical underpinnings, discursive and institutional practices of forensic settings, particularly with youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours, cannot be avoided. However, I think narrative practice offers youth the opportunity to examine the dominant stories about their identities and the dominant discourses of Counterpoint House which, in the case of George and Darren, encouraged preferred identities. In the following sections I will examine the limitations of this project, followed by a section of recommendations.

#### *Limitations and recommendations*

To begin, like many of the programs reviewed in the literature, the programming at Counterpoint House is not entirely informed by narrative practice's philosophical approaches.

Given this, I cannot say with any certainty that narrative practice encourages preferred identities with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours.

Secondly, I was only able to recruit two participants; several issues impeded my ability to access a larger sample size. For example, Counterpoint House has an open-ended in-take process and provides services to eight youth at a time. During the time frame that the study was open, there were only five residents in the house. At one point or another, all five of the residents met the participation criteria for the project. In one case, age played a part in a youth's ability to participate. Although he agreed to participate, his parent/guardian did not consent to his participation. In another case, a resident agreed to participate, but was transferred to another AHS facility. Unfortunately, I do not have ethical approval to interview participants off-site, and was thus unable to interview this individual. Lastly, due to my time constraints, I was not able to wait for new residents to become eligible to participate. However, even without any time constraints, I would not have had access to any more participants as the program closed down shortly after I completed my last interview.

Thirdly, my interview skills affected the outcome of the interviews. Overall, I tended to focus on the internal understandings and had trouble shifting the conversation to intentional understandings. While there is value in internal understandings, such understandings do not prompt a sense of agency (White, 2007). I wonder about the kinds of responses that might have been produced if I had been able to ask more intentional understanding kinds of questions. Additionally, as discussed in Chapter 4, I did not explore the general statements participants made about their identities. Had I done so, perhaps some meaningful responses would have been produced. Lastly, with respect to my consultation with Naude, I regret not asking him what

happens when a youth agrees to attend Counterpoint House, but subsequently does not accept the discourses of the program.

### *Recommendations*

Given that Counterpoint House's programming is not entirely situated in narrative practice, I cannot entirely attribute changes in Darren and George's identities to narrative practice. However, based on the results of this project, I think that there is value in repeating the interviews in a residential forensic setting that reflects the paradigm in which narrative practice is situated. Unfortunately, in my world, no such settings exist. Thus, should a similar situation occur whereby one therapist works from a narrative paradigm, I hope that a similar project could be conducted which includes interviewing staff members regarding their perceptions of narrative practice and the possible influence these practices have on them. Another option is to conduct similar interviews with youth who are in conflict with the law, are accessing services in a community-based forensic setting, and are working with a narrative therapist.

Secondly, as discussed, context and relationships are critical to shaping and supporting identity. I think that it would be interesting to do follow-up interviews with George and Darren in order to examine the effects of context, and their relationships outside of Counterpoint House, on their preferred identities. Such a project could help generate information with respect to what male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviour require to assist them in maintaining their preferred identities.

Thirdly, this project specifically looks at narrative practice and the identities of male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours. I would be interested repeating this project with a broader population, without limitations placed on the type of offense with which youth have been convicted of. I think that by generating more research examining narrative

practice with youth involved with the justice system, the more opportunities there will be for discussions about whether or not there is value in promoting a paradigm shift in the context of forensic.

Fourthly, I think that there is value in conducting an in-depth examination of the discourses of forensic agencies that provide counselling services to youth involved with the justice system. A good place to start would be to interview therapists about risk and responsibility and how they see their practice in relation to these ideas. Such a project could raise awareness of the possible effects that these discourses have on therapists and their practice. Moreover, interviewing people who are on the receiving end of these practices will highlight the effects of these discourses on clients.

Lastly, from a practical stand point, I found that mapping out participants' responses to be a very useful tool. I found that once I mapped the conversation, I had more questions for the participants. Unfortunately, the research design did not include follow-up interviews, but, from a practical point of view, I will use this idea in my work. Mapping out re-authoring conversations could generate more questions that could help produce more rich and meaningful stories for clients. Additionally, clients might find it useful to see how his or her identity has changed over time and the steps he or she took to reach this alternative view of him or herself.

In summary, there are several limitations with this project, however, given the results, I think that interviews are worth repeating with a larger sample size. Additionally, I think that an examination of the discourses in forensic settings and the effects of these discourses on therapists and clients would be beneficial. Lastly, I plan to adopt mapping as part of my practice.

*Chapter summary*

In this final chapter, I discussed my project's results. Both Darren and George experienced a shift in their identities while at Counterpoint House. I appreciate that my findings cannot be solely attributed to narrative practice, however, I find the results to be encouraging and I will continue to strive to locate my work in narrative practice. Moreover, this project has encouraged me to consider the discourses of forensic contexts and the effects of these discourses on my practice. Lastly, I feel this project contributes to the conversation surrounding narrative practice in relation to male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours.

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## Appendix A Interview guide

1a). When did you come to Counterpoint House?

1b). Can you tell me how you decided to come to Counterpoint House?

For example: What was it like to make this decision?

For example: Was it really hard, easy, or somewhere in between?

For example: How did you get ready to make this decision?

For example: Was there something you had to tell yourself?

For example: Did someone help you make this decision?

1c). Why was it important to come to Counterpoint House?

1d). What were you hoping for by coming to Counterpoint House?

2a). Tell me about how you saw yourself when you first came to Counterpoint House?

For example: Did you feel okay, not okay or somewhere in between?

For example: Did you like yourself, not like yourself, proud, not proud?

For example: On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being pretty negative, 5 middle and 10 feeling positive, about yourself where would you scale yourself?

2b). Can you tell me more about that?

For example: How long had you felt this way?

3a). Thinking about how you felt about yourself in the beginning how does that compare to now?

For example: Did you feel okay, not okay or neutral?

For example: Did you like yourself, not like yourself, proud, not proud?

For example: On a scale of 1 to 10, where do you stand on how you feel about yourself now?

3b). Can you say more about that?

For example: How long have you felt this way about yourself?

3c). This way you feel about yourself now, is this a new development or have you felt this way in the past and have recently been reconnected?

*If a new development go to questions 4*

*If reconnected go to questions 5*

**4. New development series of questions**

4a). Can you describe this development?

4b). What is this development (insert youth's description of the development) like for you?

4c). What would you call this development (insert youth's description of the development)?

4d). What made this development (if development named, insert name here) possible?

For example: Did others do anything?

For example: Did you do anything? (Landscape of action)

For example: What would others notice you doing?

4e). What would you call (insert list of actions here)? (Landscape of action)

*Go to question 6*

**5. Reconnected series of questions**

5a). What is this like for you to be reconnected to this feeling about your self (if applicable insert youth's description)?

5b). What would you call this feeling you have been reconnected to (use youth's description of the development)?

5c). Back then, what made this feeling about yourself (if feeling named, insert name here) possible?

For example: What were others doing, what were you doing? (Landscape of action)

For example: What would others notice you doing?

5d). What would you call (insert youth's list of actions here)? (Landscape of action)

6. Does (name of action) make it possible for you to feel (insert name of feeling) this way about yourself now or is it something else?

*If something else go to question 7*

***If these actions made it possible to feel this way now, go to question 8***

7. If something else, what would these actions be? (Landscape of action)

8a). Why was it important to do (insert name of actions here)? (Landscape of identity-purpose/intentions).

8b). Does (insert purpose here) say anything about the hopes you hold for yourself? (Landscape of identity -hope)

For example:

9a). Can you say more about these hopes?

For example: What are your hopes for yourself?

For example: How long have you had these hopes for yourself?

9b). Do these hopes say anything about the ways in which you would like to live your life? (Landscape of identity – principle of living)

10a). Can you say more about these ways in which you would like to live your life?

10b). What would you call (insert description)?

10c). Thinking back to the start of this conversation, the way you see yourself now, can that help with the way in which you would like to live your life (insert name or description of how youth would like to live his life) now?

10d). How so?

10e). How about in the future?

10f). How so?

11a). How has this conversation been for you today?

11b). What do you think other people would have to say about today's conversation?

## Appendix B Recruitment script

I am a master in social work student with the University of Victoria, and a therapist with the Centerpoint Young Offender out patient services. As a requirement of my master's degree I am conducting research called, *Narrative Therapy: Encouraging preferred identities with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours*. I have received approval from the program manager, University of Alberta Health Research Ethics Board, The Northern Alberta Clinical Trial and Research Centre and The University of Victoria Research Ethics Board to conduct this research. I would like to interview clients', such as yourself, who have participated in approximately 8 months of treatment at the Counterpoint House's Program.

I would like to invite you to participate in a 60-90 minute interview where I will ask you questions about; how you saw yourself when you first started in the program; how you see yourself now; and if others notice anything different about you since you have been at Counterpoint House. I will not be asking you to go into details about your charge. Rather I am interested in hearing about your experiences at Counterpoint House and whether these experiences have contributed to changes or not. No identifying information, such as your name will be used in this research.

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may decline to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without explanation. Please call me to let me know you have decided to withdraw from the study. Or alternatively you can tell Philip who will let me know about your decision. Neither Philip nor I will try to convince you to change your mind. You will not get any new charges; you will be able to continue to participate in Counterpoint House's treatment program and receive the same quality of service.

If you withdraw from the study your data will not be used, however your withdrawal from the research will be noted and included in the thesis. For example: This research started with 6 participants, however, 2 participants withdrew from the study.

Philip will remind those of you who complete approximately 8 month of treatment between now and December 2012 of this invitation to participate in my research. If you are interested he will give you my phone number and you can decide to call me and schedule a meeting. Please note that the interview may happen at the same time as a scheduled activity.

If you are under the age of 18 and you agree to participate in this research I will also need to get your parent/guardian's consent. I will either meet with them during a visit to tell them about the research and get their permission or I will phone them to tell them about the research and I will send them a consent form. Counterpoint House staff will need your consent to release parent/guardians' contact information.

Does anyone have any questions?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jennifer Flower, BA, BSW, RSW  
Centerpoint  
#701, 10242 105 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T6C 0X3  
780-428-4524 . 256

## **Appendix C Participant Consent Form**

### ***Narrative Therapy: Encouraging preferred identities with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours***

You are invited to participate in a study entitled *Narrative Therapy: Encouraging preferred identities with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours* that is being conducted by Jennifer Flower, a graduate student in the department of Social Work at the University of Victoria.

As a graduate student, I need to do a research project for a master degree in Social Work. This research is being done under the supervision of Dr. C. Richardson and has been approved by the program manager for Counterpoint House, the Northern Alberta Clinical Trial and Research Centre, University of Alberta Health Research Ethics Board and The University of Victoria Research Ethics Board.

#### **Purpose and Objectives**

With this research project I would like to answer the following question: Does narrative practice encourage positive identity conclusions with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours?

#### **Importance of this Research**

This research is important because it will help therapists understand what is helpful when working with youth who have committed sexual assaults.

#### **Participants Selection**

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are resident of Counterpoint House. If choose not to be apart of this research you will NOT receive any new charges and you will be able to stay in Counterpoint House's treatment program and still get the same quality of service.

#### **What is involved**

If you agree to take part in this research you will be interviewed one time for about 60 to 90 minutes at Counterpoint House. The interview will be tape-recorded but at any time you can ask for the tape-recorder to be turned off. I will be taking notes. You are welcome to ask me questions and see what I am writing. After the interview, I will type out the interviews. Based on my notes and the recorded interview I will write a summary letter of our conversation, which I will send you a copy of for your feedback. Feel free to make changes or add comments. This will take you about an hour. Once you are done reading the letter and made any changes, please call

me or ask staff to call me and let me know you are done. I will come to Counterpoint House and pick up the letter. If possible, please return the letter to me in two weeks.

**Inconvenience**

By taking part in this study you may miss a regularly scheduled activity at Counterpoint House.

**Risks**

Some of the questions may cause you to feel some emotions such as sadness, embarrassment. It is not my goal to make you feel uncomfortable; I have made efforts to avoid this during the interview. Philip Naude will check in with you to see how you are doing after the interview and after you receive the summary letter. You can also speak to your key worker.

**Benefits**

Taking part in the research can give you the chance to think about all the work you have done in counselling and help me and other therapist to get a better understanding of what is helpful for youth involved in the justice system. Also the information you share might lead to program changes.

**Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If you decide to take part in the research, you can back out at any time without any consequences or any explanation. You will, not be charged, stay in Counterpoint House's treatment program and still get the same quality of service. If you decide to leave the study please call me at 780-428-4524 ext. 256 to let me know about your decision. Or you can tell Philip who will let me know about your decision. No one will try to get you to change your mind. If you back out of the study your data will not be used, I will include in my paper that a participant left the research. For example: This research started with 6 participants, but 2 participants left the study.

**Anonymity**

To protect your identity you and I will come up with a different name for you which will be used in the research. No identifying information like your name, will be recorded. Information that could identify you will be altered. If Counterpoint House staff or other residents choose to read my paper they might be able to guess your identity. Lastly, because interviews are taking place at Counterpoint House, other residents and staff will probably know that you choose to participate in this research but they will not be in the interviews.

**Confidentiality**

I will protect your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data by storing data such as tapes and hand written and typed notes in a locked filing cabinet, which is in a locked office. Any computer files will be password protected. However, if you threaten to hurt yourself or someone else, or talk about any unreported sexual assaults or situations where someone under the age 18 is being harmed; by law I cannot keep that information private.



### **Dissemination of Results**

The results of this study will be presented in my final paper and presentation for school. A copy of the final paper will be available at the University of Victoria's library. The results may also be used in presentations for other professionals. Finally, the results may be published in an article.

### **Disposal of Data**

Data from this study will be destroyed five years after the study is done. Audio-tapes and electronic data will be erased and typed information will be shredded.

### **Contacts**

If you have any question or concerns you can contact the researcher, Jennifer Flower, at 780-428-4524 extension 256 and research supervisor, Dr. Cathy Richardson at 250-472-4632.

You may check the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)) and/or the University of Alberta Research Ethics Office (780-492-2615).

Your signature below means that you understand the above conditions of taking part in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you agree to participate in this research project.

Please note: if you are under the age of 18 your parent/guardian's will need to agree to your participation in this research. I may need their contact information such as their phone number and mailing address. You can either write the contact information in the spot below or with your consent Counterpoint House staff can give it to Jennifer Flower. By signing below, I consent to Counterpoint House releasing my parent(s)/guardian's contact information to Jennifer Flower for the purposes of providing consent for my participation in this research project. I understand the risks and benefits of providing this consent and I understand that I may revoke this consent at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parents/guardian contact information

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Participant*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

***A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.***

### Appendix D HREB Checklist

**Title of Project: Narrative Therapy Encouraging preferred identities with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours**

Principal Investigator(s): Jennifer Flower

Phone Number(s): 780-428-4524 ext. 256

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research study?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you read and received a copy of the attached Information Sheet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you understand that you are free to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to give a reason and without affecting your future medical care?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the issue of confidentiality been explained to you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you want the investigator(s) to inform your family doctor that you are participating in this research study? If so, give his/her name _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you understand who will have access to the information you provide?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Who explained this study to you?  
\_\_\_\_\_

I agree to take part in this study: YES  NO

Signature of Research Subject  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Printed Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the study and voluntarily agrees to participate.

Signature of Investigator or Designee \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**THE INFORMATION SHEET MUST BE ATTACHED TO THIS CONSENT FORM AND A COPY GIVEN TO THE RESEARCH SUBJECT**

### Appendix E Recruitment script for parents

I am a master in social work student with the University of Victoria, and a therapist with the Centerpoint Young Offender out-patient services. As a requirement of my master's degree I am conducting research called, *Narrative Therapy: Encouraging preferred identities with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours*. I have received approval from Counterpoint House's program manager, University of Alberta Health Research Ethics Board, The Northern Alberta Clinical Trial and Research Centre and The University of Victoria Research Ethics Board to conduct this research. I would like to interview youth who have participated in approximately 8 months of treatment at the Counterpoint House's Program. I have invited clients at Counterpoint House to participate in an individual 60-90 minute interview where I will ask them questions about; how they saw themselves when they first started in the program; how they see themselves now; and if others notice anything different about them since they have been at Counterpoint House. I will not be asking participants to go into details about their charge. Rather, I am interested in hearing about their experiences at Counterpoint House and whether these experiences have contributed to changes or not. No identifying information, such as names will be used in this research. Please note: interviews may happen at the same time as a scheduled activity.

Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Youth may decline to participate or withdraw from the study at any time without explanation. Participants have been asked to call me to let me know that they have decided to withdraw from the study. Or alternatively they can tell Philip who will let me know about his decision. Neither Philip nor I will try to convince a youth to change his mind. Youth will, not get any new charges, continue to participate in Counterpoint House's treatment program, and receive the same quality of service.

If a youth withdraws from the study his data will not be used, however the withdrawal from the research will be noted and included in the thesis. For example: This research started with 6 participants, however, 2 participants withdrew from the study.

Philip will remind those youth who have completed approximately 8 month of treatment between now and December 2012 of this invitation to participate in my research. Philip has giving my phone number to youth who have expressed interest in participating. You are being informed of this research because \_\_\_\_\_ has contacted me to schedule an interview. I am seeking your consent for \_\_\_\_\_ participation.

Do you have any questions?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jennifer Flower, BA, BSW, RSW  
Centerpoint  
#701 10242 105 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T6C 0X3  
780-428-4524 ext.256

## Appendix F Parental/Guardian Consent Form

### *Narrative Therapy: Encouraging preferred identities with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours*

\_\_\_\_\_ has given consent to participate in a study entitled *Narrative Therapy: Encouraging preferred identities with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours* that is being conducted by Jennifer Flower, a graduate student in the department of Social Work at the University of Victoria.

As a graduate student, I am required to conduct research as part of the requirements for a master degree in Social Work. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. C. Richardson and has received approval from Counterpoint House's program manager, the Northern Alberta Clinical Trial and Research Centre, The University of Alberta Health Research Ethics Board and The University of Victoria Research Ethics Board.

#### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this research project is to answer the following question: Does narrative practice encourage positive identity conclusions with male youth who have engaged in sexually abusive behaviours?

#### **Importance of this Research**

Research of this type is important because it will contribute to the relatively unexplored area of counselling with youth who have committed sexual assaults.

#### **Participants Selection**

Residents of Counterpoint House are invited to voluntarily participate in this study. Please note: if a youth is not interested in participating he will, NOT receive any new charges, continue to participate in Counterpoint House's treatment program and receive the same quality of service.

#### **What is involved**

Participation in this study consists of one 60-90 minute interview that will occur at Counterpoint House. The interview will be tape-recorded, however, at any time the participant can ask that the tape-recorder be turned off. I will also be taking notes. The participant is welcome to ask me questions and view what I am writing. Following the interview, I will transcribe the interviews. Based on my notes and the recorded interview I will write a summary letter of the conversation, which I will send a copy to the participant for his feedback. The youth will be invited to make changes or add comments. This will take about an hour of his time. Once the youth is done

reading the letter and made any changes, he will either call me or ask staff to call me and let me know that his is done. I will come to Counterpoint House and pick up the letter. I am asking that the letter be returned to me within two weeks of receiving it.

### **Inconvenience**

Participation in this study may interfere with regular scheduled activities at Counterpoint House.

### **Risks**

There is the potential that some of the questions may cause a participant some emotional stress such as sadness, embarrassment. It is not my goal to make participants feel uncomfortable; I have made efforts to avoid this during the interview. Philip Naude will check in with the participant to see how he is doing after the interview and after he receives the summary letter. Also the participant can speak to his key worker.

### **Benefits**

The potential benefits for a youth to participate in this research includes an opportunity for him to think about his efforts and experiences in counselling. Furthermore his participation can contribute to my understanding of what is helpful with youth involved in the justice system; may lead to program changes; and contribute to a relatively unexplored topic.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Participation in this research must be completely voluntary. If a youth decides to participate, he may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If he decides to withdraw from the study, I ask that he call me at 780-428-4524 ext. 256 to let me know about his decision. Or alternatively, he can tell Philip who will let me know about his decision. Neither Philip nor I will try to convince a youth to change his mind. He will NOT receive any new charges, he will be able to continue to participate in Counterpoint House's treatment program and receive the same quality of service. If a participant withdraws from the study his data will not be used, however, the withdrawal from the research will be noted and included in my paper. For example: This research started with 6 participants but 2 participants withdrew from the study.

### **Anonymity**

In terms of protecting participants' anonymity, the youth and I will come up with a different name for him that will be used in the research. No identifying information will be recorded. Information that could identify the participant will be altered. However, if Counterpoint House staff or other residents choose to read the thesis they might be able to guess the youth's identity. Lastly, because interviews are taking place at Counterpoint House, other residents and staff will likely know that a youth has chosen to participate in this research but they will not be present in the interviews.

### **Confidentiality**

I will protect youth's confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data by storing data such as tapes and paper transcripts in a locked filing cabinet, which is located in a locked office. Any computer files will be password protected. However, I am required by law to report any disclosures of threats to harm self or others, any unreported sexual assaults or situations where someone under the age of 18 is being harmed.

**Dissemination of Results**

The results of this study will be presented in my final paper and presentation for school. A copy of my thesis will be available at the University of Victoria's library. The results may also be used in presentations for other professionals. Finally, the results may be published in an article.

**Disposal of Data**

Data from this study will be destroyed upon the completion of my school work. Audio-tapes and electronic data will be erased and transcripts will be shredded.

**Contacts**

Individuals that may be contacted regarding this study include the researcher, Jennifer Flower, at 780-428-4524 extension 256 and research supervisor, Dr. Cathy Richardson at 250-472-4632. In addition, you may check the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria (250-472-4545 or [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca)) and/or the University of Alberta Research Ethics Office (780-492-2615).

Your signature below indicates that you understand the above conditions of \_\_\_\_\_ participation in this study, that you have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researchers, and that you agree to \_\_\_\_\_ participation in this research project.

<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
----------------------------	------------------	-------------

***A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.***

## Appendix G Re-authoring map

(White, 2007, p. 84-85)

intentions/values/hopes/dreams/commitments

### Landscape of Identity

-intentional understandings  
 -understanding about what is  
 accorded value  
 -internal understandings  
 -realization, learnings,  
 knowledges

---

Youth's ideas about his identity and other's account of him  
 (attitudes and beliefs)

### Landscape of Action

-events  
 -circumstances  
 -sequences  
 -time  
 -plot

---

Account's and steps taken

Remote History

Distant History

Recent History

Present

Near Future

**Appendix H George's interview**

1 Transcript

2

3 Interview: Jennifer Flower (J)

4 Interviewee: George Stark (G)

5 Interview took place at Counterpoint House, Edmonton, Alberta

6 January 16, 2012

7

8 J: Okay, so, George, can you tell me when you first came to Counterpoint House?

9

10 G: Ah, \_\_\_\_\_

11

12 J: Wow, it has been \_\_\_\_\_ hey?

13

14 G: Yup

15

16 J: Wow, okay. Can you tell me how you decided to come to Counterpoint House?

17

18 G: Um, my, my, um, my, ah, I think it was the Crown Prosecutor who had the idea and my  
19 probation officer after my court, my final court date, um said this is what – this the  
20 program that I was gonna [*sic*] be going to.

21

22 J: Okay.

23

24 G: And, yeah!

25

26 J: Okay, were – were you told by your probation officer that you had to come here?

27

28 G: It's on – it's one of my conditions I have to be in therapy or something.

29

30 J: Okay, but did it specifically say you had to come to Counterpoint House...

31

32 G: No.

33

34 J: ...or you just had to take particular...

35

36 G: No, I had to take – I had to ah attend ah the therapy my probation officer decided.

37

38 J: Okay. Um, okay. [inaudible] your words here. Okay. Um, so your probation officer told  
39 you about this program and told you, you had to attend. Can I ask you what you thought  
40 about that?

41



42 G: Um, I was kind of like dazed and like shocked so I didn't really think about it or if it was  
43 a good thing or a bad thing.  
44

45 J: Were you dazed and shocked about having to come here or just the whole court process...  
46

47 G: The court process  
48

49 J: ...that had happened? Okay. So, didn't think about it?  
50

51 G: No.  
52

53 [pause]  
54

55 J: Okay. Um, so did you have any say as to whether or not you would come here? Can you  
56 think that far back?  
57

58 G: Um, I don't think I had any say about [inaudible].  
59

60 J: Okay.  
61

62 G: But, I guess I did because Counterpoint interviews the residents to see if they wanna [sic]  
63 have therapy or not...  
64

65 J: Okay.  
66

67 G: ...and I said I was okay with it. **(LA - Rech)**  
68

69 J: Okay.  
70

71 G: Yeah.  
72

73 J: So, um, what – why – what brought around this thinking that it was okay to come?  
74

75 G: Um. Um, let's see. [pause] I guess I – I was – was doing it for my mom and sister.  
76

77 J: And, why would that be important to do something like that for your mom and your  
78 sister? Can I ask you about that? Or maybe [inaudible] idea.  
79

80 G: Um, cause they kind of – um, I knew they loved me and I really didn't care at the time,  
81 but I didn't want to, ah, just be like a disappointment.  
82

83 J: Okay. You didn't care at the Time but you didn't want to be a disappointment?  
84

85 G: Yeah.  
86

87 J: Okay. To your mom and sister?

88  
89 G: Yeah.  
90  
91 J: Okay. Was that a hard choice to make?  
92  
93 G: Um.  
94  
95 J: Or was it easy, or...?  
96  
97 G: Not really because I um my mom had kicked me out in \_\_\_\_\_ and I moved in with  
98 my dad...  
99  
100 J: Okay.  
101  
102 G: ...so I lived with him for a year and then for the court I – after – on \_\_\_\_\_ I had to  
103 move back in with my mom because I couldn't live with my dad any more cause my  
104 probation officer said I couldn't.  
105  
106 J: Okay.  
107  
108 G: Um, so I was juggling around a lot in my head and I got kicked out of my mom's house  
109 and then I had to move back and then I came here 2 months later....  
110  
111 J: Okay.  
112  
113 G: ...or about 2 months later.  
114  
115 J: Okay. Um, so – sorry you got kicked out mom's, went to dad's but you're not allowed to  
116 live there any more, went back to mom's...  
117  
118 G: Uh-uh  
119  
120 J: ...and got kicked out of mom's again? No...  
121  
122 G: No, I moved here.  
123  
124 J: ...no you moved here. Got it! Okay. Okay, so um [pause] Okay. So it sounds like  
125 someone else kind of helped you make the decision to come here then.  
126  
127 G: Yeah.  
128  
129 J: Okay, fair enough. Um, but you are also saying that it was kind of important for your  
130 mom and your sister. Um, you knew that they loved you and you didn't care at the time  
131 but you didn't want to be a disappointment to them.  
132  
133 G: Uh-uh.

134  
135 J: Okay. Um, so this is a bit of a repeat, but why would it have been important to come to  
136 Counterpoint? Was there any other reason other than not wanting to be a disappointment  
137 to your mom?  
138  
139 G: Um, because I knew what I did was wrong. (**LI – RecH, intentional understandings**)  
140  
141 J: Okay, okay. What were you sort of hoping Counterpoint would sort of help out with...?  
142  
143 G: I thought it would cure me. [smiles]  
144  
145 J: Okay, I am curious about the – the smile or “the cure me part”.  
146  
147 G: Well, well I know now that there is no cure for...  
148  
149 J: Okay.  
150  
151 G: ...sexual um, deviance...  
152  
153 J: Okay.  
154  
155 G: [inaudible]  
156  
157 J: Yeah. Okay. So, it sounds like you had some hopes when you first came here.  
158  
159 G: Uh-uh.  
160  
161 J: Yeah. Okay, um, okay, um. And so what – so you were hoping “to be cured” to use your  
162 words. Um, and then – were you hoping for anything else?  
163  
164 G: Hmm, not really...  
165  
166 J: No.  
167  
168 G: ...so I could lead my life – lead my life as it was before.  
169  
170 J: Lead your life as it was before?  
171  
172 G: Yeah.  
173  
174 J: Okay. [pause] Probably come back to that. Just putting a little star there okay? Um, so  
175 when you first came here...  
176  
177 G: Yup.  
178

- 179 J: ...Um, you knew what you did was wrong. Um, but I am wondering about how did you  
180 kind of feel about yourself back then or how were you thinking about yourself back then?  
181 Did you feel okay, not okay, like yourself, not like yourself?  
182
- 183 G: Ah, I didn't like myself. Not – not at all. (**LI – RecH, internal understanding**)  
184
- 185 J: Okay.  
186
- 187 G: Pretty low self-esteem. (**LI – RecH, internal understanding**)  
188
- 189 J: Okay [pause] Um, okay can you say a little bit more about why you were not liking  
190 yourself or there might be low self-esteem or...  
191
- 192 G: Um I got bullied at school a lot... (**Account – RH**)  
193
- 194 J: Okay.  
195
- 196 G: ...and I kind of believed them. I didn't have very many friends [inaudible] few friends  
197
- 198 J: Okay.  
199
- 200 G: Um, I was bitter. I don't really know what I was bitter about, but I just was mad all the  
201 time.  
202
- 203 [pause]  
204
- 205 J: How long had you been feeling this way, the low self-esteem and not liking yourself?  
206
- 207 G: Um, I guess ever since kindergarten. (**LI – RH, internal understandings**)  
208
- 209 J: That's a long time. [inaudible]  
210
- 211 G: Yeah.  
212
- 213 J: Okay. [inaudible] So, thinking about how you were feeling when you first came here, the  
214 low self-esteem, not liking yourself, um, history of being bullied, um, few friends and  
215 bitter and mad all the time and that feeling had been around for a long time, um thinking  
216 about then and compared to now, um, how do you think you are feeling about yourself  
217 now? Okay, not okay?  
218
- 219 G: Ah, I have a lot more self-esteem.  
220
- 221 J: Okay.  
222

- 223 G: I don't think I am a bad person. Um, I don't know. That's a hard question. It's hard to  
224 know what you think of yourself. I just know I don't think bad [*sic*] of myself anymore.  
225 **(LI – P)**  
226
- 227 [pause]  
228
- 229 J: I just want to make sure I heard this right, that there is more self-esteem and you don't  
230 think “I am a bad person”, um and that you don't think “bad” of yourself anymore.  
231
- 232 G: Uh-uh.  
233
- 234 J: Um, when you came here you thought you were a bad person?  
235
- 236 G: Ah, a little bit.  
237
- 238 J: Yeah.  
239
- 240 G: I didn't really [inaudible] I was a good person. I thought I was kind of worthless and kind  
241 of useless. **(LI – RecH, internal understandings)**  
242
- 243 J: And was this um, going back to kindergarten or was this more to do with what had  
244 happened with what brought you to Counterpoint?  
245
- 246 G: Ever since kindergarten. **(LI-RH, internal understandings)**  
247
- 248 J: That sense of low self-esteem since kindergarten. Okay. But over the past year sounds  
249 like there has been a sense of “I am [inaudible] not a bad person”...  
250
- 251 G: Uh-uh.  
252
- 253 J: ...and more self-esteem. Okay. Um, I am just kind – I'm – I'm interested to know more  
254 about that.  
255
- 256 G: Uh-uh.  
257
- 258 J: Um, so, you kind of have a lot to say about how you felt when you first came here.  
259 Right? Can you say a little bit more about [inaudible] this self-esteem, you are not seeing  
260 yourself as a “bad person”. How are you feeling about yourself now?  
261
- 262 G: Um...  
263
- 264 J: I guess I kind of questioned you on that one? Hey? [inaudible]. [laughs]  
265
- 266 G: Well, I – I don't really think I thought of it.  
267

- 268 J: Yeah? Okay. Is it a question worth thinking about or not so much cause we can move on  
269 if you like?  
270
- 271 G: It's worth thinking about.  
272
- 273 J: Yeah, how come?  
274
- 275 G: Um, cause it's good to know.  
276
- 277 J: Okay.  
278
- 279 G: Ah. I think – I think I am a good person. **(LI – P, internal understandings)**  
280
- 281 J: Okay.  
282
- 283 G: Um, and funny... **(LI – P, internal understandings)**  
284
- 285 J: Yeah?  
286
- 287 G: ...um, smart, and um, um, likeable, um, [pause] happy, um, [pause]. Yeah.  
288
- 289 J: Okay. So in the past year you have come to this idea that you are a good person, you're  
290 funny, you're smart, you're likeable and you're happy. **(LI – P, internal understandings)**  
291
- 292 G: Uh-uh.  
293
- 294 J: Okay. So, um, this next question I want to ask you it um, it – I think it sounds a little bit  
295 repetitive because I think you have already cleared this up for me but I want to make sure  
296 I ask it anyways. Make sure that – I do have – that I am thinking about this the right way.  
297 So, the way you are feeling about yourself now so that you think you are a good person  
298 [inaudible] and that you are funny, you're smart, you're likeable, you're happy. Is this a  
299 new development or have you felt this way in the past at any point and just recently been  
300 re-connected to that feeling [inaudible]?  
301
- 302 G: I think it's new.  
303
- 304 J: Yeah. Kind of thought that's what you were saying giving everything you said but just  
305 wanted to double check. Okay, alright. So, can you say a bit more about this  
306 development, like, um, how did it kind of come around for you?  
307
- 308 G: Ah, slowly. I think it was a lot of work. **(Account – P)**  
309
- 310 J: Okay.  
311
- 312 G: Um, trying to – trying to get better at being who I am suppose to be.  
313

314 [pause]  
315  
316 J: Can I ask about this idea of a lot of work? Yeah? Okay. Um, so who did a lot of work  
317 here? You? Other people?  
318  
319 G: Me...  
320  
321 J: Yeah?  
322  
323 G ...and staff had to do a lot of paper work and had to talk to each other all the time.  
324  
325 J: [laughs] Okay. That's a lot of hard work hey?  
326  
327 G: Yeah.  
328  
329 J: Yeah. Um, but I guess on a serious note, you're saying you're the one who did all the  
330 hard work here?  
331  
332 G: Yeah.  
333  
334 J: Yeah? Okay. So, um, can you say more about that? What did it take, or what kind of hard  
335 work you did?  
336  
337 G: Um, I had to choose that I want to – to ah, to be a better person. And I had to ah, keep  
338 catching myself doing things I am not suppose to and telling myself “No I can't do that.”.  
339 (LA – P)  
340  
341 J: Okay.  
342  
343 G: And it's really hard to catch yourself if you don't notice it or if you don't wanna [sic]  
344 notice it.  
345  
346 J: Okay. [pause] So, um, so why did you choose to notice it?  
347  
348 G: Um, because I wanted to get out of here faster so I wouldn't have to drag out how long I  
349 would be here. And...[laughs]  
350  
351 J: I appreciate your honesty [laughs].  
352  
353 G: Yeah. And so I can go home and make better relationships with my friends and my mom  
354 and my sister.  
355  
356 J: Okay. Okay, so the desire to get out but there is also this goal to make better  
357 relationships.  
358  
359 G: Uh-uh.

- 360  
361 J: Okay. [pause] So, better relationships with mom, sister, friends, and did you say “myself”  
362 or did I hear that...  
363  
364 SIDE 1 OF TAPE ENDS  
365  
366 J: So why is it important to have better relationships with your mom, your sister and your  
367 friends?  
368  
369 G: Um, so I can talk with them, have fun with them. Um, be a normal – normal person.  
370  
371 J: Okay.  
372  
373 [pause]  
374  
375 J: This idea of being a normal person, what does that mean to you?  
376  
377 G: Um, I don't know. Just like, normal, like society's normal. Being able to talk to people  
378 and um, being able to make friends. And not one of those people who acts crazy on the  
379 street. [laughs].  
380  
381 J: Okay. Do you – do you think – like are you surprised that you are sitting here today  
382 doing this interview?  
383  
384 G: No.  
385  
386 J: No? Okay. Okay I was just wondering if, you – you – okay. I didn't know you before  
387 right?  
388  
389 G: Uh-uh.  
390  
391 J: Um, okay, so, this “feeling good about yourself,” this self-esteem has been, um, a slow  
392 work in progress. A lot of work, um and trying to get better. Trying to become the person  
393 you are suppose to be is the way you put it..  
394  
395 G: Uh-uh.  
396  
397 J: ...um, okay. So, I – I'm still kind of wondering about um, were there things you had to  
398 tell yourself to make this happen? Um, were there certain steps you had to take to – to –  
399 to participate in this slow and a lot of work to help bring this self-esteem around?  
400  
401 G: Ah. I was being encouraged by residents and staff here. (**Account – P**)  
402  
403 J: Okay.  
404  
405 G: Um, being able to make friends here with the – the residents and kind of with the staff.



406  
407 J: Yeah.  
408  
409 G: Um, um. [pause] I don't know.  
410  
411 J: That's fair. Um, ah, I am kind of – I am kind of getting this idea that you have [inaudible]  
412 comfortable by being here...  
413  
414 G: Uh-uh.  
415  
416 J: ...was that helpful with this process for you?  
417  
418 G: Uh-uh.  
419  
420 J: Um, okay. Um, and I am not going to do it but just say we brought in – do you have a key  
421 worker?  
422  
423 G: John.  
424  
425 J: John? Okay. So if we brought in John or we brought in Philip today and said “so you  
426 know – what do you think it took for George to do this? To be able to do this hard work  
427 and to participate in this program and to get self-esteem out of it and become this better  
428 person?” [sic]? Do you think they would be able to [inaudible] noticed you doing?  
429  
430 G: Uh-uh.  
431  
432 J: Yeah? What do you think they would say?  
433  
434 G: Um. [pause] I don't know.  
435  
436 J: [laughs]. But you are guessing that they would have noticed something?  
437  
438 G: Yeah.  
439  
440 J: Okay. Pause. Hmm, I am curious about that one now. But I am going to have let it go  
441 because you are not sure.  
442  
443 G: Uh-uh.  
444  
445 J: Okay. So all this hard work um that you have done, a lot of work you have done, um, in  
446 trying to become the person you are suppose to be, that you have made this choice to  
447 become a better person...  
448  
449 G: Uh-uh.  
450

- 451 J: ...you made this choice to um, catch yourself doing something you're not supposed to do  
452 and tell yourself not to do it. Um, that you have made this choice to want to improve your  
453 relationships with your mom and your sister and your friends. Um, is that all the things  
454 making you feel how you are feeling about yourself now; feeling good about yourself or  
455 is it something else?  
456
- 457 G: Um. I think it's that and that I know – now I have the tools and the want to never re-  
458 offend. **(LI – P/F intentional understandings, realization and learnings)**  
459
- 460 J: Okay [pause] Can I ask why you never want to re-offend? I don't know if that's  
461 [inaudible]...  
462
- 463 G: Um  
464
- 465 J: ....[inaudible]  
466
- 467 G: I don't want to re-offend because it wrecks my relationships; it puts me in places like this.  
468 Ha! **(Account – F)**  
469
- 470 J: Yeah.  
471
- 472 G: And if I were to offend now, then I won't be coming back to a place like this. I would be  
473 going to jail.  
474
- 475 J: Hmm. If you came back to a place like this or jail what would be the big deal with that?  
476
- 477 G: Um, it puts a halt in my life. Like, I have only seen my friends once since, ah, \_\_\_\_\_,  
478 actually probably the Sunday which they [inaudible]  
479
- 480 J: Oh, okay.  
481
- 482 G: So, ah I saw them at \_\_\_\_\_time.  
483
- 484 J: Yeah?  
485
- 486 G: Um, I forget the question.  
487
- 488 J: I was just wondering about what would be the big deal if you came back to a place like  
489 this or you went to jail. You said it would put a “halt” on your life, wreck your  
490 relationships, um [inaudible] you don't get to see your friends very much. Any other  
491 reasons? Or is that [inaudible]  
492
- 493 G: Um, yeah, just – I can't – I don't have as much freedom...  
494
- 495 J: Okay.  
496

- 497 G: ... here as I do at home.  
498  
499 J: Freedom's important to you?  
500  
501 G: Uh-uh.  
502  
503 [pause]  
504  
505 J: You have already kind of answered the [inaudible] I guess what I am wondering about is  
506 why was it important to you to put in all this work and to – we have talked already about  
507 improving relationships and your freedom um, and not coming back to place like this.  
508 Um, would there be other reasons why it might be important for you to have done all this  
509 work here and to start to see yourself as a better person and to [inaudible]  
510  
511 G: Hmm. [pause] Cause, um I was a danger to society... **(LI – RecH, internal**  
512 **understanding)**  
513  
514 J: Okay.  
515  
516 G: ...and, hmm I was told to. [pause] Could you repeat the question?  
517  
518 J: Yeah. I have another one now. [Laughs] But [inaudible] what I think I was wondering is  
519 why was it important for you to do all this work? Um...  
520  
521 G: Um.  
522  
523 J: ...You made that choice to come here, um, even though you were told to, you came to the  
524 interview and said “Okay, yes I am going to do this.” um “I don't want to disappoint  
525 people”, um and when you got here you put in the work while you were here...  
526  
527 G: Uh-uh.  
528  
529 J: [inaudible] um, hard work, slowly over time, um started to feel better about yourself  
530 through all that hard work. I guess I am just wondering if there are any other reasons it  
531 was important to do all that.  
532  
533 [pause]  
534  
535 G: So I could be me. Um, um, [pause]. Yeah.  
536  
537 J: Yeah. Um, um I am curious who kind of gave you the idea that you are a danger to  
538 society? Is that you talking or other people talking?  
539  
540 G: Um, well I know that sexual offending is – that is a danger to society.  
541  
542 J: Okay.

543  
544 G: Um, yeah so.  
545  
546 J: Is that kind of just through being here? [inaudible]  
547  
548 G: Yeah.  
549  
550 J: Okay. I was just wondering if anyone had specifically said “You are a danger to society”  
551 [inaudible] that’s just something you picked-up by being here [inaudible]?  
552  
553 G: Uh-uh.  
554  
555 J: And you don't want to be a danger to society.  
556  
557 G: Uh-uh.  
558  
559 [pause]  
560  
561 J: Um, so not wanting to be a danger to society, but you want to [inaudible] um, what does  
562 that say about what's important to you in life?  
563  
564 [pause]  
565  
566 G: Um, people are important.  
567  
568 J: People?  
569  
570 G: Um, yes [inaudible] important to me  
571  
572 J: Are there certain people you are thinking about?  
573  
574 G: Friends and family.  
575  
576 Pause  
577  
578 J: Friends and family [inaudible] I am just wondering...  
579  
580 G: [yawns]  
581  
582 J: [laughs]. You look like you are starting to get bored.  
583  
584 G: I am really tired.  
585  
586 J: You are tired? Oh! How come?  
587

- 588 G: Cause [*sic*] I don't think I get enough sleep. Eight hours isn't enough. And I never fall  
589 asleep right at 10:30 anyways...  
590
- 591 J: Yeah.  
592
- 593 G: ...so I never get [inaudible] So I am always tired.  
594
- 595 J: Okay. I'm a nine hour sleeper. [inaudible] Yeah, I saw on the board you guys have to get  
596 up at 6:40pm. Harsh!  
597
- 598 G: Yeah.  
599
- 600 J: Okay, um I think we are close to wrapping up. Are you okay to be doing this?  
601
- 602 G: Uh-uh  
603
- 604 J: Yeah? Okay. So, people are important to you, your friends and your family. Um, I guess  
605 what I am wondering about the fact that people are important to you does that say  
606 anything about the hopes you have for yourself?  
607
- 608 G: What do I hope for myself in the future?  
609
- 610 J: Yeah.  
611
- 612 G: Well, I hope to be married and have kids. And have good relationships with other  
613 people. **(LI – F, understandings of what is accorded value)**  
614  
615
- 616 [pause]  
617
- 618 J: How long have you had these hopes?  
619
- 620 G: I have always had them.  
621
- 622 J: You've always had them? [pause] And do these hopes say anything about how you want  
623 to live your life?  
624
- 625 G: Ah, better than I was. **(LA – F)**  
626
- 627 J: Can you say a bit more about that? Or...  
628
- 629 G: Hmmm, [inaudible]. [pause] I am not sure how to answer that question.  
630
- 631 J: Yeah. Hmm, I'm – I'm not sure if you haven't ever thought about it or my question is not  
632 clear?  
633

- 634 G: Both.  
635
- 636 J: Both! Okay. Hmm, so basically what you're kind of saying is that you hope to be married,  
637 have kids and have good relationships with others. Hmm, and so what I am wondering  
638 about if it's more about – [sighs] [inaudible] you would like to live your life better than it  
639 was hmm and so it sounds like [inaudible]...
- 640
- 641 G: Uh-uh.  
642
- 643 J: ...I am guess I am wondering what that would look like? Hmm, does that help?  
644
- 645 G: Ah, I don't know how I picture my life [inaudible] kind of [inaudible].  
646
- 647 J: How do you see yourself being a good person? It sounds like it was better than it was?  
648
- 649 G: Yeah.  
650
- 651 J: Better than it was when you first came here.  
652
- 653 G: Yeah. I guess if I had to answer it would be a functioning person in society. To help  
654 people and ah [inaudible]. **(LI - F, internal understandings)**  
655
- 656 J: [inaudible].  
657
- 658 G: Hmm, [inaudible].  
659
- 660 J: It's okay. Hmm, that's interesting because in the beginning we talked about [inaudible]  
661 you came here to be “cured” and you smiled at that idea and to lead your life as it was  
662 before. Now that we have spent about 45 minutes with each other...  
663
- 664 G: Uh-uh  
665
- 666 J: Now you are saying that I want to be better than I was. So do you want to go back to  
667 living the way you were before or...  
668
- 669 G: No.  
670
- 671 J: No? Okay. I am not trying to say you weren't a “functioning” person before.  
672
- 673 G: But I wasn't really a functioning...  
674
- 675 J: Okay  
676
- 677 G: ...person in society.  
678
- 679 J: Sounds like being a member of society is really important to you.

680  
681 G: Uh-uh  
682  
683 J: Yeah. I am kind of getting this idea that relationships are important to you and being  
684 apart of the community. I don't know...  
685  
686 G: Yeah.  
687  
688 J: .... [inaudible] yeah? Okay. Hmm, that's important to you. Okay! Hmm. [pause] so this  
689 might be repetitive too but just kind of thinking back to the beginning of the conversation  
690 when you were also saying that there has been improved self-esteem, and um you're  
691 funny, you discovered that you're funny and that...  
692  
693 G: Uh-uh.  
694  
695 J: ...and that you're a happy person. And I think there were a few other things you  
696 mentioned [inaudible] finding it. [reviews notes]  
697  
698 G: Page 2.  
699  
700 J: Page 2?  
701  
702 G: The top of the page.  
703  
704 J: That "I don't think I am a bad person". You are also a very observant person. [smiles]  
705  
706 G: Yeah.  
707  
708 J: Okay. [laughs]. Um, you are likeable and smart. So  
709  
710 Side two of tape ends.  
711  
712 J: So, think back to the beginning of the conversation when you realized that "I am this  
713 good person, I'm funny, I'm smart, I'm likeable, I'm happy", other important things you  
714 learned in therapy, got more self-esteem and "I don't think I am a bad person"...  
715  
716 G: Uh-uh.  
717  
718 J: ...Do you think those things can help you live your life the way you would like now? That  
719 you are a person that functions in society, you are a person um who is helpful to other  
720 people.  
721  
722 G: Uh-uh. [nodes]  
723  
724 J: Yeah? Okay. Hmm, I am just going to say you said "yes" rather than "Uh-uh. Okay?"  
725 [laughs].

726  
727 G: [smiles]  
728  
729 J: Thanks! Okay. Hmm. How so? How do you think those things can help?  
730  
731 G: Ah...  
732  
733 J: Any ideas?  
734  
735 G: They can help maybe – talk to people – help me talk to people. Um, make relationships  
736 that I don't – didn't have before.  
737  
738 J: Okay.  
739  
740 G: Um. Pause. Hm. [pause] Yeah!  
741  
742 J: Yeah? Okay. Um, so maybe this has already been mentioned but how about in the future?  
743 Like, um since you are 15 now, so if you thought about yourself in 20 years from now or  
744 you are 20 or 30 or 35 and you've got self-esteem and knowing you are a smart, funny  
745 person and you are a good person, can that make a difference down the road?  
746  
747 [pause]  
748  
749 J: What do you think? [laughs]  
750  
751 G: I think so.  
752  
753 J: Any ideas of how?  
754  
755 G: Um, same way.  
756  
757 J: Okay.  
758  
759 G: Um, yeah!  
760  
761 J: Okay. Um, okay. How's this conversation been for you today?  
762  
763 G: Good.  
764  
765 J: Yeah? What's been good about it?  
766  
767 G: Um, I know I can help – this might help other people.  
768  
769 J: Okay. Yeah. I guess it is going back to your intentions hey...  
770  
771 G: Yeah



772  
773 J: ...what is important to you. Huh!  
774  
775 [pause]  
776  
777 J: Has this been useful for you at all or not so much?  
778  
779 G: Ah, it hasn't been unuseful [*sic*] but it hasn't been the most useful.  
780  
781 J: Okay [Laughs]. That sounds like a really polite answer. [inaudible]. You don't have to be  
782 polite. That's okay.  
783  
784 G: Ah, no, I think it was useful.  
785  
786 J: Yeah?  
787  
788 G: Um, but I don't think that it's going to make much of a difference.  
789  
790 J: Fair enough. Not earth shattering hey?  
791  
792 G: Yeah.  
793  
794 J: I still think you are being polite. But thank you. Hmm, okay. What do you think other  
795 people might say about this conversation today, if they overheard it? If Philip or John  
796 was in the room or your mom or your sister or...  
797  
798 G: Hmm. That I am being honest...  
799  
800 J: Okay.  
801  
802 G: And – and. [pause] I guess it just would be honest.  
803  
804 J: Yeah. How would they know, I mean I don't know you! I just assumed you were being  
805 honest...  
806  
807 G: Yeah.  
808  
809 J: ...so how would they know you were being honest?  
810  
811 G: Because all that I have told them in the past year...  
812  
813 J: Okay.  
814  
815 G: ...but – I am actually – in my opinion I am a really honest person. **(LI – internal**  
816 **understanding)**  
817

818  
819 J: Okay!  
820  
821 G: I find it really hard to lie.  
822  
823 J: Has that always been the case?  
824  
825 G: Yeah.  
826  
827 J: Okay. [pause] Hmm. So, having had this conversation – is [*sic*] there any questions you  
828 might have after this? Or anything else you might want to be chatting about related to  
829 this?  
830  
831 G: Um, um, [pause] (Snaps his fingers.) Um. Not really. No.  
832  
833 J: No? Okay. Great! Thank you. I am going to turn the tape recorder off now if that's okay  
834 with you?  
835  
836 G: Yup!

## Appendix K Darren's interview

1 Transcript

2

3 Interviewer: Jennifer Flower (J)

4 Interviewee: Darren Smith (D)

5 Interview took place at Counterpoint House, Edmonton, Alberta

6 July 9, 2013

7

8 J: I am wondering Darren, if you can tell me when you came to Counterpoint House?

9

10 D: \_\_\_\_\_,

11

12 J: Okay. Okay. And can you tell me how you decided to come to Counterpoint House?

13

14 D: I was given the offer.

15

16 J: You were given the offer?

17

18 D: Yeah, thought about it a little bit. And yeah and just decided to come. **(LA – recent history)**

19

20

21 J: So, can I ask, who gave you the “offer”?

22

23 D: Jason.<sup>22</sup>

24

25 J: Jason? Okay. Do you remember who put you in touch with Jason?

26

27 D: Hum...

28

29 J: Like, how that came about? If you can't it's not important.

30

31 D: I think it's my probation officer.

32

33 J: Yeah? Okay. Cause [*sic*] when you mean Jason, you mean Jason that works here?

34

35 D: Yeah.

36

37 J: Okay. So, your probation officer put you in touch with Jason...

38

39 D: Yeah.

40

---

<sup>22</sup> Jason is the House Coordinator.

41 J: ...and they offered you the opportunity to come to Counterpoint House? Hum, and you  
42 said you thought about it...  
43  
44 D: Yeah.  
45  
46 J: ...hum, and you decided to come. So, can I ask about – about hum, what – what did it take  
47 to make that decision to come here? Like, what might have been some of the things you  
48 thought about that would – that would make you come or were there people telling you,  
49 you had to come? Or hum, was there pressure to come?  
50  
51 D: Just weighed the pros and cons.  
52  
53 J: Yeah?  
54  
55 D: Yeah.  
56  
57 J: So the pros outweighed the cons?  
58  
59 D: Ah, you can get help. **(LI – Rech, intentional understanding)**  
60  
61 J: Okay. Okay.  
62  
63 D: It's only for around a year. It's not a big part of my life.  
64  
65 J: Okay. Any other pros or any cons you might want to mention about being here?  
66  
67 D: Cons would be I am away from family and friends.  
68  
69 J: Okay. [pause] Hum. Was that a hard decision to make, an easy decision to make,  
70 somewhere in between?  
71  
72 D: Pretty difficult.  
73  
74 J: It was difficult hey? [pause] Okay.  
75  
76 D: Yeah.  
77  
78 J: How come?  
79  
80 D: How come it was difficult?  
81  
82 J: Yeah.  
83  
84 D: Because I would be away from a lot of important people in my life...  
85  
86 J: Yeah?

87  
88 d: ...and I don't get to see them for awhile.  
89  
90 J: So even though there's one con, sounds like a big con.  
91  
92 D: Yeah, it's a big con.  
93  
94 J: Yeah. [pause] Hum, and did these “important people” play a part in your decision to  
95 come here or more...  
96  
97 D: Yeah.  
98  
99 J: Yeah? Were they supportive or...  
100  
101 D: Yeah.  
102  
103 J: Yeah [pause]. Was there – okay – so – so, even though you would be away from really  
104 “important people”, hum..., the pros are for you to get some help?  
105  
106 D: Yeah.  
107  
108 J: Hum, so, I'm wondering, was that why it was important to come to Counterpoint House?  
109 Or was – is it that reason and other reasons or just other reasons?  
110  
111 D: That reason.  
112  
113 J: Yeah? Okay. [pause] Thanks. Hum..., so, ah – ah, did you have any hopes about coming  
114 here? What would help look like? Or what you would get out of being here?  
115  
116 D: I wondered what it would look like.  
117  
118 J: Yeah?  
119  
120 D: Yeah.  
121  
122 J: Like the – wha – wha – what would look like, the house? Or the program?  
123  
124 D: The programming.  
125  
126 J: Yeah? And, are you hopeful about that the program?  
127  
128 D: Yeah.  
129  
130 J: Okay. Anything in particular you were hoping it to be helpful with? Or – you don't  
131 necessarily have to answer that if you don't want to.  
132

- 133 D: Not in particular.  
134
- 135 J: No? Okay. So, I get that you were hoping for help when you came here, so what I'm  
136 wondering about then is when you first came here back – way back when you did, hum, I  
137 am wondering, h – h – how did you kind of see yourself at that point when you first came  
138 to Counterpoint House? Or how did you think about yourself?  
139
- 140 D: I thought I was doing something very good.  
141
- 142 J: By coming here?  
143
- 144 D: By coming here would be good for myself.  
145
- 146 [pause]  
147
- 148 J: Okay. Before you met Jason, or your probation officer suggested you came here, how did  
149 you kind of think or see yourself back then?  
150
- 151 D: As a normal kid. **(LI – RecH, internal understanding)**  
152
- 153 J: A “normal kid”? Okay..., What's a “normal kid”?  
154
- 155 D: Like? What do you mean?  
156
- 157 J: Hum, I think there's different ideas about what “normal” means. Hum, I know we have,  
158 hum in society we have these ideas about what “normal” looks like and I am wondering  
159 for you, what does “normal” mean to you? I don't know if that was very helpful.  
160
- 161 D: Hum, I guess..., just having fun with your friends.  
162
- 163 J: Okay.  
164
- 165 D: Hum, being able to get through to your friends..., Yeah.  
166
- 167 J: Okay. So were you feeling okay about yourself, not okay about yourself, somewhere in  
168 between?  
169
- 170 D: Okay about myself.  
171
- 172 J: Yeah? Okay..., So, even kind of being in trouble with the law didn't change any of that?  
173
- 174 D: Nah [*sic*], not for the most part.  
175
- 176 J: Not for the most part?... Sounds like there's a small part.  
177
- 178 D: Hm. Changed how I thought about myself a little bit, but nothing really more than that.

179  
180 J: Yeah? Can I ask about that small piece about how you saw yourself back then?  
181  
182 D: I thought I was kind of weird. **(LI – RecH, internal understanding)**  
183  
184 J: Okay. Is it okay that I am asking about this?  
185  
186 D: Yeah.  
187  
188 J: Okay. Hum, so how about on a scale of one to ten, one being pretty negative, five  
189 somewhere in the middle and ten pretty positive where would you sort of put yourself  
190 back then?  
191  
192 D: About a five.  
193  
194 J: Five?... Thanks. Hum. So, this thinking that this small part of you that thought that you  
195 were “kind of weird,” how long had you been feeling like that for?  
196  
197 D: Couple of months. **(LI – RecH, internal understanding)**  
198  
199 [pause]  
200  
201 J: Okay. So, that smaller part of you that was feeling – feeling kind of “weird” about  
202 yourself, but a larger part of you was feeling kind of “normal”, hum, if you think back  
203 about that and you think about today hum, is there still a small part of you that is feeling  
204 kind of “weird” or has that changed?  
205  
206 D: That's changed  
207  
208 J: Yeah? Is it – is that, is that part of you bigger now, or smaller, or...,  
209  
210 D: It's gone.  
211  
212 J: It's gone? Okay..., So if we had to put that back on that scale of one to ten, one being  
213 hum, pretty negative, and five kind of in the middle and ten pretty positive, where would  
214 you put that – yourself now?  
215  
216 D: Nine.  
217  
218 J: Nine? Okay..., So, how – how long has that changed happened for?  
219  
220 D: Ah..., since I started to get...,warmed up to here.  
221  
222 J: Yeah?  
223  
224 D: Yeah.

225  
226 J: Did that take some work?  
227  
228 D: Not a lot.  
229  
230 J: No?... Okay. So, didn't take a whole lot of work to get "warmed up to here" and we  
231 know that you came in \_\_\_\_\_, hum when did you think you started to "warm  
232 up" to being here?  
233  
234 D: \_\_\_\_\_ sometime.  
235  
236 J: Okay. So you're thinking maybe like four or six weeks?  
237  
238 D: Yeah.  
239  
240 J: Yeah? And so at – at about six weeks then, you started not seeing – not feeling at a five  
241 but feeling at a nine?  
242  
243 D: Yeah.  
244  
245 J: Yeah? Okay..., So what did it take to "warm up to here"?  
246  
247 D: Hum...., Just getting to know everybody.  
248  
249 J: Yeah?... So would that be – would "everybody" be hum, other residents, or staff or both  
250 or...  
251  
252 D: Both.  
253  
254 J: Anyone else? I don't think that there is anyone else..., Okay. Hum, and so if now you're  
255 feeling at a nine what would you call that now? How you're feeling about yourself or see  
256 yourself now?  
257  
258 D: Positive. (**LI – P, internal understanding**)  
259  
260 J: Positive? Okay..., Would you call it anything else? You don't have to.  
261  
262 D: No.  
263  
264 J: Okay. Are you getting bored already?  
265  
266 D: No.  
267  
268 J: No? [laugh] You'll let me know? [laugh]  
269  
270 D: Yeah.



271  
272  
273 J: Okay. Hum, so, getting to know everybody here, helped you “warm up”. Hum, did it take  
274 anything? Like, what did it take to get to know people?  
275  
276 D: Hum, talking to them.  
277  
278 [pause]  
279  
280 J: So is that an effort you had to make on your part or others or both?  
281  
282 D: Both.  
283  
284 J: Okay..., Is that unusual for you to talk to people you don't know or...  
285  
286 D: It feels that way.  
287  
288 J: It feels that way...  
289  
290 D: Yeah.  
291  
292 J: ...that it is unusual for you talk to people you don't know?  
293  
294 D: Yeah.  
295  
296 J: Yeah?..., Would others say the same about that – about you?  
297  
298 D: I'm not sure.  
299  
300 J: So is hum, is that hard work to do that, to talk to people you don't know?  
301  
302 D: For the first little bit.  
303  
304 J: Yeah?..., Hum, okay..., So, has this been hard work to come and do something like this?  
305  
306 [pause]  
307  
308 D: No. I wouldn't say so.  
309  
310 J: No? Okay. Hum..., Would it take anything else to get to know others? It took a little bit  
311 of hard work on your part because it meant you were having [*sic*] to talk to them and they  
312 were also talking to you. Anything else that sort of helped you get to know everybody?  
313  
314 D: Ah..., No, I don't think so.  
315

316 J: No? Okay. So this idea of feeling positive about yourself now and being at a nine, have  
317 you ever felt that way before about yourself hum, and you're just kinda [*sic*] getting hum,  
318 back in touch with that way of seeing yourself or is this kind of a new way of seeing  
319 yourself?  
320  
321 D: I guess it's a little bit of a new way.  
322  
323 J: A little bit of a new way? So, doesn't sound like you're 100 percent committed that this is  
324 brand new for you to be seeing yourself as positive or you just haven't really thought  
325 about it?  
326  
327 D: Haven't really thought about it.  
328  
329 J: Yeah. Okay. Is it worth thinking about?  
330  
331 D: Yeah.  
332  
333 J: Yeah? How come?  
334  
335 D: Feel good about yourself.  
336  
337 J: Yeah? That's important?  
338  
339 D: Yeah.  
340  
341 J: How long has that been important to you?  
342  
343 D: As long as I can remember.  
344  
345 J: Yeah?... So is this the first time you have kind of felt so good about yourself you are at  
346 nine?  
347  
348 D: Hmm.  
349  
350 J: Or have you felt that way before in your life?  
351  
352 D: Felt that way before.  
353  
354 J: Yeah? So being at a nine and feeling "positive", are they kind of different ideas or are  
355 they the same?  
356  
357 D: [*inaudible*] the same  
358  
359 J: Pardon me?  
360  
361 D: Around the same.

- 362  
363 J: Around the same? Okay. Sounds like there is something a little bit different about each of  
364 them? Or again, not – not to sure cause you haven't thought about it?  
365  
366 D: Haven't thought about it.  
367  
368 J: Okay. That's okay to say that cause [*sic*] I have a feeling I might be asking you a lot of  
369 questions you may not have thought about. Or is that fair to assume that?  
370  
371 D: Ah, ah, I don't know.  
372  
373 J: Okay [laughter]. Hum, okay..., So, should we go with the idea that this is a newer thing  
374 then or maybe start thinking about how it was for you in the past when you did feel kind  
375 of positive? That it might be something you used to feel like.  
376  
377 D: [inaudible] could just say that it is a newer thing.  
378  
379 J: Newer thing? Okay. Thank you. There is no right or wrong answer. Thanks for kind of  
380 choosing a direction.  
381  
382 D: [inaudible]  
383  
384 J: Okay. [pause] We have actually answered a bunch of these that's why I am kinda [*sic*] of  
385 jumping ahead. I didn't realize we had already moved that far forward. Hum. [pause]  
386 Okay. So, one of things that I am wondering about though is that really what's helped you  
387 move to a nine and to feel positive about yourself is to – is that you made the effort to get  
388 to know other people here hum, and that helped you “warm up” to the place.  
389  
390 D: Yeah.  
391  
392 J: Okay. Hum and, and by “warming up to here” what did that make possible for you then?  
393  
394 D: I got to know other people, and I could trust them. **(LA – P)**  
395  
396 J: Trust them?..., Hum, and by trusting them, hum did that make it easier for you to kind of  
397 achieve your goal to get “help”?  
398  
399 D: Yeah.  
400  
401 J: Yeah? Okay. Did it do anything else to trust them?  
402  
403 D: Ah, I was able to tell them more about myself.  
404  
405 J: Okay. And what was that like, to be able to tell them more about yourself?  
406  
407 D: It was a relief ‘cause then I can start to use them as supports.

408  
409 J: Okay..., Okay. Anything else at all or if there's not that's okay.  
410  
411 D: No.  
412  
413 J: Okay. Hum..., And by using them as a support and knowing that you could, did that kind  
414 of influence how you saw yourself then as well?  
415  
416 D: Yeah.  
417  
418 J: Yeah? Okay..., So, what I am wondering about then, is to “warm up” to them, to trust  
419 them, to achieve your goals [inaudible] to tell them more, which was a relief, so you  
420 could use them as a support, why was this even important for you to do?  
421  
422 D: Can you repeat the question please?  
423  
424 J: Yeah, sure. You made the effort to come here. You made that big choice to come here, to  
425 leave friends and family. You said “important people,” I shouldn't say friends and  
426 family, sorry. Hum and then you came here and you made the effort to “warm up” to  
427 people, which meant that you made the effort to talk to people, which was a little bit hard  
428 to do...  
429  
430 D: Yeah.  
431  
432 J: ...and by doing that you started to feel like you could trust people which, helps you  
433 achieve your goals of getting help here. Hum, to feel relief and to use them as a support.  
434 Why was it important to take all of those steps?  
435  
436 [pause]  
437  
438 D: To benefit me in my treatment, to have..., some – something to rely on. Hum, yeah. **(LI –**  
439 **P, understanding about what is accorded value)**  
440  
441 J: Okay. Can I ask what you mean by “something to rely on”?  
442  
443 D: Like, I have supports.  
444  
445 J: Okay..., And why would it be important for you to benefit from treatment? Does that say  
446 anything about hum, what you are hoping for out of life, for yourself?  
447  
448 D: Yeah.  
449  
450 J: Yeah? Can I ask, what you're hoping for – for yourself out of life?  
451  
452 D: Just to be successful in..., almost everything I do. Not just everything because I don't  
453 wanna [sic] be perfect... **(LI – R, understanding about what is accorded value)**

454  
455 J: Hmm,  
456  
457 D: ....just want to be close to it.  
458  
459 [pause]  
460  
461 J: Hum, any ideas of things that you might like to be successful at? Or that you are hoping  
462 to be successful at?  
463  
464 D: Hum, treatment for one. **(LI – P/F – intentional understandings)**  
465  
466  
467 J: Yeah?  
468  
469 D: Yeah.  
470  
471 [pause]  
472  
473 J: That sort of sounds like the chicken or the egg, which came first? Cause, if you are  
474 successful at treatment you can be successful at everything right?  
475  
476 D: Yeah.  
477  
478 J: Yeah? I am not sure – so what I am thinking hum – okay. So, if you are successful at  
479 treatment what can you be successful at when you leave here? What is it that you are  
480 hoping to be successful at in life?  
481  
482 D: Whatever I am doing for a living.  
483  
484 J: Yeah? Anything you would like to be doing for a living?  
485  
486 D: Not particularly yet.  
487  
488 J: Okay. That's fair [laughs]. Do you have any other hopes for your life other – other than  
489 success? Or dreams?  
490  
491 D: No.  
492  
493 J: No?  
494  
495  
496 D: Not really.  
497  
498 J: Did you have dreams and hopes before coming here?  
499

500 D: No, I just kinda [*sic*] of went with the present.  
501  
502 J: Yeah? Okay. Still kind of go “with the present” or is the focus being successful at  
503 treatment?  
504  
505 D: A little bit of both.  
506  
507 J: Yeah? Okay. [pause] Does – does anybody else know this about you? That you would  
508 like to be successful at treatment?  
509  
510 D: Yeah.  
511  
512 J: Yeah? Okay. Hum, are they people outside of here?  
513  
514 D: Yeah.  
515  
516 J: Is that helpful?  
517  
518 D: Yeah.  
519  
520 J: Okay..., Okay. So, if we..., if we kind of think back to this idea hum, now that you are  
521 feeling “positive” and at a nine, do you think all of that work that it took to get to being  
522 “positive” and a nine; I can list those off again if you want, would that be helpful or no?  
523  
524 D: Naw [*sic*].  
525  
526 J: Okay [laughs].So, all of that work you did hum, do you think that's gonna [*sic*] – and  
527 hum – so feeling positive about yourself, do you think that's going to help with your  
528 hopes in life to be successful? To be “almost successful” at everything?  
529  
530 D: Yeah.  
531  
532 J: Yeah? Okay. Why do you think that?  
533  
534 D: Well, cause [*sic*] if you're optimistic you set yourself up for success. But, where if you're  
535 pessimistic you're going to set yourself up for failure. If you tell yourself you're going to  
536 fail, you're probably going to fail. **(LI – P, knowledges)**  
537  
538 J: Did you ever use to tell yourself that? Or tell yourself you would succeed or neither?  
539  
540 D: Hum..., Neither really.  
541  
542 J: Yeah?  
543  
544 D: Yeah.  
545

546 [pause]

547

548 J: Okay..., Okay. So, hum, I know you kind of said you kind of live in the present and – but  
549 you are kind of focused on success in treatment, what I am wondering about how – could  
550 you guess, or figure out where being a nine and “positive” could take you in life and in  
551 the future? Even just a few years down the road.

552

553 D: Sorry?

554

555 J: Like, if you – this – this sense of being – feeling like you're at a nine and being “positive”  
556 and being opt – I am assuming you are being optimistic. Is that fair to say? So, being at  
557 nine, being positive and feeling optimistic and trying to set yourself up for success,  
558 where do you think that could take you in the future? Like, in just a few years down the  
559 road?

560

561 D: Aw...

562

563 J: Just guess.

564

565 D: I could have a good job that I like to do.

566

567 J: Yeah? Okay..., No dreams around the jobs?

568

569 D: Not particularly

570

571 J: Okay [laughs]. Gotta get through school first?

572

573 D: Yeah.

574

575 J: Yeah? Okay. [laughs]. Hum, okay. So, I'm wondering, how has this conversation been for  
576 you today?

577

578 D: Good.

579

580 J: Yeah? Okay. Can I ask “what's been good about it?” or...

581 D: All of it.

582

583 J: Okay. Hum, how – how come? Why?

584

585 D: Cause [sic] none of it was bad.

586

587 J: Okay [laughs]. Is this conversation of any use to you?

588

589 D: Yeah.

590

591 J: Yeah? How, how do you think it could be?

592  
593 D: I learned a little bit about myself today.  
594 J: Oh, did you?  
595  
596 D: Yeah.  
597  
598 J: Can I ask what you learned? Or you don't have to share that if you don't want to.  
599  
600 D: Just learned..., some..., beliefs about myself. **(LI – P, realization, learnings)**  
601  
602 J: Okay.  
603  
604 D: Yeah.  
605  
606 J: Are these the new beliefs we were kind of talking about or old beliefs that you held or...  
607  
608 D: Both.  
609  
610 J: Both? Okay. And can that make any difference towards your success in treatment?..., Or  
611 might it get in the way of treatment?  
612  
613 D: Ah, might give me a little boost.  
614  
615 J: Okay. So – so that's why maybe this has been good?  
616  
617 D: Yeah.  
618  
619 J: Yeah? Were you worried it would be bad?  
620  
621 [pause]  
622  
623 D: Not really.  
624  
625 J: Okay. That's good. Hum, and – and – if – like – like you have a key worker?  
626  
627 D: Yeah.  
628  
629 J: Yeah? Can I ask who your key worker is?  
630  
631 D: \_\_\_\_\_.  
632  
633 J: \_\_\_? Okay. So, if \_\_\_ – and you work with Philip too, right?  
634  
635 D: Yeah.  
636



- 637 J: Yeah? So if \_\_\_\_ or Philip were in the room today and they overheard this conversation  
638 what do you think they might say?  
639
- 640 D: Ah, I'm not sure to be honest.  
641
- 642 J: Yeah? Okay. Do you think they would be, hum, they would be inter – I won't be sharing  
643 any of this information with them today, but do you think they would be interested to  
644 hear that you have changed..., that you've kind of realized some beliefs about yourself  
645 and that might actual give you a bit of a “boost”?  
646
- 647 D: Yeah.  
648
- 649 J: Yeah? Okay. Do you think it's worth talking to them about it on your own? I won't be  
650 doing that.  
651
- 652 D: I guess so.  
653
- 654 J: Yeah? Okay. Hum. Do you think hum..., do you think they've noticed that when you  
655 came in here you were probably at a five since you started at Counterpoint and now you  
656 are at a nine? Do you think they would have noticed anything?  
657
- 658 D: Yeah, I guess they'd notice improvements in my attitude...  
659
- 660 J: Your attitude?  
661
- 662 D ...Yeah. And – yeah. Just..., like..., overall skills, I guess you could say. **(LA)**  
663
- 664 J: Okay. And what do you think they would have noticed you, hum, I guess maybe doing  
665 that would have helped you change your attitude, your overall improvement in your  
666 attitude and your skills?  
667
- 668 D: Sorry?  
669
- 670 J: What do you think they might have noticed you doing that would have helped lead to an  
671 improvement in your attitude and your skills?  
672
- 673 D: Ah, I guess trying new things like..., instead of letting people come to you, go to them.  
674 **(LA)**  
675
- 676 J: Okay. Anything else?  
677
- 678 D: Hum, not right off the top of my head.  
679
- 680 J: I'm just putting down the overall improvement in attitude and skills. I didn't get that one.  
681 [pause]I probably shouldn't have stopped taking the notes there. Hum..., okay. Is there

682 anything else you may want to add or are there any questions you might have about  
683 today's conversation?

684  
685 D: Ah, no.

686  
687 J: No? Okay. Shall we just end it at that then? I have another tape if you would like to  
688 continue?

689  
690 D: No, I think I am done.

691  
692 J: You think you're done? Okay. [laughs]

693  
694 D: Yeah.

695  
696 J: Well, I appreciate your time hum, thank you

## Appendix J George's Letter

Dear [REDACTED]

January 17, 2013

Thank you for meeting with me and participating in my research. This letter is intended to summarize our conversation. You are welcome to give me feedback by making a copy of this letter with your written comments, however it is not necessary. Should you decide to give me feedback, please put the letter with your comments in the envelope that has my name on it and seal it. Please give the sealed envelop to Counterpoint House staff and let them know you are done so they can call and let me know that the letter is ready to be picked up.

You told me that you arrived at Counterpoint House [REDACTED]. Initially you stated that you came to Counterpoint House because the Crown Prosecutor had the idea, your Probation Officer told you about Counterpoint House and that you did not give it much thought because you were "dazed and shocked" over the whole court process. You felt like you had "no say", but while speaking with me you realized that you did have a choice because when interviewed by Counterpoint House staff back in [REDACTED] you agreed to become a resident of Counterpoint House. You figured that you agreed to attend for your mom and sister, who you knew loved you and you did not want to disappoint them. You also felt it was important to attend Counterpoint House because "I know what I did was wrong". You were hoping to be "cured" and then go back to living your life "as it was before".

You told me that when you first arrived at Counterpoint House you did not like yourself; since kindergarten you have experienced "low self-esteem". However you have found that with your year at Counterpoint House you have more "self-esteem"; you do not think that you are a "bad person". For the first time since Kindergarten you do not think of yourself as "worthless". Rather you think that you are "a good person, funny, smart, likeable, happy".

You figured that "slowly" and with "a lot of hard work" you are trying to get "better at being the person" that you feel you "are suppose to be". To become that person, you "choose" to want to be "a better person". To do that, you have taken the steps to "catch" yourself, which you said is hard to do if you "don't notice or don't want to notice". It was important for you to "notice" as you want to leave Counterpoint House "faster" so you can "go home, make better relationships with your mom, sister and friends". In addition to "hard work", you figured that the relationships you developed with other residents and, to some degree with staff, encouraged this "hard work". Finally, you guessed that others at Counterpoint House might have noticed signs of this "hard work" but you are not sure what they might have noticed.

[REDACTED], because of this "hard work" you know that you have "the tools and the want to never re-offend". This is important to you as you feel that re-offending will wreck your relationships, you would be placed into custody and your life will "halt"; re-offending will take away your "freedom". Your "hard work" has also led you to believe that you can be yourself and that people, such as friends and family are important to you. You value relationships, and have hoped for a very long time to one day be "married, have kids, have good relationships with other people". As you are hopeful to build meaningful relationships you intend to live your life "better than I was" meaning "a functioning person in society, to help people". Finally, you think that with "self-esteem" and the ideas that you are a "good, funny, smart, likeable, happy person" you

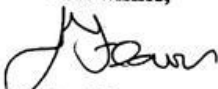
can live your life as what you refer to as a "normal person" who talks to people and makes new relationships.

██████, you described our conversation as "good" and you expressed hope that this conversation might help other people. Also you guessed that if anyone from Counterpoint House had been apart of this conversation that they would say you were being honest.

In short, from what I understand from our conversation ██████ is that after a little over a year of living at Counterpoint House that with "a lot of hard work" and encouragement from staff and the other residents you have moved away from your long held belief that you are a "bad person" to thinking about yourself as a "good, funny, smart, likeable, happy and worthwhile person", which has made your long held hopes to marry, have children and have good relationships with people seem more possible. You intend to live your life as what you described as a "normal person". Lastly, you discovered through our conversation that you choose to participate at Counterpoint House and that you do not want to go back to the way you were living prior to attending Counterpoint House but to live your life building good, long-last relationships.

██████, thank you for agreeing to take the time to speak to me about the changes you have experienced over this past year at Counterpoint House.

Best wishes,



Jennifer

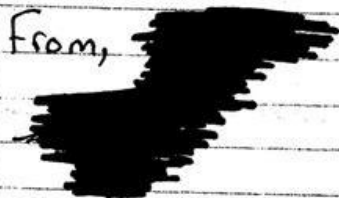
Dear Jennifer

January 21, 2013

I Am glad to have been part of this study, and I hope our interview will help you get your Degree.

I think that you summarized my/our interview very well and I have no revisions for you.

From,

A large, irregular black scribble completely obscures the signature of the sender.

## Appendix K Darren's Letter

Letter is great, no comments.

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for meeting with me and participating in my research. This letter is intended to summarize our conversation. You are welcome to write comments on a copy of this letter, however it is not necessary. Should you decide to give me feedback, please put the letter with your comments in the envelope that has my name on it and seal it. Please give the sealed envelope to Counterpoint House staff and let them know you are done so they can call me to let me know that the letter is ready to be picked up.

[REDACTED] you told me that you came to Counterpoint House in November, 2012 because you were offered the opportunity. Before taking up this opportunity you weighed the pros and cons. Although you would be away from family and friends; important people, you decided that the chance to go to Counterpoint House would give you the opportunity to get "help". You made this "hard" decision because you "thought I was doing something very good for myself". And even though you would be away from important people, these people supported your decision.

When you came to Counterpoint House you saw yourself as a "normal kid", who has "fun" with friends and is able to "get through to friends". But there was a part of you that thought you were "kind of weird". In the past few months you have come to see yourself in a "positive" way. From what you tell me this new feeling about yourself did not come easily. But by "warming up to the place"; meaning by you getting to know staff and residents and giving them the chance to know you, you found that you can trust them and tell them more about yourself, which you found to be a "relief". You also said that

with "warming up to the place" you feel that people at Counterpoint House can help you achieve your treatment goals and that you can rely on them for support.

By taking these steps of getting to know and trust the people at Counterpoint House, and by letting these people get to know you, you hope that these efforts will help you be successful in treatment and life in general.

Finally, you told me that you "learned about some beliefs about yourself"; both old and new, which was a good thing. You figure this new knowledge about yourself will give you a "boost". You also guessed that staff at Counterpoint House have probably noticed your efforts because of your improvement in "attitude", "overall skills" and the fact that you are "trying new things. Like, instead of letting others come to you, go to them".

In short, since your efforts of making the "hard" choice to leave behind important people, to take the opportunity to go to Counterpoint House, to get to know and trust the residents and staff at Counterpoint House, and to let them get to know you, you have found yourself feeling positively about yourself. Also, you see that through your hard work and the support of staff and residents that it is possible to achieve your goal of getting "help" at Counterpoint House and being successful in treatment and in life.

, thank you for taking the time to speak to me about the changes you have experienced in the past 7 months at Counterpoint House.

Best wishes,



### Appendix L George's map

Landscape of Identity	<p>Values mom and sister's love for him.          "Knew what I did was wrong" hoping "to be cured" and to "lead my life as it was before"</p>	<p>desire "to go home and make better relationships with my friends and my mom and my sister"          "be a normal person"</p>	<p>values freedom and relationships and commitment: to not re-offend          want to live life "better than I was"</p>	
<p>-intentional understandings          -understanding about what is accorded value          -internal understandings          -realization, learnings          Knowledges</p>	<p>"low self-esteem" since kindergarten          "bitter"          "mad all the time"</p>	<p>"Knew what I did was wrong" to "lead my life as it was be          "I didn't like myself. Not – not at all"          "low self-esteem"          "I thought I was kind of worthless and kind of of useless"          "danger to society"</p>	<p>"I have a lot more self-esteem"          "I don't think bad about myself anymore"          "I am a good person"          "funny"          "smart...likeable"          "...I know - now that I have the tools and the want to never re-offend"          "honest person"</p>	
Landscape of Action	<p>-events          -circumstances          -sequences          -time          -plot</p>	<p>Account:          Bullied at school          -"I didn't have very many friends"          "I kind of believed them"</p>	<p>Account:          George's decision to attend group home          -"said I was okay with it (treatment)"          -easy choice          -did not want to disappoint Mom and sister</p>	<p>Account:          Being at the group home          -hard work on both George's and staffs part.          "I had to choose to want to be a better person. And I had to Ah, keep catching myself doing things I am not Suppose to and telling myself "No I can't do that"          "Encouraged by residence and staff here"</p>
Remote History	Distant History	Recent History	Present	Near Future



**Appendix M Darren's map**

<p>important to Landscape of Identity "feel good about yourself"</p>	<p>Hoping to get "help"</p>	<p>goal to get "help" Took these steps "To benefit me in my treatment</p>	<p>hoping for success in..., almost every- thing I do" success in treat- ment</p>
<p>-intentional understandings -understanding about what is accorded value -internal understandings -realization, learnings Knowledges</p> <p>Landscape of Action -events -circumstances -sequences -time -plot</p>	<p>"Normal kid" Feeling "okay about myself" "Thought I was kind of weird." "5"</p>	<p>Feeling "kind of weird...It's gone." "9" Feeling "positive" "A little bit a of a new way" of seeing him- self other's might notice: "improvement in my attitude...overall skills" "Trying new things like... instead of letting people come to you, go to them"</p>	<p>"...if you're optimistic you set yourself up for success."</p>
<p>Remote History</p>	<p>Account: Darren's decision to attend group home "thought about it" "weighed pros &amp; cons" "pretty difficult" decision</p> <p>Recent History</p>	<p>Account: Being at the group home "warmed up to here" "not a lot" of work "just getting to know everybody" made the effort to talk with staff &amp; residents; hard to do "at first" "I got to know other people, and I could trust them...use them as supports"</p> <p>Present</p>	<p>Account: Successful in life</p> <p>Near Future</p>