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Overcoming relationship challenges for males



He moana pukepuke e ekengia te waka
A choppy sea can be navigated

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Abstract

This research project presents a new paradigm for the men who work tirelessly to maintain adult relationships, often only to see them eventually break down because of circumstances that they unwittingly experienced during childhood. The project considers how early boyhood challenges can affect close relationships as adult men. It will identify the effects and present them inside a bio-psychosocial framework. Also, the project will suggest that change and modification of early childhood experiences is possible, changes occurring through a suggested safe eclectic counselling model, thereby offering these men freedom from relationship challenges. Finally it will consider the ethical and Christian perspectives of counselling, from a New Zealand viewpoint.

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1 Chapter One

1.1 Research Question

Which counselling approaches can be usefully integrated with a Person-Centred model in working with men who have experienced, and continue to experience, fear and mistrust in close personal relationships?

1.2 Introduction

He moana pukepuke e ekengia te waka (*A choppy sea can be navigated*) (Ryan, 1995, p.19). This whakatau-a-ki (Maori proverb) has an application for counselling. Some men struggle to engage in secure close relationships and there are significant factors during their childhood that contribute to their difficulties (Karen, 1998). In cases like this, what future hope do they have? This research project will outline the demographic of men who might present to counselling with relationships challenges, establish the underlying contributors to their difficulties and reveal current scholarly literature opinion. It will conclude by suggesting an appropriate eclectic counselling model as a way to assist these men navigate the choppy sea of life and improve their close relationships.

How can we make sense of what influences human relationships? While there are varying philosophical perspectives possible when assessing human relationships, a lifespan developmental stages approach is the preferred model I will use. This research project will use the implications of 'social factors' to build an understanding of the influences involved in the formation of close relationships.

Central to relationship development is the reality that both nature and nurture influence a child's development. Genetic or hereditary influences offer the nature (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000) side of the debate and nurture becomes involved as a consequence of parental influences. Grandparents can affect a child's relationship development (Jensen, 1989). However, parenting is not an easy task. There is no step-by-step manual issued to parents when a child is born and even if there were, it simply would not be possible to cover every personality quirk or life path that a parent could cover. Therefore, this research project will offer generalisations related to genetics and parenting regarding a child's relationship development.

In the main, parents successfully navigate their way through child rearing. Unfortunately, there is an overwhelming amount of times the literature refers to mistrust, jealousy, anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem and all too often boys who have adult relationship difficulties have experienced relationship complications attributed to early parental influences. Freud observed that people often prefer relationships that are like those they experienced as a child, despite how bad they might have been (cited in Karen 1998, p. 395). An implication of these statements could be that while many parents successfully raise children who are confident in relationships, some parents may unwittingly create future adult relationship challenges for their children through attachment.

The literature discussing relationship challenges for men indicate that attachment or bonding to parents has an influential role in child development. Hendrix (1988) suggests that a boy's success at feeling both distinct from and connected to his mother has a profound impact on later relationships. A quality secure attachment is of extreme relevance because of the benefits provided in laying

a foundation for future relationships. Some attachment experiences assist a child to maximise his/her intellectual potential, clarify personal perceptions, think logically, develop a conscience, become self-reliant, cope with stress and frustration, handle fear and worry, develop future relationships and reduce jealousy (Fahlberg, 1988). Secure attachment plays a powerful function in a boy's future close relationships.

For some men relationship difficulties appear deeply rooted in the childhood developmental struggles that lead them to act in particular ways in relationships. Will counselling, therefore, be an effective tool in assisting these men undo such entrenched behaviour? Part of the answer may lie in Karen's (1998) writings when he suggests that men cannot change their childhood but they can let go of the defences and obsessive postures formed at that time. They can make sense of what has been repressed and forgotten. They are able to reexperience disassociated feelings with a new appreciation for themselves as they were as children. Further, they are able to reexperience feelings of the situation that existed at the time, re-evaluate the parents who may have caused them to suffer and they can successfully mourn their losses (Karen, 1998, p.408). Therefore, his answer is yes and is supported by many authors and organisations such as The Institute for Attachment and Child Development (Development, 2008). Karen (1998) goes on to add that counselling can provide a new model of what a close relationship can be for these men. Much of the literature reviewed indicates that while it is possible to change and modify early models, it is difficult. Karen offers insight as to the root of the difficulty, suggesting that in an intimate relationship, always playing is the drama of the rejecting parent and the longing child who is some combination of angry, bad, inadequate,

manipulative, and spurned (Karen, 1998, p.397). Despite difficulties experienced, recovery from the negative experiences of the past is possible.

It is possible for men experiencing relationship challenges that were negatively affected by early attachments to restructure themselves. However, there is a composite of important points to consider when reshaping the self is contemplated. Themes in the literature indicate an understanding of the development of self as an adult is important. Jensen (1989) argues that it is important for men to really know who they are, to discover their real self and to develop an ability to communicate their feelings (Jensen, 1989, pp.207-210). Additionally, he indicates that it will take 'time' to rebuild intimacy and that knowledge of the differences in men and women will also be valuable for men faced with relationship challenges (Jensen, 1989, pp.215-229). Knowledge of these points gained in counselling will assist men who desire more close relationships.

Importantly, counselling will be valuable and benefits of more satisfying intimate relationships are attainable for men who desire more close relationships. Counselling models that have strengths in developing a composite picture of the people that have influenced these men, will be effective and would include models such as Imago Therapy and Family systems therapy (Hendrix, 1988, p.31). Corey (2005) would indirectly support Family systems therapy's inclusion because he too acknowledges that an individual's dysfunctional behaviour grows out of the interactional unit of the family. Also incorporated in a safe eclectic model would be Transactional Analysis (TA). The philosophical orientation of TA suggests that people are relationship seeking and interdependent through out life (O'Reilly-Knapp, 2007). Additionally, Gestalt Therapy proposes that a person has the capacity to recognise

how earlier influences are related to present difficulties (Corey, 2005). Another counselling approach in an eclectic model would be Person-centered therapy, particularly because it fosters a non-defensive approach that maximizes active listening, reflection and clarification (Corey, 2005, pp.472-481). These counselling models all present favourable components that will assist men gain a greater understanding of how their relationships with people have affected their lives.

1.3 Limitations to the research project

Unfortunately New Zealand European literature on the topic was scarce. New Zealand Maori writings were unable to be located. At a men's issues summit held at Massey University in 2005 and although speaking generally about men's health, Bruce Mackie pointed to the New Zealand literature restrictions when he said that it *"largely fails to investigate why men behave as they do"* (University, 2005). Consequently, most of the qualitative and quantitative literature reviewed is limited to British, American and Australian publications. The literature restrictions also presented this writer with a difficulty about additional support information regarding application to New Zealand men. Therefore, that information and an interview are anecdotal.

1.4 Key Terms

The following are some of the terms used throughout this research project.

1.4.1 Attachment:

Ainsworth (1991) describes attachment as *"an affectional tie that one person or animal forms between [them]self and another specific one – a tie that bonds them together in space and endures over time"* (Ainsworth, 1991, p.31). Kenny & Barton (2002) discuss that the characteristics of secure parental attachment *"have been associated empirically with indices of adaptive social and psychological functioning across a variety of developmental periods*. Kenny strengthens his earlier view stating that *"among early and middle adolescents, secure parental attachments have been found to buffer life stress and to be associated with positive self-worth and low levels of depressive symptoms"* (Kenny 2006, p.63). Attachment to an adult is an *"enduring social-emotional relationship"* (Kail & Cavanaugh 2000, p.163).

1.4.2 Eclectic counselling:

The Nelson (1984) dictionary states eclectic to be a *"choosing or picking from many sources"* (Nelson and Sons, 1984 p.133) and Corey (2005) offer, *"therapist's [who] borrow techniques from many other therapy systems"* (Corey, 2005, 251).

1.4.3 Paradigm:

"A philosophical and theoretical framework of a scientific school or discipline within which theories, laws, and generalizations and the experiments performed in support of them are formulated; broadly : a philosophical or theoretical framework of any kind" (Dictionary, 2008)

1.4.4 Disorganised or disoriented attachment/ attachment distress/ insecure attachment/ reactive attachment disorder (RAD)/ depersonalisation:

These terms are used throughout this research project and are accurately paraphrased according to an author's use of a particular term. The Institute for Child Development offer a foundation on which to build understanding, "*Attachment difficulties are on a continuum of disturbance that range from attachment issues all the way to attachment disorder*" (Development, 2008, URL). The International Society for Bonding Psychotherapy builds further knowledge of these terms by stating, "*Unsuccessful and painful attachment-experiences lead to the development of insecure attachment representations with the related dysfunctional emotional, cognitive and behavioural patterns. These insecure attachment representations are demonstrated at an interpersonal level primarily through the avoidance of intimacy and closeness, the lack of confidence in oneself and in others, and the fear of separation*" (Psychotherapy, 2008, URL).

Mary Ainsworth states that a "*child with an anxious-resistant attachment style is anxious of exploration and of strangers, even when the mother is present. When the mother departs, the child is extremely distressed. The child will be ambivalent when she returns - seeking to remain close to the mother but resentful, and also resistant when the mother initiates attention...A child with an anxious-avoidant attachment style will avoid or ignore the mother - showing little emotion when the mother departs or returns. The child will not explore very much regardless of who is there. Strangers will not be treated much differently from the mother. There is not much emotional range displayed regardless of who is in the room or if it is empty*" (Foundation, 2008, URL).

“Reactive attachment disorder (RAD) is the diagnostic term for severe and relatively uncommon disorders of attachment that can affect children. RAD is characterized by markedly disturbed and developmentally inappropriate ways of relating socially in most contexts. It can take the form of a persistent failure to initiate or respond to most social interactions in a developmentally appropriate way—known as the “inhibited” form—or can present itself as indiscriminate sociability, such as excessive familiarity with relative strangers—known as the “disinhibited form”. The term is used in both the World Health Organization's International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10) and in the DSM-IV-TR... RAD arises from a failure to form normal attachments to primary caregivers in early childhood. Such a failure could result from severe early experiences of neglect, abuse, abrupt separation from caregivers between the ages of six months and three years, frequent change of caregivers, or a lack of caregiver responsiveness to a child's communicative efforts...Children with RAD are presumed to have grossly disturbed internal working models of relationships which may lead to interpersonal and behavioral difficulties in later life” (Encyclopedia, 2008, URL).

Depersonalisation is a mental state in which a person feels detached or disconnected from his or her personal identity or self. This may include the sense that one is "outside" oneself, or is observing one's own actions, thoughts or body (Jrank, 2007, URL).

1.4.5 Autonomy

Independence, self-sufficiency, *“self-government”* (Publications, 1986).

1.5 Methodology

The methodology selected for this research project is a combination of literature reviews, anecdotal evidence and a qualitative interview. Anecdotal evidence was gathered from an assortment of personal study and life experience. Consent for the interview was given by Ngai Tahu whanau.

1.6 Annotated Notes

Corey, G. (2005) *Theory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy* (7th ed.). Belmont: Brooks/Cole-Thomson Learning. This book provides a quality broad overview of popular models of counselling and has a good depth of information about counselling. The book is essential for counsellors who desire a snap-shot overview of a number of different counselling theories. It offers an interactive, personal experience of the theories to a counsellor in training and the skills required by counsellors. The theories are well supported and referenced with actual counselling cases provided to assist understanding for the reader. Further, it helps to compare, contrast critique.

Karen, R. (1998). *Becoming attached*. New York: Oxford University Press. This book is well written and provides a quality overview of attachment. It gives sad insights into the harm caused by lack of attachment in childhood, yet also gives examples of hope. Its clarity offers parents and parents-to-be an up to date view of the importance of attachment. Psychologists continue to research and attempt to understand how we become the people we are, how our personalities are developed and how these influences become reflected in adulthood. This book goes some way toward providing answers.

Kail, R. V., & Cavanaugh, J. C. (2000). *Human development: A lifespan view* (2nd ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning. An informative book written from the lifespan perspective. It provides clear examples, explanations and context of the developmental effects through the stages of the lifespan. It assists readers to gain greater knowledge and understanding of the myriad of twists life takes throughout its span. It navigates its way through the dynamic interplay of biological, psychological, and social forces as they affect development. It compliments explanations with case studies to offer the reader potentially greater understanding.

Zigler, Edward F., Finn-Stevenson, & Hall, N. W. (2002). *The first three years & beyond*. London: Yale University Press. (Zigler, 2002). This book is written from a scientific view, discussing early childhood and offers a practical insight into the important aspects of the major influences of attachment on a child in their first three years of life.

Farrell PhD, Warren. (1993). *The myth of male power*. New York: Simon & Schuster. (Farrell Ph.D, 1993). This book provides a different look at society's view of males and assists build an understanding of a biophychosocial framework.

Lashlie, C. (2003). *The journey to prison (Revised ed.)*. Wellington: Harper Collins Publishers New Zealand Limited. (Lashlie, 2003). The book discusses childhood development from the worldview of a former women's prison manager.

2 Chapter Two

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two will identify some negative consequences for men who have relationship challenges attributed to disorganised attachment. They may seek counselling to improve their close relationships so chapter two will investigate some effects of restrained safe attachments. The five main themes are mistrust, jealousy, anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem. The themes are related to completing stages of development that were delayed by insecure attachment.

There are underlying factors that contribute to the consequences of insecure or disrupted attachment for boys. The majority of disruptive effects of insecure attachment come from sociocultural influences. Considerations such as interpersonal relationships, social cultural and ethnic factors form the sociocultural influences (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000). These significant aspects of human development all contribute to the identifying of the possible outcomes of attachment distress for boys. Thus, many of the factors related to insecure attachment then lead to intimate relationship problems for men later in their life.

2.2 Influences that impact on adult relationships:

Research has shown that early attachment is an important factor in relationships throughout the lifespan. John Bowlby is a key figure in the understanding of early childhood relationships and attachment (Kail & Cavanaugh,

2000). Ainsworth, one of Bowlby's colleagues, defined attachment as "*an affectional tie that one person or animal forms between [them]self and another specific one – a tie that bonds them together in space and endures over time*" (Ainsworth, 1991, p.31). It is commonly known that characteristics of secure parental attachment are connected to successful adaptive social and psychological functioning across a variety of developmental periods (Kenny & Barton, 2002), cementing the connection between attachment and relationship development.

The quality of care and secure attachment a child experiences from parents or primary caregivers can determine the quality of future intimate or close relationships and also mitigate potential developmental difficulties (Peluso, 2004). Erikson's theory of Psychosocial Stages supports this caregiver influence and indicates that in the first year of a child's life they ideally learn to trust according to the amount of secure attachment they experiences from significant others (Corey, 2005). Erickson's theory proposes that during the first year of life (he calls this period "Infancy: Trust versus mistrust") an infant ideally acquires 'hope', which is an openness to try new experience but which is balanced with caution because discomfort or danger could occur (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000). If significant others provide for basic physical and emotional needs, the infant develops a sense of trust, which is a sign of secure attachment.

At the opposing end of a secure attachment continuum is attachment distress or, insecure attachment in relationships. Erickson's theory suggests that a balance of trust versus mistrust is important but if a child's basic physical and emotional needs are not met, they will develop an attitude of mistrust especially in interpersonal relationships, (Corey, 2005). Verrier (1993) suggests fear (fear of separation) and

trust (the lack of confidence in oneself and in others) are the core issues for adult males who have insecure attachment in their close relationships. Relationships can be hard to deal with if there are fears and mistrust. Therefore, an initial misstep in social development during the trust and confidence building developmental stage disadvantages a child in their social interaction later in childhood and interferes with their adult social development (Kail & Cavanaugh 2000, pp. 167-168). Insecure attachment is in some respects, compounded for boys. Research of the relations between attachment, gender, and behavior with peers in preschool found that relations between insecure attachment and peer interactions were different for boys and girls. Insecure boys showed more aggressive, disruptive, assertive, controlling, and attention-seeking behavior than secure children (Turner, 1991). Thus, literature links relationship development effects from insecure attachment for males.

Constraints including insecure attachment, in developmental stage progress can also restrict a child's ability to attain full intellectual potential, sort out their perceptions, think logically, develop a conscience, become self-reliant, cope with stress and frustration, handle fear and worry, develop future relationships and reduce jealousy (Fahlberg, 1988, p.18). Poor attachment may mean a man can feel he can never let his guard down and relax or enjoy trust in relationships (Verrier, 1993). Therefore, difficulties during the development stage progress can restrict a man from reaching their potential in relationships.

Erikson's theory of developmental stages suggests that during the second developmental stage - 'autonomy versus shame and doubt' (years one to three) children need to learn to overcome the struggle between a sense of self-reliance and self-doubt. They need to explore their world, experiment and make mistakes.

Growing up with insecure attachment will sometimes prevent a child from developing autonomy. Often a child may become overly dependent, which can hamper their capacity to deal with the world effectively later in life (Corey, 2005). Thus, an adult can feel shame easily, continually doubt themselves and become subservient to others.

A consequence of insecure attachment during the second developmental stage may be the triggering of relationship jealousy. There is a repeat of early childhood experiences of jealousy in adulthood. Jansen (1989), states that jealousy in this context is an emotion, which comes from the fearful part of the self. Jansen also suggests that at the first sign of threat to a close relationship, a tension can take over. This tension is the sign of fear of loss of a close relationship. Karen's (1998) perspective is similar and suggests deprivation of love triggers a jealous response to close relationships. Atwool (1997) corroborates their comments and proposes that the jealous response, triggered by insecure attachment provokes males who are most at risk of destroying relationships altogether, to devote an intense effort toward maintaining the semblance of bonds (Atwool, 1997). Further, Atwool notes that in cases where boys who have been severely maltreated by a caregiver during attachment, they do not dare challenge the durability of their relationship with the caregiver. Karen (1998) adds that an adult male can feel like a baby, hungry for attention, placing him in an intolerable emotional turmoil, which requires the mobilisation of his defenses in order for him to cope (Karen, 1998, p.362). It is these consequences of jealousy, created by insecure attachment, which may lead the adult male to counselling.

Atwool (1997) draws a connection between insecure attachment, jealousy and anxiety. She notes that when a boy desperately hangs on to the enmeshed connection with his caregivers, he becomes anxious. He enlists his protection mechanisms of argumentative and aggression behavioral measures. Sedona (2007) concurs and adds that anxiety is another symptom of insecure attachment for boys. It can be all-consuming, interfering with daily lives, relationships and physical health (Sedona, 2007). Erickson's theory proposes that anxiety for these boys can occur in the 'initiative versus guilt stage', ages three-6. In this stage, he suggests that a child develops the ability to try new things and to handle failure (Kail & Cavanaugh 2000, p.18). Corey (2005) describes anxiety as a state of tension that motivates us to do something (Corey, 2005, p.58) and Kail & Cavanaugh adds that it is very tiring. Anxiously attached boys show little flexibility in communication with parents, they communicate less often, and have a very restricted range of feelings and subject matter in conversation (Karen 1998, p.218). The intense apprehension of real or imagined danger of losing a close relationship manifests for a man in him becoming anxious, his confidence reduces, he becomes more dependant, more antisocial, more self-centred, more withdrawn, and has lower in self-esteem, (Peluso, 2004, p.144). Therefore, dealing with anxiety in counselling relationships will be important for a man who has experienced insecure attachment in childhood to achieve relationship well-being.

Insecure attachment can follow when parents prevent boys from making their own decisions. Erickson's theory suggests that indecisiveness for these boys could also develop in the 'initiative versus guilt stage'. Erickson proposes that developing the courage to try new things and be capable of coping with possible failure is

important (Kail & Cavanaugh 2000, p.18). A shortfall of courage can trigger a boy's lack of confidence in taking an active stance and instead he encourages others to make choices on his behalf, (Corey, 2005, p.62). Therefore, indecisiveness may even contribute to delays in the adult male coming to counselling.

A sociocultural effect of antisocial behaviour is generated as a consequence of insecure attachment through a child being taken to a foster home. The effects of disrupted attachment when a child leaves their birth family and is taken into a foster family is a significant contributor to antisocial behaviour because of reduced opportunities for secure attachment to occur (Penzerro, 1995, p.351). If there is continual relocation, related to being fostered, antisocial behaviour can be an outcome. Penzerro (1995) hypothesises that young men who have internalised a view of the world as a hostile, rejecting place as a consequence of disrupted attachment, develop antisocial behaviours, which he suggests is evidence of ideas and feelings of alienation from others. These antisocial behaviours also alienate others, which serves to reinforce the young man's worldview that the world is a hostile rejecting place. Further, (Penzerro, 1995, p.352) adds that as the movement of a boy from placement to placement occurs during fostering, a pattern of drift through relationships becomes entrenched as a way of life. These historical disruptions of attachment following fostering are also likely to lead to antisocial behaviour and continue into adulthood and are likely to lead the adult male into counselling.

The symptoms of Radical Attachment Disorder (RAD) are another effect of insecure attachment. While RAD is a diagnosis for both boys and girls, boys substantially lead the statistics of numbers diagnosed with the disorder because of a strong genetic influence (Psychiatrists, 2008, URL). Children who are diagnosed and

treated for this disorder frequently experienced extreme, chronic trauma prior to age five (Rosenstein, 1996, p.246). Levy (1998) suggests disorganised/disoriented attachment patterns are deeply ingrained in boys who have been diagnosed with RAD. Rosenstein (1996) states that a common symptom of RAD is the effect of a feeling of depersonalisation. Depersonalisation is a mental state in which a person feels detached or disconnected from his or her personal identity or self. This may include the sense that one is "outside" oneself, or is observing one's own actions, thoughts or body (Jrank, 2007, URL). Boys diagnosed with RAD voice a strong desire for things they cannot affectively or cognitively manage such as strong friendships and intimacy. When love and intimacy enter their lives, they become scared about closeness and they sabotage the relationships (Sheperis, 2003, p.76). In order to limit intimacy in social relationships, boys may use poor physical hygiene as a method of controlling the physical distance of others (Levy. T. M., 1998, p.315). Consequently, boys who diagnosed with RAD may require counselling assistance as adults to deal with the chronic symptoms so that they are better able to cope with relationships. Counselling, in offering a safe supportive relationship is likely to be experienced in an intensely ambivalent way for these men – as both needed and therapeutic. It is important that the counsellors understand this ambivalence and offer sufficient 'holding' (not too close, not too distant) while the client experiences their intense ambivalence towards close interpersonal relationships (the client focus group are likely to be experiencing this with their partners already).

Disrupted attachment can occur with the loss of a caregiver during younger years and lead to a lack of commitment for men (Colliver, 1992). The commitment referred to is both a fact demonstrated by behaviour of leaving relationships before

they are rejected, and an attitude consisting of thoughts and beliefs that include, "she'll probably leave me anyhow" (Steele, 2005, URL). Consequently, some male's adult relationships can be very troubled by the lack of commitment on the part of the man. Therefore, the lack of commitment in close relationships with another person may lead the adult male to counselling.

Insecure attachment can develop from caregivers who appear to be insensitive or underresponsive to children's emotions (Jenkins, 1997, p.45). Consequently, Jenkins (1997) suggests that a boy learns to hold back or withdraw in certain parts of his personality. He learns to hide emotions and act staunchly. Erickson would consider this a consequence of too much autonomy between the ages of one and three (Corey, 2005). These developmental delays may contribute to the adult male's inability to function socially appropriately. Insecure attachment and emotional withdrawal affect the adult male's relationships. Men commence acting strong, showing no vulnerabilities and withdrawing from close relationships and it is this continuing pattern that may lead the adult male to counselling.

A boy's level of personal responsibility is usually influenced by his parents. According to Jenkins (1997), some parents do not expect boys to act responsibly. Some caregivers appear to excuse boys from responsibility and apply few meaningful sanctions for responsible behaviour (Jenkins, 1997). Jenkins also suggests that boys appear to be excessively reliant on caregivers (generally mothers) [perhaps in the absence of fathers] to assist them face normal age appropriate pressures, responsibilities and challenges. Increasingly some boys avoid taking responsibility for their own actions and become dependant. They experience increasing difficulties in handling pressure, disappointment and challenge in relationships. Erickson would

consider this reliance on caregivers as parental encouragement of dependency during the ages of one and three (Corey, 2005). Erickson suggests that this is a time a child should be developing autonomy, a child's struggle between a sense of self-reliance and a sense of self-doubt. Therefore, insecure attachment can be linked to caregiver insensitivity and developmental delays. Consequently, adult males whose childhood included parental/caregiver dependency can act irresponsibly when faced with stress and upsets in their relationships with others.

Unfortunately, the financial struggle some families experience is also aligned with insecure attachment. A boy whose parents face this challenge will sometimes be unable to securely bond with them because of the effects of economic hardship on their parents. Poor parenting skills and the maltreatment of children are more common in families suffering economic hardship (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000). Fonagy (Fonagy, 2007, URL) supports this view and adds that a disorganised/disoriented pattern of infant attachment is most likely associated with financial deprivation. The effects of difficulties in bonding between boys and their parents as a consequence of economic hardships that a boy experiences can contribute to a man's disorganised relationship attachment and his inability maintain secure relationships. It is his disorganised relationship styles that may connect the adult male to counselling.

Insecure attachment can also be connected with cultural stereotyping. Men are bombarded with myths like, 'men are not good enough and it's their fault'. At a New Zealand Men's issues summit in 2005 the suggestion was given that people need to get away from these stereotypes, because, when they are so pervasive, men start to feel the effect. Men believe stereo types rather than believing in themselves. This view is often transferred to boys and becomes part of the male culture. Men are seen

as a risk not an asset, e.g. male teachers are advised to keep themselves safe (University of Waikato, 2005). Feminist literature supports this view and suggests that both women and men have been mislabelled and misunderstood because of traditional gender stereotypes (Corey, 2005). Therefore, the suggestion is that boys who have learned as children and grown up to believe the stereotypical myths are less likely to parent securely attached children. Consequently, males who have a lack of self-belief, triggered by stereotyping, will require counselling. However, consideration must also be given that they may find counselling difficult, possibly even shameful because of the stereotypes and as such having them attend counselling is likely to be difficult.

2.3 Chapter 2 summary

There is a dearth of New Zealand literature, either New Zealand European or Maori, related to the effects of attachment difficulties for boys and the consequences for men. Despite this limitation, considerable other western literature highlighted the effects of insecure attachment to trustworthy others in childhood. Thus, for the purpose of this project, transferability is offered. Until sufficient New Zealand research is compiled on the subject, it is suggested by this writer that information from the literature reviewed is transferred to a New Zealand application. Some of the important effects identified in the literature were mistrust, jealousy, anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem. See *Appendix Table 2a (Purpose for the counselling -presenting issues- for the focus client group)* for an overview of the effects the men experience.

The effects identified raise a number of issues worthy of a counsellor's consideration. Fear of separation and the lack of trust or confidence in others interfere with an adult male's social development and can be displayed in aggression, disruptiveness, assertiveness, controlling and attention seeking. Their childhood attachment restrictions can effect perceptions, logic, conscience, self-reliance, degrees of stress and frustration, all contributing to the limitations for these men of reaching their potential in relationships. Further, attachment restrictions effect the development of autonomy, which triggers shame, self-doubt and subservience to others. These effects require a counsellor's understanding and appropriate deliberation.

Another issue for counsellors to ponder is jealousy. Men negatively affected during attachment can 'go all out' to retain the appearance that there is no difficulty in a relationship. However, if 'push comes to shove', activation of their defense mechanisms can occur, assisting them cope with potential threats. Equally, anxiety can initiate a similar defense, displayed in argumentative and aggressive behaviors. In addition, anxiety can be exhibited in a male's communication; they simply do less of it. When they do manage to communicate, they will have difficulty in expressing a range of feelings and they will have less content in conversation. Therefore, counselors must be aware of how jealousy and anxiety can manifest in the adult male who has experienced attachment challenges.

Counsellor's also require understanding of these men's indecisiveness, antisocial behavior, depersonalisation and ambivalence, their lack of relationship commitment, their under responsiveness and some personality withdrawal. Additionally, knowledge of their dependency, their irresponsibly particularly in stressful and their continued

relationship upsets is important. Many of these men have experienced financial struggles while growing up and some are caught in cultural stereotypical views of men, which effect their self-belief. Consequently, a counsellor's insight of the various ways men within the focus group display insecure attachment will be important.

3 Chapter Three

3.1 Introduction:

Chapter two investigated the main themes of mistrust, jealousy, anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem from literature for men who have experienced, and continue to experience, fear and mistrust in close personal relationships and who desire more satisfying intimate relationships as an adult. Chapter 3 will consider these effects alongside a number of counselling approaches and narrow down the selection to form a safe eclectic model that best fits working with the specific effects a man, within the focus group, may face. It will also factor in a statistical argument for integrating the tentative counselling therapies.

3.2 The Eclectic selection of suitable counselling approaches for men experiencing relationship challenges:

While the literature reviewed offered effects for men who have experienced, and continue to experience, fear and mistrust in close personal relationships and who desire more satisfying intimate relationships as an adult, individual client characteristics are impossible for a counsellor to know until after they had meet the client. Therefore, predetermining or being overly determined about a suitable counselling approach is inappropriate. It is for this reason perhaps that Corey (2005) suggests that during the course of counselling, clients may need different interventions at different times. Further, he suggests that a client's needs in any

given environment provides a framework for selecting interventions that are most appropriate (Corey, 2005). Despite these challenges, correlation of a potential eclectic counselling model is possible and preference is given to fitting the counselling approaches to the client, rather than to the counsellor.

The counselling approaches considered all have particular idiosyncratic views of how they interpret people and their presenting issues. The formulation of the eclectic model for this research project is on the understanding the eclectic proposal is hypothetical, rather than based on experience. Corey (2005) explains that developing an integrative perspective is a lifelong endeavour that is refined with experience. It is on this premise that a safe eclectic approach for men who have experienced, and continue to experience, fear and mistrust in close personal relationships and who desire more satisfying intimate relationships as an adult is developed. Cormack (2005) offers a possible reason for the ongoing debate about the best way to select and eclectic mix by suggesting that each of the main therapeutic counselling models focuses on the way in which that particular theory invites counsellors to see the world and make sense of human beings — their problems and potential.

There are a number of philosophical ways to understand eclecticism. The preferred method for this research project is Theoretical Integrationism, "*the conceptual unification of diverse counselling approaches*" (Hansen, 2002). This is an approach that synthesises the best of two or more theoretical approaches under the assumption that the outcome will be richer than either theory alone (Corey, 2005). This writer further considers the method may be a way to allow maintenance of a counsellor's philosophical interest while also allowing congruency with their beliefs

and values. Jones and Butman (1991) state that for a Christian counsellor, when considering an eclectic compilation of counselling approaches, an important contemplation is related to their faith because the therapy they choose needs to be in harmony with their faith. These considerations along with the others previously discussed promoted a concentrated assessment of the therapies and promoted the construction of *appendix table 3a* (Personal eclectic counselling therapy compatibility considerations) and *appendix table 3b* (Application of the considerations to the chosen therapy's). A Theoretical Integration approach to selecting counselling approaches appears to accommodate the complex range of considerations for counselling practice as well as philosophical thinking for a counsellor.

Once the possible counselling approaches are identified, there is a need to also factor into those choices, a basis for the selection in the final assembly of a safe eclectic model. I have chosen a tenet that underpins my final choice of counselling approaches for the men. The principle is, counselling approaches that have strengths in developing a composite picture of the people that have influenced these men, will be effective. Initially, Person-centered counselling, Gestalt therapy, Transactional Analysis (T A), MacMillan's integration model, Imago and Family systems therapy all met the tenets criterion. Chapter 3 will focus on the use of the first three counselling approaches and the underpinning tenet to accordingly assemble a safe eclectic counselling model.

A reason for choosing the eclectic combination of counselling approaches was to ensure that clients would receive optimal benefit from the counselling relationship. The thinking about the benefit to clients in having a quality client/counsellor relationship paved the way to merge the existential philosophy (experiential and

relationship orientated) of both a Person-centred approach to counselling and Gestalt therapy with the humanistic ethos (*"each of us has a potential that we can actualise and through which we can find meaning"* (Corey, 2005, p.166)), of Transactional Analysis (TA). The benefits of linking an existential philosophy and the humanistic ethos were also borne out in appendix *table 3b (Application of the considerations to the chosen therapies)*. While there are other statistical arguments for integrating the suggested counselling therapies like relationship questions (*appendix Fig 1.*), compatibility factors (*appendix table 3a*) and a rating process (*appendix table 3a*), the breadth restrictions of this paper constrain discussions about their significance. Therefore, I believe by culminating a client counselling approach fit over a counsellor preference, including Theoretical Intergrationism and considering my Christian faith that men presenting with intimate relationship difficulties, as a consequence of insecure attachment, are likely to profit from the amalgamation of Person-centred and Gestalt therapy with TA counselling approaches.

3.3 Person-centered counselling:

A Person-centred approach forms the backbone of a safe eclectic approach for men who have experienced, and continue to experience, fear and mistrust in close personal relationships, and who desire more satisfying intimate relationships as an adult. This is because rebuilding trust will be a key component during counselling. The Person-centred philosophy will assist restoration of trust through a particular type of relationship that counsellors are encouraged to facilitate. It is this relationship that will hold the key to assisting the men to initiate personal change regarding trust.

That client and counsellor relationship is paramount. Consequently, it will be during the counselling relationship development stage that the Person-centered counselling approach philosophy, "*a person has the capacity or ability within themselves to become fully functioning*" (Corey, 2005, p.470) will be of great value. A counsellor who is able to create a climate of understanding and acceptance through their relationship and enable the client to non-defensively come to terms with aspects of themselves that they have denied or disowned (Psychiatrists, 2008, pp.2-3), could expect the men to overcome their relationship challenges. This will be particularly effective for working with an adult male who experienced a childhood misstep in social development during Erickson's trust and confidence building developmental stage, mainly because insecure attachment continues to interfere with his adult social development. The client/counsellor relationship is of primary importance (Corey, 2005) and a counselling goal might be to assist men with relationship challenges to become capable of letting their guard down, relax and enjoy trust in relationships.

Further cementing the choice of Person-centered as the base philosophy in a safe eclectic model are other influential factors. Rogers (1954) suggests, if the counsellor "*can provide a certain type of relationship, the [client] will discover within [themselves] the capacity to use that relationship for growth and change, and personal development will occur*" (Rogers, 1961, pp. 32-33). Therefore, Corey suggests that the relationship required between counsellor and client is such an extremely important component that it is at the very heart of the therapy. The facilitating role of the counsellor is crucial and their ability to exemplify 'genuineness' is critical. He suggests the counselor must be "*genuine, integrated and authentic*"

(Corey, 2005, p.172). It is through this model of authenticity that the counsellor will be of great value to the men. As summarised in chapt 1 (1.4.4) and chapter 2 attachment deficits have created challenges for men within the focus group. Unfortunately, they would have experienced incongruent environments, which fostered their inability to trust. Therefore, counsellor congruence demonstrated to the client through matching their inner feelings, thoughts, reactions and attitudes with outward expressions is very important. It is by way of congruence in the relationship that trust will occur and become a central feature in counselling with the men.

The therapeutic relationship in Person-centred counselling requires three core conditions from the counsellor. One core condition discussed as being pivotal in building trust for the men is congruence. Rogers (cited in Corey 2005) adds another core condition, respectfulness. According to Rogers, the counsellor must have unconditional positive regard for the client, an acceptance and caring for them. The counsellor must accept clients as they are and allow them to have their own beliefs and feelings (cited in Corey 2005, pp.172-173). Attributable to the disadvantage of not experiencing Erickson's trust and confidence building developmental stage, the men are likely to display some or a combination of aggression, disruptiveness, assertiveness, controlling and attention seeking behaviours. Therefore, in spite of their possible behaviour, the counsellor must display the core condition of complete respectfulness by understanding the men's childhood pathways.

Rogers's third core condition is accurate empathy. This is an ability to grasp the subjective world of another person. The counsellor's ability to show accurate empathy for the client is important because it *"plays a vital role in facilitating*

constructive change in the client...research consistently shows that therapist empathy is the most potent predictor of client progress in therapy" (Corey, 2005, pp.182-183). Men who have experienced, and continue to experience, fear and mistrust in close personal relationships and who desire more satisfying intimate relationships as an adult may experience restrictions in perceptions, logic, conscience, self-reliance, degrees of stress and frustration. Attributed to insecure attachment, the men are unlikely to have accurate attunement of their feelings and needs. Through the support and empathic communication process, the counsellor can assist the men to identify and experience genuine expressions of self, in a relationship and re-establish their feelings and needs. It is limitations of this type that the counsellor must be acutely aware of while also having a sense the men's subjective experience. Therefore, the counsellor must be able to do more than recognise the men's feelings around their challenges, they must sense them as if they were their own, ensuring that they are also able retain congruence. Empathy will help the men to *"(1) pay attention and value their experiencing; (2) see earlier experiences in new ways; (3) modify their perceptions of themselves, others, and the world; and (4) increase their confidence in making choices and in pursuing a course of action"*(Corey, 2005p. 174). Accurate empathy will facilitate the men becoming more reflective of themselves and assist them gain self-understanding and clarification of their beliefs and worldviews (Corey, 2005, p.173).

There are range of effects identified in chapter two for men with relationship challenges including mistrust, jealousy, anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem. Trust rebuilding will be a key component and the Person-centred approach will be

effective for working on this insecure attachment effect and thus its importance in inclusion in the development of a safe eclectic model.

3.4 Gestalt therapy:

Having established Person-centered counselling as appropriate for working with the focus group, considered was another relational counselling approach. An approach that supports and strengthens a safe eclectic model for the focus group was Gestalt therapy. The Gestalt therapeutic relationship philosophy proposes that a *"person [has] the capacity to recognise how earlier influences are related to present difficulties"* (Corey, 2005, p.470). Latner (1992) adds that the therapy is a here and now (present moment) present-centred approach. He suggests that critical questions like, *"what caused [the] present condition"* (Latner, 1992, p.4) need to be asked and proposes answers have to do with past events, specifying that the remembering, planning and reflecting on the events must be done in the present. Therefore, Gestalt therapy's relational approach will assist the focus group to practically experience in the present, through acting out various roles of influential people from their past, how those people have shaped their lives (Corey 2005, p.470).

These practical experiences allow clients to act differently and appropriately as an adult, in either past or present or future time. Chapter 2 raised the issue of jealousy for some men in the focus group, indicating that there is a repeat of early childhood experiences of jealousy in adulthood. These men can continually doubt their ability to retain relationships. They become dependent on their relationship with their partner and at the first sign of threat to the relationship the fear of loss takes

over. During the therapy the client will have the opportunity to observe how their autonomy developed as a child and how it affects them in the present. Consequently, Gestalt therapy would encourage client's to directly experience, in the present, their struggles with 'unfinished business' from their past (Psychiatrists, 2008) and make adjustments as an adult, should they desire.

Chapter 2 also linked jealousy with anxiety. Men within the focus group will often show signs of their anxiety through their lack of communication. Their likely difficulty in expressing a range of feelings and conversational content restrictions will require the counsellor to have the ability to allow themselves to be affected by the client's being and ensure that they actively share their own perceptions and experiences with the client during session times (Corey, 2005). Corey also suggests that a counsellor should make sure that the client works and develops their own interpretations of whatever is being discussed and as such does not follow the counsellor's perspective. Corey adds that the quality of the counsellor's presence is also important and that the client will need to feel as though the counsellor is really in the moment and fully attending, thus deepening relational trust and attunement. Provided the counsellor is able to promote such a counselling environment, the men will have the capacity to acknowledge how anxiety was influenced during childhood and its influence in their present relationship challenges.

The effects identified in chapter two for men with relationship challenges included mistrust, jealousy, anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem. Dealing with how jealousy and the connected anxiety was established for the men will be important and are the main reasons for Gestalt Therapy's inclusion in the

development of a safe eclectic model, for working with men who have experienced these insecure attachment effects.

3.5 Transactional Analysis:

Another counselling approach and relationship philosophy considered for the safe eclectic model for the focus group is Transactional Analysis (TA). Similarly to Person-centered counselling and Gestalt Therapy, TA's philosophical orientation suggests that *"people are relationship seeking and interdependent throughout life...[and] a strong therapeutic relationship is crucial"* (O'Reilly-Knapp, 2007).

O'Reilly-Knapp promotes the counsellor as the teacher, trainer, and resource person and that they are heavily involved in the therapy. Further and provided the client is participating in a close relationship, the counsellor will teach the client how to rely on their own 'Adult', not the counsellors or anyone else's and that the client is active agent in the therapeutic process. In addition, the client must understand and accept a therapeutic contract, do assignments, and demonstrate willingness to change by "doing" not just talking (O'Reilly-Knapp). The blend of TA's philosophical orientation, the counsellor's prominence and the client's understanding and commitment will strengthen and support the two other approaches to form a safe eclectic model.

The counsellor's contribution is very important for the development of the therapeutic relationship and will be important for the clients healing. O' Reilly-Knapp (2007) notes that the counsellor attempts to establish 'egalitarian' relationship and offer client's unrestricted access to the person the counsellor is and are committed to the clients change through the process as an equal partner. Further, the counsellor

will ensure that the client feels safe and understands that their relationship is mutually respectful. Strengthening of the relationship will only occur when the client feels the counsellor has a true and empathetic understanding of them (O'Reilly-Knapp). Additionally, O'Reilly-Knapp indicates that during sessions, counsellors will be normalising the functions of psychological processes and by doing so, will assist the client not feel at odds with the procedures. For the client the journey is quite an undertaking and the necessary healing required during the process is intricate in the relationship (O'Reilly-Knapp).

The counsellor can assist the client examine the basis on which early decisions were made and encourage them to make more appropriate decisions based on more evidence (Psychiatrists, 2008). The approach would be of great benefit in resolving the men's intimate relationship difficulties because it will assist them recognise where their childhood decisions were made. The therapy will further assist them to remodel thinking based on the evidence they have acquired as an adult, enabling them to alter their childhood thinking appropriately.

At the heart of changing the men's thinking and the most significant reason for TA's inclusion will be how it assists them gain understanding of their 'ego' states (Parent, Adult, and Child). *"Understanding the differences between these empowers us to make choices about behaviour we may wish to change"* (Saunders, 2007, p.1). As clients become aware of the content and functioning of their Parent, Adult, Child, it will allow them to find out which ego state their current behaviour is based. Jealousy in relationships will be based on the functioning of the 'Child' and the men will gain awareness of how their Child ego is affecting relationships. Chapter 2 also identified that jealousy frequently has anxiety close at hand because some men in

the focus group continually doubt their ability to retain relationships. While Gestalt Therapy will be valuable in working with the effects of anxiety, TA offers another perspective. Using TA a counsellor will be able assist the client draw a link that identifies how the 'Child' ego, which was effected by insecure attachment, is playing out in his adult life in the form of anxiety and is manifested in his lack of confidence, dependence, antisocial behaviour, self-centeredness, general withdrawal and his poor self-esteem. As an 'Adult', clients can gain understanding of their ability to determine more appropriate actions based on the new information received (Chapman, 2007). As an 'Adult', clients can choose to remodel their childhood thinking away from past anxious related behaviours which affect relationships. Therefore, TA is a suitable approach for working with men in the focus group that are unable to function normally while interacting in relationships because of confusion in their ego states.

Chapter two highlighted the psychological effect of concealment of inner conflict for some clients, causing disturbed personalities with troubling symptoms like aggression. Erickson would argue that this is a consequence of too much autonomy between the ages of 1-3. Steiner (2007) suggests counsellors using TA are capable of helping clients with their dysfunctional, unproductive, toxic, uncooperative interactions. As with the childhood effects of jealousy and anxiety, TA will be able to assist the men to determine in which ego state their aggression is playing out and offer them choices about alternative behaviours such as being a 'winner'. A winner refers to the power in relationships and a winner is respectful of the rights of both self and others. Therefore, TA will assist men effected by aggression "*choose winner behaviours to replace those old outdated ones*" (Saunders, 2007, p.4).

TA will assist the counsellor teach the men who suffer with the self-esteem issues how to enhance interaction and construction of relationships. Chapter 2 discussed how attachment restrictions during the ages of 1-3 could trigger shame, self-doubt and subservience to others. Erickson suggested that limitations occur also between the ages of 3-6 because the child did not develop the courage to try new things and thus develop the capabilities of coping with failure. This shortfall activates a lack of confidence and a tendency to allow others to make choices on their behalf. Steiner (2007) suggests counsellors familiar with TA are capable of understanding, predicting and helping improve client's communication and productivity within their relationships. As a client learns the ways they behave and how they learned the behavior, they will also have the opportunity to choose alternatives that counteract self-esteem issues and thus improve relationships.

A further reason for the inclusion of TA in the safe eclectic model suggested was its alignment with the writer's personality and its congruence with the writer's beliefs and values. Appendix tables 3a (*Personal eclectic counselling therapy compatibility considerations*) and 3b (*Application of the considerations to the chosen therapy's*) highlights the importance placed on these considerations. Corey (2005) supports the importance of counsellor personality alignment with the approach by stating, as one of the central messages of his book, that counsellors need to reflect on "*how the key concepts of each approach fit [their] personality*" (Corey, 2005, p.493). The process of the potential fit to the writer's personality for each of the three counselling approaches considered for working with men with relationship challenges was considered and of the three, TA was most closely aligned through my beliefs, values, spirituality and cognitive style.

There were a wide range of effects identified in chapter two for the focus group and include the five main themes of mistrust, jealousy, anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem. Working with the focus group on the anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem effects of insecure attachment will be important in TA's safe eclectic contribution in the development of a safe eclectic model for counselling men with relationship challenges. Until a counsellor is aware of individual client characteristics, the three approaches suggested for the safe eclectic model can only be theoretically complimentary to one another and an exact combination of approaches for the presenting issue/s remains untested.

3.6 Chapter 3 summary

Chapter three considered the proposed counselling approaches in the light of the effects associated for men who have relationship challenges. Of the counselling approaches considered which included Person-centered, Gestalt, Transactional Analysis, Morgan and MacMillan's integration model, Imago and Family systems, the selection was narrowed to three suitable approaches. The thinning out process used the principle tenet that counselling approaches that have strengths in developing a composite picture of the people that have influenced these men, in combination with many other important considerations. The process identified Person-centered, Gestalt and Transactional Analysis as approaches that best matched all significant factors and best dealt with the attachment effects identified in chapter 2.

The final three approaches identified have their strengths and weaknesses. With those considerations in hand, chapter three has considered the five main effects

of insecure attachment (mistrust, jealousy, anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem) that were identified from the literature research in chapter two and has suggested the approaches that are best suited to each effect. This project suggests Person-centered counselling will be effective because it offers a therapeutic model where the therapeutic relationship is paramount and Gestalt Therapy offers further methods and practices for working more contact-fully with relational experience (including experience of unfinished business). Transactional Analysis offers a cognitive framework for complex relational dynamics and concludes the formulation of a safe eclectic model for working with men with relationship challenges.

4 Chapter Four

4.1 Introduction

Chapter three took an in-depth look at the suggested safe eclectic counselling model for men who have experienced, and continue to experience, fear and mistrust in close personal relationships. It described the selection process and approach to selection and highlighted reasons supporting the safe eclectic choice. Chapter three also broadened understanding for the reader why the suggested therapies are suitable for the focus group by suggesting which of the five main effects the focus group experience (mistrust, jealousy, anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem) were able to be effectively resolved by the counselling approaches selected. Chapter four will expand the findings of chapter three and consider them in a New Zealand environment. Further, chapter four will introduce ethical and Christian perspectives and provide a summary of the literature reviewed.

4.2 Research findings

The literature reviewed suggests that most men identified as having relationship challenges have existential presenting issues/problems. Person-centred therapy is companionable with concerns of these types and therefore is the backbone therapy. Gestalt therapy and TA are included for a compatible integration of a safe eclectic counselling model that will contribute to a male's ability to have closer intimate relationships as an adult.

4.3 New Zealand Culture and Values

Much of the material came from western culture narratives. Unfortunately, there appears to be a very small number of Maori or New Zealand European writings on the subject. Philip Culbertson in his introductory to a special edition of the N.Z. Journal of Counselling, 'working with male clients in New Zealand' states, "*how little writing is done by New Zealanders, in several fields of mental health, about dealing with male clients*" (Culbertson, 2007, p.iii). His comment reflects the real issue of New Zealand literature restrictions I had while preparing this research project. However, one of the writer's in the journal, Matthew Bannister was able to relate his view of Pakeha masculinities and their complex association with national identity. He discusses the social construction of identity, particularly through New Zealand male writers who formulated identity around accounts of the rural working man and the 'Kiwi Bloke' (Culbertson, 2007, pp.1-13). The term Kiwi Bloke is the dominant stereotype in our society and has many implications attached for the Pakeha men like acting like other blokes (play sport, chasing sheilas, tuff, rugby, racing, and beer). Discussed in Chapter 2 where the implications of stereotyping and the Kiwi Bloke is a New Zealand example. Bannister argues that Pakeha masculinities are influenced by global biases such as capitalism, which actually disempowers individual postmodern men. However, it is the global influence that provides the opportunity to suggest that, application of western cultural narratives and the safe eclectic counselling model developed from them for this research project, is transferable to working with Pakeha males inside the focus group.

The critique of the similarities, differences, biases and assumptions or omissions in the literature will include Maori cultural scrutiny. Representation of the

Maori view will occur through this writer's experience and familiarity with tangata whenua, in combination with the writings of (Pitama, 1996). These views offer an alternative to the western literature.

While the research has value for many men, it may not be the complete picture for all. Caution is flagged for New Zealand men because the lack of New Zealand literature accessible for this research project means some findings may not be applicable to all New Zealanders. Warning also for Maori that these research findings may not have a cultural fit because Maori have a "*different*" (Pitama, 1996, p.112) focus than the European individualistic influences identified within the literature. There is no greater example of a difference between European and Maori than the process of whangai, (*"Maori customary practice of raising children, either transient or permanent"* (McRae, 2006)) by other whanau (family) members. The reviewed literature depicts childhood attachment difficulties as a major influence in adult intimate relationship concerns. Many references link historical disrupted attachment to the difficulties experienced regarding close relationships. Metge (1995) suggests that a western worldview would argue that the offering by the biological parents, their mokopuna (*"Grandchild"* (McRae, 2006, p.16)) to whanau, usually to Toua (Grandma) and Poua (Granddad), would instigate disruption in a child's life and has the potential to lead to insecure attachment. Western literature connects insecure attachment to the five main themes (mistrust, jealousy, anxiety, aggression, and low self-esteem) and the relationship challenges that some men face, yet some Maori do not view the whangai process this way. It is this alternative cultural understandings and interpretations that counsellors need to weary and mindful of.

Therefore, prudence is required while interpreting the conclusions this research essay presents, particularly for Maori.

This writer has witnessed attachment disruption occur within his own whanau while caring for whangi. However, the opposite has also occurred and attachment has been very successful. The common denominator in both cases appears linked to life-style influences. In situations where Maori live according to non-contemporary practices and according to traditional values and customs of iwi obligations and kin group responsibilities, the whangai process works very well (McRae, 2006). In cases where non-traditional practices are lived, attachment disruption in the writer's whanau has occurred and is aligned with the research project findings.

Support for this comment came about during an informal interview with North Island whanau who grew up as whangai and who now raise whangai. When questioned about the five themes the research has identified and if they identified with any of them because they had experienced a shift from the direct care of biological parents to Toua and Poua, it took a considerable amount of explanation on the part of this writer before whanau understood the meaning of the question. This point directs to the difficulty for some Maori of interpreting such a question because of the perspective assumed by this writer. They experience and know the whangai process as normal and to answer this writer's question and its implication might mean the need to assume that there is negative connotation with the whangai method. Whanau consider that it is not an answerable question and that instead there are many benefits of the whangai practice. Benefits such as loving Taonga (precious gift) to another person who may not be able to have tamariki (children), inability for biological parents to raise a tamariki, tamariki gaining opportunities and

love that they may not have otherwise experienced and tamariki are able to experience the best of both worlds through the closeness and collectivism of Maori culture.

Traditional Maori, while affected also by environmental issues, do not display identical symptoms as the men discussed by authors from western cultures when the traditional whangi process is adopted. This is largely attributable to tangata whenua's collectivist attitude, compared with western 'individualism' (University, 2005, p.8). Maori also benefit from their Te Whare Tapa Wha philosophy of wellbeing (*appendix Fig. 4 Te Whare Tapa Wha model of health*), which encourages them to retain a balance of all four fields and redirect focus off themselves onto the wider whanau, Wairua (Spiritual wellbeing), Hinengaro (Mental wellbeing) and Tinana (Physical wellbeing) (Ministry, 2004). There appear considerably less intimate relationship difficulties for Maori men who value and live according to traditional tikanga (custom), than for those Maori who live western cultural lifestyles. Thus, matching symptoms of Europeans to traditional Maori whanau practice of whangai is difficult.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, counsellors must be acutely aware of the dangers of word choice because in the multi cultural society words can be misunderstood. No better example of a situation where caution is required than when a counsellor is working with a Maori male with relationship challenges. The counsellor needs to not only ensure that they meet the statutory requirements of the Treaty of Waitangi, which includes the 'partnership', 'participation' and 'protection' requirements of the principles of the Treaty, but that they also be aware of the five potential ways Maori clients can choose to view and position themselves within their culture (Traditional, Non-traditional, Assimilated, Bi-cultural, and Alienated (Taiapa, 2007)). Some clients,

while of direct Maori decent, may choose to see themselves as Traditional or conversely, as Alienated. Therefore, the counsellor must be careful not to make assumptions, rather investigate and be certain that an understanding is mutually agreed before proceeding.

Further, genuineness toward appreciating other cultures, particularly Maori culture because of the Treaty, is imperative for a New Zealand counsellor. Gregory (2006) and others are critical of those who play 'lip-service' to the Treaty. For the writer, lip-service also has ethical implications. The New Zealand Counsellors Association Code of Ethics has established principles, values and professional guidelines for counsellors (NZAC, 2007). If a counsellor is to practice in accordance with the code, it is important that they respect human dignity and diversity and engage authentically in the culture of a client, rather than artificiality participating.

Identified also were other unqualified literature limitations like the assumption that 'care' is the only contributing factor in developmental issues. Clearly, this is not the case, particularly when highlighted against a bio-psychosocial background, which suggests that there are three interactive forces/factors of sociocultural, biological and psychological influences involved in childhood attachment (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2000). Furthermore, the assumption that attachment is the only contributing factor in future relationship challenges when clearly this is only part of the picture. The finding of this research paper contradicts both points and further emphasizes limitations in the literature.

4.4 A Christian/spiritual perspective

Holding an ethical stance is important for a counsellor and I consider that ethics is linked also to the value of genuineness and in-turn to sincerity. The NZAC code of ethics (4.7) suggests that counsellor has an ethical obligation to their client to be honest (NZAC, 2007). If one is truly honest then one is likely to be also attempting to be genuine (Nelson and Sons, 1984 p. 215). Genuineness and sincerity have closely aligned meaning (Nelson and Sons, 1984 p. 473). If a counsellor is sincere in their relationship with a client, one could argue that the counsellor will attempt to facilitate any intervention or use any tool that will assist a client to overcome their presenting issue. Some counsellors might include consideration of spirituality as an intervention. Spirituality, used in this context infers *"that state of holiness, purity, and relative perfection which enables men [and women] to enjoy the near-constant companionship of the Lord's Spirit"* (McConkie, 1981, p.760).

Joshua 24:14 speaks of sincerity and truth. He suggests that man should *"put away the gods of which [his] fathers served"* (Bible, 1979). This writer considers 'fathers' in that context could also imply 'man' or in the context of counselling, 'man's theories'. Therefore, one interpretation could be that a counsellor should not rely solely on counselling theories because over time they can lose favour and be replaced with alternative views, consequently there may be other options than counselling theories, such as spirituality.

A counsellor with a Christian worldview would generally consider spirituality and prayer are connected to each other in some form or another. Popov offers her take on prayer and has counsellor user-friendly information that supports her thoughts on prayer, *"The medical impact of prayer has been studied...Dr. Mitchell*

Krucoff [says that,] patients receiving prayer [when undergoing cardiac procedures] have up to 100 percent fewer side effects from these procedures than people not prayed for" (Popov, 2004, pp.261-262). The Bible in James 5:16 it states, "*...and pray for one another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*" (Bible, 1979). Both statements offer an insight into the power of prayer. Thus a Christian counsellor would be wise to consider client interventions such as spirituality that are outside of conventional counselling approaches.

Another Christian perspective might include considering God "*(generally meaning the Father)...in whom all fullness and perfection dwell*" (McConkie, 1981, p.317). "*Father is to taken literally; it signifies that the Supreme Being is the literal Parent or Father of the spirits of men (Heb. 12:9)*" (McConkie, 1981, p.278). From this position a counsellor may be able to consider working with the men in the focus group using God as a Loving Father and inviting them to develop a relationship with Him. The counsellor may be able to draw a connection for the men that their relationship challenges occurred while being nurtured by mortal ("*a human being*" (Publications, 1986, p.315)) caregivers and as such were unlikely to have been perfect examples. In contrast, God is perfect, understands mortal challenges and is capable of forming a relationship that some of the men may require.

Within the safe eclectic model suggested for the men with relationship challenges, some therapies provide opportunities to consider spirituality. Williams (2006) suggests Gestalt therapy cultivates spirituality as an attitude (such as openness or love) and offers the opportunity for clients to consider that spiritual awakenings can be born out of difficulty and struggles. Wolfert (2000) adds that Gestalt therapy is not merely a mental activity; rather it is a complete creative

experience in the present. Therefore, Gestalt therapy may be ideal for working with these men and for providing a platform to consider spirituality.

A counsellor using Person-centred therapy and successfully demonstrating the core condition of 'unconditional positive regard and acceptance' provides another opportunity for the client to consider spirituality. "*Caring is unconditional; it is not contaminated by evaluation or judgement of the client's feelings, thoughts, and behaviour as good or bad*" (Corey, 2005, p.172). This perspective offers a client opportunity to consider that God's view of them would be the same as the core condition, while also allowing a client who is non Christian to have other forms of spirituality. Thus, the core condition provides an ideal platform to further consider spiritual openings for the client.

4.5 Summary of Findings

Within the sociocultural influences of disrupted or insecure attachment, which includes consequences of adoption, modelling, economic hardship and stereotyping there were many similarities that are connected to one another by lack of nurture. The literature reviewed recognised that a boy's quality relationships, particularly from birth until four years, directly influenced their road through to and including adulthood relationships. The biological literature had the common link that nature also has a particular role to play.

Culminating the interactive forces of the bio-psychosocial framework and attachment, a picture has been revealed of the main effects behind the relationship difficulties some men face. The painted scene includes wounds on the men that took place during the formation of early close relationships. The scene also incorporates

men recovering, assisted by a safe eclectic counselling model. It is during the recovery stage that this research project holds its greatest value. This research project provides an opportunity of liberation from the weight that early relationships difficulties have had on some adult males and provides hope that counselling can assist to lighten their load in close personal relationships.

4.6 Where to from here?

There were limitations to this research project which included the lack of New Zealand literature. Consequently, much of information gathered for this project originated in other western countries. Therefore, accurate application for New Zealand men is yet to be applied and researched and therein lays an opportunity for New Zealand researchers and writers.

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6 Appendices:

Fig.1 Ethics and relationships

The following are Epston and White's questions they developed to ask themselves when determining their choices of models, theories, and practices.

Freedman, J., & Comps, G. (1996). *Narrative therapy: The social construction of preferred identities*. New York: Norton.

1. How does this model/theory/practice "see" the persons?
2. How does it press you to conduct yourself with people who seek your help?
3. How does it press them to conduct themselves with you who offer your help?
4. How does it have them "treat" themselves? "See" themselves?
5. How is this person being redescribed/redefined by it?
6. Does it invite people to see therapist or themselves as experts on themselves?
7. Does it divide and isolate people or give them a sense of community and collaboration?
8. Do the questions asked lead to in generative or normative directions (e.g., propose alternative or converse dominant social practices)?
9. Does the model require the person to enter the therapist's "expert" knowledge or does it require the therapist to enter the "world" of the client?
10. What is the definition of "professionalism"? Does its idea of "professionalism" have more to do with the therapist's presentation of self to colloquies or with the therapist's presentation of self to the person(s) seeking their assistance?

Note: The questions focus largely on the effects of practices, so that what therapists do is not evaluated by how well their actions follow rules but by the actual effects of those actions on people's lives.

Fig. 2 Correctness (Patterson, 1994, pp.30-53)



some, with committment caring and genuineness.

Egan (1990) adds another condition that has relevance throughout the counseling process:

5. Concreteness—using clear language to describe the client's life situation

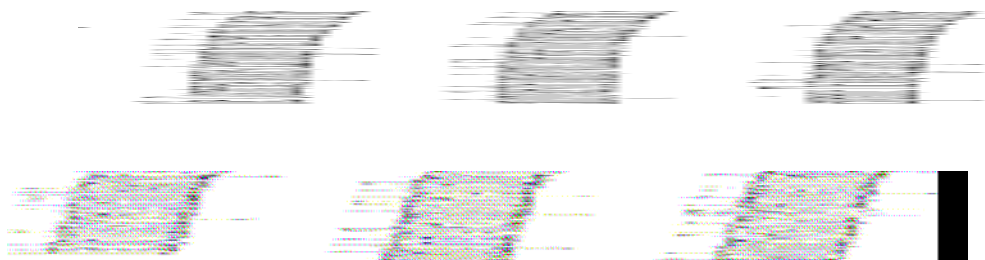


Fig. 3 Stages of Counselling (Geldard, 2001)

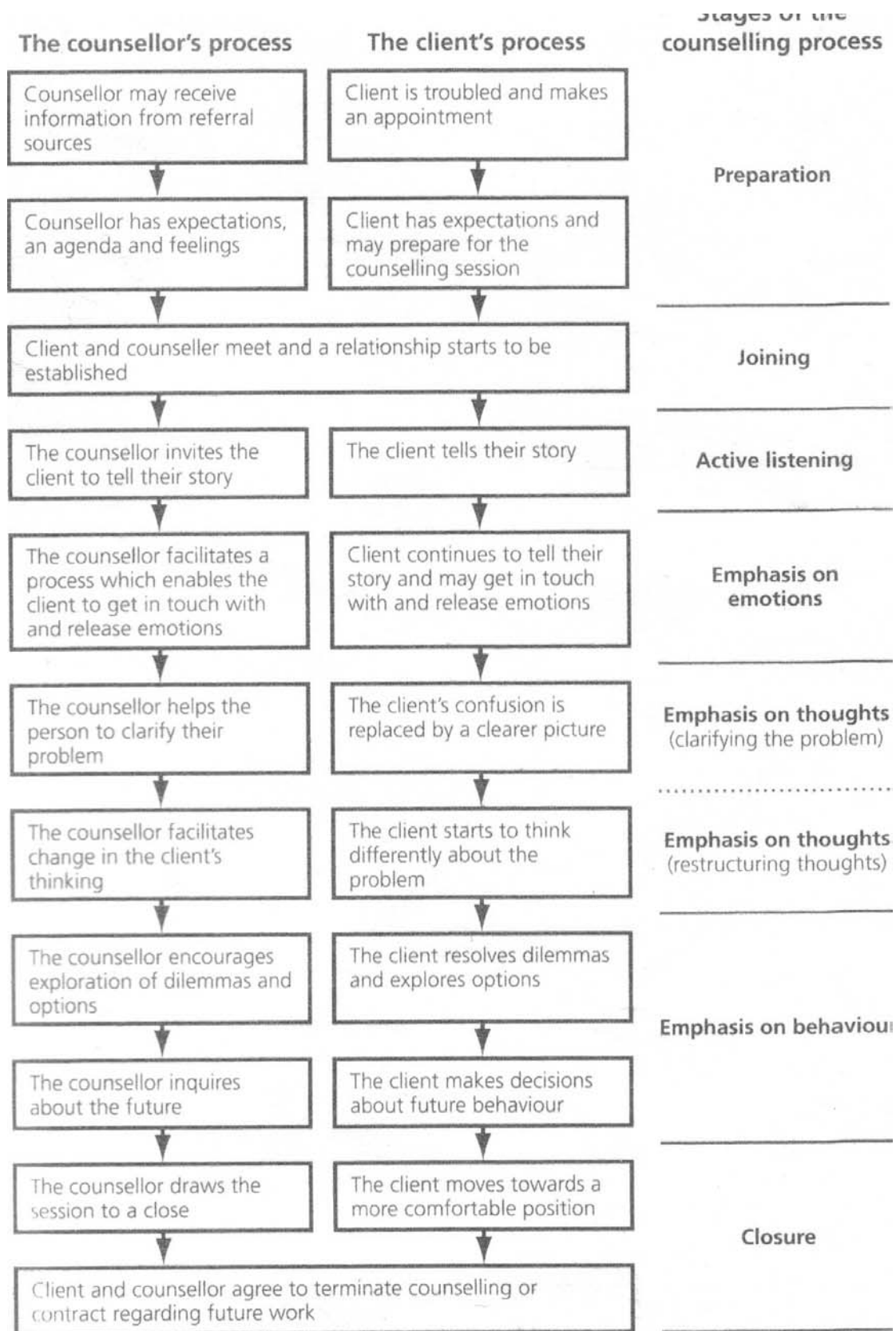
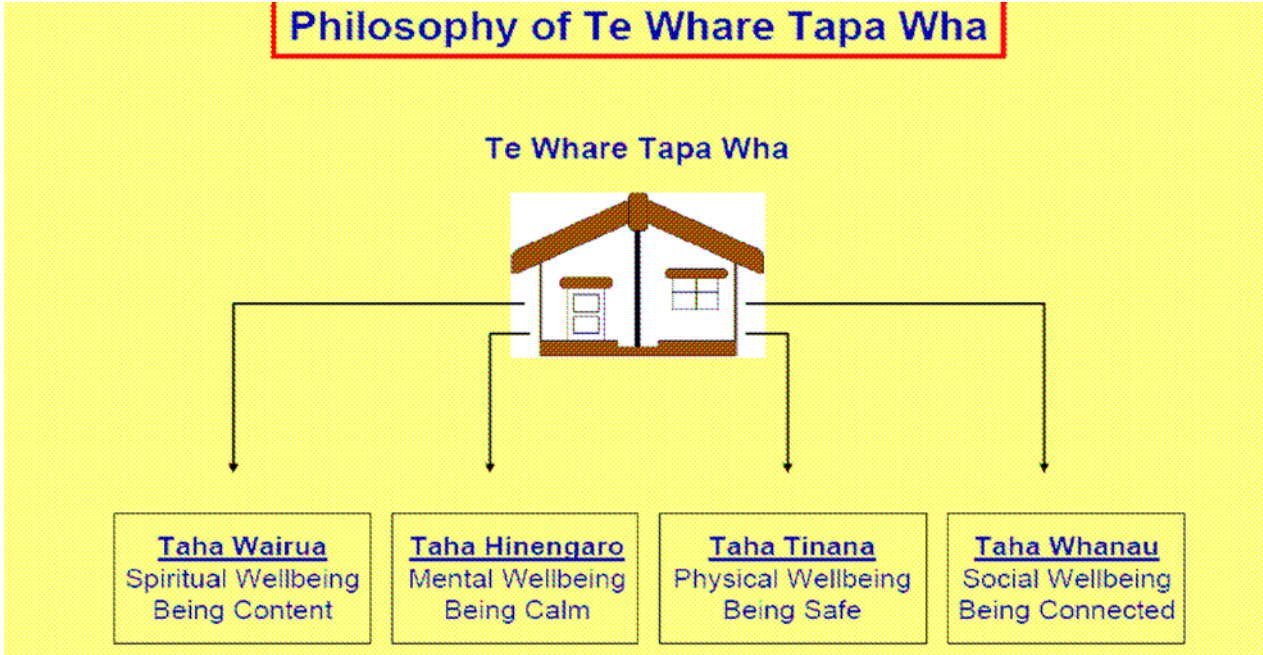


Figure 14.1 Stages of the counselling process

Fig. 4 Te Whare Tapa Wha model of health



(Ministry, 2004)

Table 2a Purpose for the counselling (presenting issues) for the focus client group

Sociocultural <i>reason for counselling</i>	& Biological <i>& reason for counselling</i>	Psychological <i>reason for counselling</i>	& Life-cycle <i>& reason for counselling</i>
<p>Developmental</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mistrust <p>Relationship challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jealousy <p>Anxious-resistant or anxious-avoidant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety <p>Have a tendency to act out antisocially</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antisocial behaviour <p>Affects fundamental relations to others</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence and/or commitment. <p>Developmental overloads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much autonomy, inability to deal with the world appropriately. <p>Developmental underloads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unable to find sufficient autonomy or ability to deal with the world appropriately <p>Strong emotional reactions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stress reactions in relationships are undesirable <p>Deprivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insecure attachment behaviours <p>Not good enough</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Struggling with their identity and having considerable self-doubt 	<p>Radical Attachment Disorder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disorganised/disoriented attachment patterns are deeply ingrained... However, forcibly through the legal and health systems these men may enter counselling. <p>Evolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With difficulties in relationship commitment, nurturing, trust, abandonment and rejection. <p>Transgenerational genetic transmission</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about transgenerational transmission of attachment patterns, origins of their relationship reactions and opportunity to choose behaviour modification/s. 	<p>Psychic convulsions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locate the conflict source <p>Devaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men who consistently devalue themselves, which restricts relationship development and or retention. 	<p>Best suited to survival</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A male could conceive numerous meanings from statements such as this... counsellor requires understanding of a specific period in the mans life and acquire knowledge of what came before the challenges and what is likely to come after them. <p>Not good enough</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relationship challenges contributed to by stereotyping will probably require counselling that is mindful of context.

Table 3a Personal eclectic counselling therapy compatibility considerations

Considerations	Weighting
P/C philosophy (<i>each person has the capacity to progress/heal</i>)	10
Congruence with my faith	9
Epston and White relationship ethics (<i>appendix fig. 1</i>)	8
Scientific support for presenting issue (<i>book reviews etc</i>)	8
Congruence with my beliefs and values	7
Empathy	6
Positive self regard	6
Congruence (<i>equivalence</i>)	6
Correctness (<i>appendix fig. 2</i>)	6
My personality	6
Clients personality	5
Cultural flexibility	4
Spiritual application	3
Philosophical eclecticism (<i>A foundational approach to build a more inclusive approach</i>)	1

Table 3b Application of the considerations to the chosen therapy's

Therapy's

	Weighting. (Note: within the weighting, an amount or percentage can be given to relative fit e.g. if the weighting is 8 the amount can be from 1-8)	Person-centered it fosters a non-defensive approach that maximizes active listening, reflection and clarification (Corey, 2005, pp.472-481).	Gestalt a person [has] the capacity to recognise how earlier influences are related to present difficulties" (Corey, 2005, p.470).	Imago Counselling models that have strengths in developing a composite picture of the people that have influenced these men, will be effective. This would include models such as Imago Therapy (Hendrix Ph.D., 1988, p.31)	Family systems "an individual's dysfunctional behaviour grows out of the interactional unit of the family" (Corey, 2005, p.471).	Transactional Analysis "people are seeking interdependent through out life" (O'Reilly-Knapp, 2007)	MacMillan's integration model Based on object relations, attachment and behavioral techniques p.252 Corey
Considerations							
P/C philosophy	10	10	9				
My faith	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
Epson and White relationship ethics	8	8	6	2	2	3	6
Scientific support for presenting issue	8	8	8	8	8	8	4
Congruence with my beliefs and values	7	5	7	5	5	7	7
Empathy	6	6	5	3	3	3	3
Positive self regard	6	6	5	3	3	3	3
Congruence	6	6	5	3	3	3	3
Correctness	6	6	5	3	3	3	3
My personality	6	4	6	5	6	6	6
Clients personality	5						
Cultural flexibility	4	2	3	3	3	2	2
Spiritual application/consideration	3	1	1	1	1	2	1
Philosophical eclecticism	1	1	1	1			1
TOTALS	89	72	70	46	43	49	48
Priority	1	2	5	3	6	4	4

Table 3c Eclectic critique

Eclectic approach	Critique Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Person-centred philosophy is that it views humans as positive: "we have an inclination toward becoming fully functioning" (Corey, 2005, p.470) <i>The goal will be to assist clients move toward greater openness, an increased trust in themselves, a willingness to be a process rather than a finished product and have greater spontaneity.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship is of primary importance (Corey, 2005, p.478). Therefore example... • The ability to work with difficult, diverse and complex individuals, couples, families and groups. • The method can be used universally. • Can be used with other approaches • In "a climate of understanding and acceptance through [a] relationship that enables [the client] to non-defensively come to terms with aspects of [themselves] that [they have] denied or disowned" (Psychiatrists, 2008, pp.2-3), I would expect clients to be capable of tackling some of the 'skeletons in their cupboards'. • Because "techniques are secondary to the therapist's attitudes" (Psychiatrists, 2008, pp.2-3), I would not expect to be spending much effort in any other activity than me attending, reflecting, personalizing and initiating to whatever the client brings to each session. Therefore, I will need little in terms of external resources other than myself, and as such, I feel that this will be an efficient therapy to work with clients from the focus group. • Arguably, some clients may be experiencing stages of their lives that requires "crises intervention" (Corey, 2005, p.483), a suitable application for the Person-centred approach. • I feel the "principles" (Corey, 2005, p.483) of Person-centred therapy are well suited and applicable to the focus group. 	<p>Relationship crises are attributed to the relationship, that is, people are in control of their own destiny, that God does not play a role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relying too much on self-reporting to assess the outcomes of therapy. • Inability to deal with mental health issues because of the lack of structure. • It assumes the position that people are in control of their own destiny, that God does not play a role. • Some cultures expect a directive counsellor and can be put off if the counsellor is unable to provide sufficient structure. • Some cultures have different interpretations of communication expressions • Some cultures view collectivism as superior over individualism thus it would be very difficult to assist them to help themselves without also having to involve others. • As a general limitation there has been comments made by Ellis (1987) that 'empathy' is addicting the client to the therapist and hence maintaining dysfunctional patterns. Further, that the affects of therapy are only short term and that even if the suggestion that long term progress was possible if treatment could be delayed, this had not been supported by empirical research (Thorne, 1990). Therefore, 'the jury is out' on the effectiveness of the essential 'empathy' component of Person-centred and I would need to consider this before using it with the focus group • Some clients may have a rigid thinking process, tending to also suggest that they might also desire 'hear and now' answers. If they are seeking help and immediate answers "from a knowledgeable professional" (Corey, 2005, p.486), by wanting their counsellor to 'tell them what to do, then Person-Centered therapy may not be suitable. <p>While Corey (2005) suggests that the therapy is useful for clients in the initial crises phase, he also says that "clients in crises may need more directive measures" (Corey, 2005, p.490). On the strength of his comment about 'initial' crises phase, I feel clients may benefit in the early stage of a possible crises, particularly during assessment and evaluation, but if established that they are in a 'serious crises', an alternative therapy should be considered.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My quality of presence will be important. Clients will need to feel as though I am really in the moment, in complete attendance with them while in counselling sessions. • An extension to the importance of my presence will be my ability to allow myself to also be affected by the clients being, ensuring that I actively share my own perceptions and experiences with them during our session times. • I will need to know the clients and myself. In order for our relationship to function according to Gestalt practice, I will not only require 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From a multicultural perspective, there is the limitation that some Gestalt experiments are tailored to fit more the western understanding of feelings and emotions. As such, there are vulnerabilities when utilizing them with "ethnic minority clients" (Corey, 2005, p.217). If a clients family of origin was from another culture, I will need to be extremely cautious and be sure I have a quality understanding of their "cultural framework" (Corey, 2005, p.217). • Another limitation might be that clients "who have difficulty using imagination may not profit from experiments" (Corey, 2005, p.490).

