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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The concept of “boundaries” is not new, neither in individual nor in group psychology. In his influential publication “Beyond the pleasure principle”, Freud (1910) describes traumatic incidences in terms of boundaries or what he referred to as barrier (used in the positive sense) breaching disturbances. “Such external excitations as are strong enough to break through the barrier against stimuli we call traumatic. In my opinion the concept of trauma involves such a relationship to an otherwise efficacious barrier” (chap IV, par 11).

Almost 40 years ago Hartman and Gibbard (1974) wrote, “Our conclusion is that the foundation of group development is boundary establishment, boundary maintenance, and boundary transformation” (p.174). The authors came to this conclusion after working and theorising about groups for many years and also conducting an empirical study on group development and boundaries. In their study they postulated that affective shifts in a group are indicative of the effectiveness of the boundary structure of the group, on both a personal and collective level. They, therefore, centralised boundaries as a concept in group theory and practice.

Boundaries are generally used as a concept to describe the limit, end, or border of a structure. The structural boundary of the group can, therefore, be regarded as the dividing line between *group* and *not-group*, the *in-group* and *out-of-group*. Singer, Astrachan, Gould & Klein (1979) regard boundaries as a key concept of the group’s structure stating that boundaries are, “those dividing lines, sometimes abstract and sometimes concrete, which define what is ‘in’ and what is ‘out’.

Group events have time boundaries, membership boundaries, role boundaries, and task boundaries” (p. 22).

During the 70s and 80s significant advances were made in establishing boundaries as an important, or even central, construct in group theory and practice. The 7th International congress of group psychotherapy held in Copenhagen in 1980 with the theme “The individual and the group: Boundaries and interrelations in theory and practice” is testimony of these developments. At the conference, and in a subsequent publication, Kissen (1982) presented three historical approaches to group dynamics in which he supported the notion that boundaries as a construct had gained prominence in group theory and practice. The third and most recent approach he described as “a transition toward an understanding of them as very significant boundary processes” which, according to him, had a tremendous impact on the practice of group psychology (p. 270). Although Kissen (1982) had a limited view of group dynamics, regarding it as emotionally charged moments in the group, the importance of his statement is that boundaries as a construct was centralised in describing significant group events.

Furthermore, the application of general systems theory, in which boundaries is a central theoretical construct, to living systems, including groups and publications such as, *Living groups: group psychotherapy and general systems theory* by J. E. Durkin (1981) as well as research conducted by H. Durkin (1981, 1982a, 1982b and 1983) were part of these developments.

Boundaries continued to be used both as a concrete construct referring to the structural aspects of the group as well as an abstract construct referring to group processes and dynamics. MacKenzie (1990), for example, emphasises boundaries as an abstract concept when he states that, “.... in therapy, a more important way of thinking about boundaries is to regard them as psychological dimensions within the group space.” Ettin (1992) also utilises boundaries as an

abstract concept when he uses the properties of a circle to create an understanding of some qualitative aspects of a group. He postulates that a remote group, where contact and commitment are restricted, is “a group out of bounds, out of touch, out of shape, and inside out” (p. 291). A well-functioning group, on the other hand, would be a well “bounded” group.

Practitioners, such as Motherwell and Shay (2005), also pointed out that, although the construct of boundaries has not always featured explicitly, it has been part of theorising and thinking almost since the beginning. They (2005) made the comment that:

“A review of psychoanalytic and psychodynamic group theory and practice since the time of McDougall (1920), Freud (1922/1951), Wolf and Schwartz (1962), Bion (1960), and Foulkes (1964) indicates that many seminal group thinkers did not use the concept of boundary as an important parameter in their writings on group theory and practice. This is not to say that their theories did not address the contract, norms, task, and roles – all factors that distinguish group events from non-group events. However, the word and concept of ‘boundary’ was not emphasized by these authors” (p. 9).

This statement is somewhat contentious. Foulkes (1964) made specific references to boundaries in describing group processes, and in the group-as-a-whole approach, which is to a large extent based on the work of Bion (1961), boundaries is an important construct in theory and practice.

Apart from boundaries being used as a theoretical construct, it is also used as an operational construct. In practice, the concept of boundaries is often utilised to describe the task of the leader in part or wholly. Rice & Rutan (1981) describe the task of the leader in boundary terms as follows:

“The group psychotherapist manages or influences an array of complex boundaries. These include the group’s boundary with its relevant environment, group membership and role boundaries, task boundaries,

communication and information boundaries, boundaries between members and subgroups of members, boundaries between different levels of psychological phenomena (such as conscious/unconscious), and boundaries between intrapsychic, interpersonal, and group process” (p 299).

Skolnick (1992) also refers to a number of boundaries that need to be managed:

“From a systems boundary-management point of view, the therapist (1) defines and monitors the task, (2) selects and takes in members, (3) delineates intragroup boundaries (roles, ground rules, culture, and contract), (4) delineates and manages his own role/person boundary, (5) delineates and manages the group/environmental boundary, (6) serves as catalyst and protector, and (7) processes information and interprets” (p. 336).

The concept of boundaries has, furthermore, received attention in research. An interesting finding from research undertaken by Johnston & Farber (1996), conducted amongst 213 therapists regarding the management and maintenance of boundaries in psychotherapy, did not support the generally accepted view that boundaries are often, if not persistently, challenged by patients. Their definition of boundaries was, however, restricted to two types of boundaries in psychotherapy, “logistical (session begin/end times, payment issues, scheduling) and conceptual (self-disclosure, theoretical orientation, availability between sessions)” (p. 392). Their study was limited to the contractual boundaries, or what they referred to as “everyday boundaries”, such as fees, scheduling, beginning, and ending times, etc. Boundaries, as it is used in the theory and practice of group psychotherapy in general, has a much broader meaning.

In practice, the concept of boundaries has been used primarily as a structural component to guide the maintenance and management of the group. Some prominent theorists and practitioners, such as Mackenzie & Livesley (1983), did, however, propose that boundaries be utilised specifically as a guide and

instrument to gauge group dynamics, stating that, “The specific focus on boundary functioning provides a useful guide to understanding the stages. In addition, awareness of boundary issues provides the therapist with a set of criteria for assessing group events” (p. 112).

More recently, practitioners, such as Billow (2000) and Brabender (2000), have given boundaries prominence specifically through the metaphor of the group and therapist acting as containers. Billow (2000) stated that, “My task was to be a container with firm boundaries which could be traversed, but not violated or destroyed” (p. 256). Brabender (2000) emphasised consistency as a qualitative aspect of boundaries and boundary management, “While consistent boundaries are important at all times in the life of the group, they are critical during chaotic periods” (p. 30).

In 2008 a task force of the American Group Psychology Association (AGPA) published a set of guidelines for the clinical practice of group psychotherapy in support of practitioners of contemporary group psychotherapy (Bernard, et. al., 2008). In the guidelines, frequent and explicit references are made to boundaries and boundary management. Boundary management, as part of the executive function of the group leader, is specifically emphasised. The authors (2008) also make mention of latent group processes that are employed in an attempt to distort boundaries in the group. There is, furthermore, a growing appreciation for the overt and covert group process “so that the therapist may modulate anti-therapeutic forces and enhance positive ones” (p. 492).

As stated above, the intention of the guidelines is to assist practitioners of group therapy. In practice, the recognition of the latent processes and attacks of boundaries is not an easy task. This study, with its emphasis on boundaries as psychological dimensions in group space, can contribute to or supplement the guidelines, more specifically in managing the therapeutic forces in the group.

Even though the concept of boundaries has become an integral part of group theory and practice, the aim and motivation for the undertaking of this study is to add to the refinement of the use of boundaries in theory, research and practice. It attempts, furthermore, to work toward a model of operationalizing boundaries that will aid and enable conceptualisation and make the assessment of boundaries and boundary movement possible. The focus of the study will, therefore, be on boundaries as psychological dimensions of the group as part of the dynamics and processes of the group, and, to a lesser extent, on boundaries as a structural component.

In addition to developments in theory and practice, personal experiences with groups have contributed further to the motivation for the undertaking of this study, as described in the following section.

1.2 Personal reflection on experiences with groups

Early experiences, during my formative years as a clinical psychologist, and subsequent experiences, have brought about an awareness of boundaries, the difficulty and importance of managing boundaries, and also the complexity and qualitative differences of boundaries.

During my internship year as a clinical psychologist in 1991, I started a therapeutic group in a hospital ward for psychiatric patients. I soon realised the difficulty of managing boundaries in an institution. Attendance, membership turnover, punctuality, and other group structural boundaries proved to be very difficult to manage. In addition to these boundaries, managing and maintaining the group within the institution also proved to be a real challenge. The difficulty of managing boundaries in an inpatient setting has been well documented. Yalom (1983) acknowledges the impact of the institution, specifically the ward, on the group by dedicating the first two chapters of his book to the interface between the

group and the ward. He proposes several, mainly structural, modifications to traditional outpatient groups to make the inpatient group more effective and manageable in the ward. (p. xii). Reflecting on my own early experiences, I recognise that I should have spent more time and energy preparing and managing contextual factors that had a critical impact on the dynamics and destiny of the group.

A second period of experiences with groups came about during the transitional phase to a democratic South Africa. With a small group of psychologists, I was one of the initiators and chief facilitators of a group-based intervention aimed at assisting the structural integration of the then different statutory and non-statutory armed forces into one united new South African armed force. Institutionalised barriers, created and shaped by political forces, had to be transformed into permeable boundaries that would allow previous enemies to work together in the present in defence of a newly-formed democracy. (The psychological integration programme is described in: “*The Fourth Dimension: The Untold Story of Military Health in South Africa*, 2009”). These experiences started almost 20 years ago and continued for about three years. In current South Africa most, if not all, structural barriers have been removed, yet, as a nation, South Africa is still struggling to become an integrated society as opposed to a segregated society. Reflecting on these experiences, where we were as a nation and where we currently are, highlights the difference between structural and psychological boundaries. Structural boundaries are visible and, therefore, often more easily managed in contrast to the psychological boundaries which are invisible and, therefore, inevitably more difficult to influence deliberately.

An important factor influencing the lack of integration of South Africa as a society may be that we are a traumatised society. Boundaries and trauma have been linked since the days of Freud (2010).

Trauma has not only an individual effect but it also has an effect on the group and society at large (Hopper, 1996 and 2003a). This will be discussed later in more depth. South Africa is not only a historically traumatised society but it is still continuously traumatised mainly through the effects of current and ongoing violence and also the effects of HIV/Aids (Kaminer and Eagle, 2010; Smith, Lobban and O'Loughlin, 2013). Given the inextricable link between trauma and boundary disturbances, the exploration of boundaries in the context of South Africa is well worth pursuing.

A third set of experiences came with the presentation of training groups for psychologists and practitioners working in the field of human resources and human development. These training groups were presented over a number of years at varying intervals. The training included both experiential and theoretical components. The purpose of the training groups was to equip the participants with knowledge and skills to conduct groups in a variety of contexts. The difficulty of integrating experience and theory prompted me to think that boundaries might be a useful theoretical and operational concept that could be beneficial in a sense-making process of experiences in groups as well as a guiding concept in theory.

The focus of the study will be on the small group and not on the large group or society. Although the individual, the small group, and large group are inextricably linked, as is well illustrated by Hopper (2001, 2003b), this study is aimed at the small group experience.

The words of Hawkins and Schermer (2005) resonate with me, "Feathers have been ruffled and boundaries have been disturbed, but every crisis is also an opportunity. I see the potential here for a powerful growth experience for everyone in the group" (p.34). To study and explore boundaries in a small group in the context of South Africa as a "boundary disturbed" society could lead to the

enhancement of the theory and practice of small groups which, in turn, could possibly contribute positively to the society as a whole.

1.3 Research Problem

Against the background described above, the following problems have been identified:

1. In theory, the concept of boundaries has been described from different traditions resulting in multiple formulations which makes core distinctions difficult.
2. There is no existing research method whereby psychological boundaries can be revealed, systematically and quantitatively, that would allow for a longitudinal tracking of changes which can then guide or aid qualitative exploration. A method that can quantify boundary changes would, furthermore, make comparative studies and research feasible.
3. The deliberate influencing of psychological boundaries, as opposed to structural boundaries, in different circumstances with different outcomes in mind, such as therapy versus training, is under explored.
4. Operationalizing psychological boundaries can assist in defining and affecting change in specific applications, settings, and with certain membership groupings in mind.

1.4 Research Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the study has been to increase the understanding of boundaries and gain an insight into the role and functioning of abstract and psychological boundaries in a small group. The objectives can be outlined as follows:

1. To explore the concept of boundaries in existing theories on groups. This will include inferring the influence boundaries have had and continue to have in existing theoretical frameworks where boundaries are not explicitly

referred to. The first task of the research will, therefore, be to “uncover” the often implied boundaries and make that which is implicit explicit.

2. To design a research method for detecting and revealing boundary movement in a small group. One of the main reasons for embarking on an explorative research journey has been that there was no existing method that could be applied to study boundaries in groups. If such a method could be developed, boundaries could be studied in a systematic way leading to an enhanced understanding of the function of boundaries in groups.
3. To apply the proposed method to a transcription of a real group case-study to reveal the boundaries in focus and the boundary movements. The revealed boundaries will then be further explored in an in-depth study of boundaries for that group.

1.5 Thesis statement

A boundary conceptualization, and an awareness of, and focus on, boundaries can lead to an increased understanding of the complexity of a small group which, in turn, can lead to enhanced group practice.

1.6 Significance of the study

The research project is significant, firstly, because it addresses a phenomenon which, despite its being mentioned as important in the theory and practice of groups, has not received adequate attention in research. A better understanding of psychological boundaries in groups could lead to enhancements in the practice of groups, specifically with regards to the management of psychological boundaries in groups.

Secondly, the study will endeavour to design a method that could be applied to groups in order to identify and reveal psychological boundaries in groups.

Preliminary criteria for such a method are that it should be able to identify boundary changes and developments over a period of time as well as being able to identify noteworthy moments in boundary movement which could then be further investigated. No such method currently exists, and the method could enrich understanding and insight into group dynamics.

Thirdly, the research is significant in that it could lead to an increased understanding of group dynamics in the South African context. The boundary challenges, exacerbated by past and ongoing traumatising of the South African society, have been highlighted. Although this study focuses on the small group, insights gained on psychological boundaries in groups could possibly make contributions to the further transformation and healing of the South African society.

1.7 Delineation and demarcation

1. In this study the focus is on boundaries as psychological dimensions or abstract concepts as opposed to a structural entity of a group. In general, the concept of boundaries is used as a structural entity. Singer, Astrachan, Gould & Klein (1979), for example, mention that group events have four boundaries, namely time, membership, role, and task boundaries. Although the authors make the distinction between abstract and concrete boundaries, they nevertheless limit boundaries to the above-mentioned number of boundaries. When a boundary is regarded as an abstract concept, many more possibilities open up. MacKenzie (1990) emphasises the significance of boundaries as an abstract concept when he states that, "... in therapy, a more important way of thinking about boundaries is to regard them as psychological dimensions within the group space" (p. 36). The focus in the following four chapters is on these "psychological dimensions" as part of the group space.
2. In the first part of the study, the concept of boundaries is explored in different theoretical frameworks. The point of departure is the concept and not a

particular theoretical framework or perspective. An advantage of this order is that it counters a problem that was observed by Gildenhuis (1989). He noted that, when theoretical frameworks are taken as points of departure, different theoretical frameworks are often played off against one another, and this consequently has a limiting effect on theorising, research, and training. Maintaining a focus on the concept and not on a particular theoretical framework will serve the purpose of explorative research better.

3. A further advantage to using a concept as the point of departure is that operational information from different frameworks can be combined in the empirical research. When a single framework is presented it can lead to high achievements within the limits of that particular framework, but, at the same time, it can lead to a restricted view of application. Gildenhuis (1989) argues that, when it comes to the application of theory, a more recent tendency can be found in the eclectic and integrative approaches. He reasons that, as far back as 1985, Halgin gave evidence that different frameworks have been moving closer to one another and have been seeking common ground. Taking the concept as a point of departure can, therefore, lead to further integration and advancement in application.
4. The theoretical exploration of boundaries in group theories focuses on three clusters of theories, namely the group analytical framework, the group-as-a-whole framework, and general systems theory and system centered therapy. A cluster shares fundamental characteristics and also has common historical roots. The main criterion used for categorising a specific theory in a cluster is the conceptual structure of the group in that particular framework. Theories in a cluster share a conceptual structure, which will be described later, but these may differ in some other aspects. When a theory is classified under a certain cluster, it should be noted that it does not necessarily imply that the theory belongs exclusively in that cluster. It may share some features with theories of another cluster. Within each model, the main exponent of that particular cluster is utilised as a point of departure, but attention is also given to other important contributors.

5. The empirical research is situated in the context of a small training group. Empirical, in the case of this study, implies that assertions made are based on findings and observations made in relation to an actual group (Babbie, 2008). A small group setting provides an ideal opportunity to develop and test a method that can be utilised for the study of boundaries in groups. The feasibility of the method can, as a start, be tested in a small group setting before being applied in different contexts. This approach is in line with the objectives of explorative research (Babbie and Mouton, 2006). Based on the notion that the individual and group will reflect something of the society in which it is situated (Dalal, 1998), certain inferences could possibly be made based on the research with regards to the society. Making these inferences, however, is not an explicit objective of the study.
6. The general approach of the study is explorative for reasons that will be discussed in the chapter on the research methodology. The study is guided by the general purpose of explorative research which seeks neither to prove hypothesis nor to come to fully conclusive answers but rather to further understanding and insight. (Babbie and Mouton, 2006).

1.8 Outline of study

In chapters 2, 3, and 4 the concept of boundaries is explored in the group analytical framework, the group-as-a-whole framework, and the general systems and system centred therapy framework. The focus is on abstract or psychological boundaries as opposed to the structural boundaries of groups. The three chapters largely follow largely a similar pattern.

1. In the first part of each chapter the main components, including the historical roots, are given. The purpose is to create a framework for exploring boundaries in that particular cluster and not to provide a comprehensive review of the framework.
2. The conceptual structure of a group and underlying dynamics are then highlighted. Different theoretical perspectives will make different abstractions

about the structure of the group and, as a consequence, will emphasize different boundaries of the group structure. Psychological boundaries and underlying dynamics as they feature in these different conceptual structures are then explored. Dynamics in a group refer to the energy and forces operative in a group. Pines and Schlapobersky (2000) emphasized the interplay between structure or framework, process and content. "...these dynamic elements have a determining influence on each of the others." (p1447). The concept of boundaries is added to these elements in the discussion of the theoretical framework.

3. The development of groups over time is another aspect of the theories that is emphasised. In each case reference is made to boundaries and development.

The theoretical chapters are concluded with summaries and propositions with specific reference to boundaries. Note should be taken that the boundary interpretations and references to boundaries in group analysis and the group-as-a-whole framework are to a large extent inferences as there are few direct references to boundaries.

Chapter 5 describes the research methodology with a detailed explanation of the proposed method for exploring boundaries in the group. In the first part of the chapter, an argument in favour of a qualitative research paradigm is developed. In the second part, a description of the method that was developed to explore boundaries is provided, as well as a description of how the method was put into practice. This part includes the research design and a detailed description of the process used to analyse and interpret the data. Also addressed are the issues of research quality and ethical considerations.

In chapter 6 the results of the research are given, interpreted, and explicated. The first graphical display depicts the frequency distribution of boundaries in focus for the duration of the group, and this is followed by a discussion of the display. The group is divided into six periods consisting of one or two sessions per period. The rationale for clustering sessions into periods is provided. The

second part of the chapter deals with the second step of the process of data interpretation. A thematic distribution of the conversation is applied to the first step in order to elucidate the results of the first part.

In chapter 7, the final chapter, the results of the empirical research are integrated with the theoretical exploration, and a conclusion is reached. In the first part of the chapter, the outcomes of the theoretical exploration are utilised to elucidate two boundary issues derived from the empirical research. In the second part of the chapter, the implications of the research for the practice of groups are highlighted. Finally, an overall conclusion is reached which starts with a discussion about the contribution the study has made to the theory and practice of groups and then proceeds to making some comments on possible future research on the concept of boundaries.

Chapter 2

Group analytic theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction

As a concept or construct, boundaries feature, to a limited extent, explicitly in group analytical theory, but, implicitly, boundaries form an integral part of the conceptualization and application of the framework of group analytical theory. In the first part of this chapter, an overview of the essential components of the group analytical framework will be given. The main purpose of the overview is to create a framework that can be related to the concept of boundaries; it is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the theory.

In the first section, historical roots are highlighted. This section demonstrates that the personal history of Foulkes, the father of group analysis, shaped his conceptualization and application of group theory. Thereafter, the basic components of the conceptual structure of the group in the group analytical theory and how they relate to boundaries will be addressed. This will be followed by development in a group and the underlying dynamics that contribute to creating a group conducive to healing or growth, as well as the dynamics that prevent or hinder the group from progressing. A section will follow that will give a brief overview of the position and role of the leader in the group. Lastly, the contexts in which the framework have been and can be applied will be discussed.

At the heart of group analysis, with Foulkes (1898-1976) as the founder and main exponent, lies the attempt to integrate the dichotomy between the individual and the group. As Dalal (1998) puts it: "This question [division between the individual and the group], forms the basis of his [Foulkes] group analytic theory" (p.1). Although group analysis shares analysis with psychoanalysis as a method, the

“both-and” approach of the individual and the group is in contrast with the “classical” Freudian psychoanalytical approach.

In this chapter it will be shown that one of the central, and also radical, concepts in the theoretical framework is the notion that just as a person cannot be understood outside of his context so the group-member cannot be understood outside of the context of the group. In his definition of Foulkes’ view on the structure of the group this becomes apparent: “Group analytic psychotherapy is a form of psychoanalytic therapy which takes as its frame of reference the group as a whole. As in all psychoanalytic frameworks, it puts the individual into the centre of its attention.” (Foulkes, 1964, p. 39). From his definition, the two main elements of his conceptual structure are apparent: the group-as-a-whole and the individual. The boundary demarcation as well as the dynamic interplay between the group and the individual will be highlighted in the discussion on the dynamics underlying the conceptual structure.

2.2 Historical roots of the conceptual structure of the group

In his personal history, Foulkes had contact with different groups in the medical field. These experiences played an important part in his conceptualisation of the group. Although group analysis has developed and established its own concepts, part of its uniqueness lies in the way it integrates different theoretical perspectives and concepts. “What distinguishes group analysis from other approaches is its unique integration of psychoanalytic concepts within open-systems and gestalt framework that underpins both its theory and practice” (Pines and Hutchinson, 1993, p. 29). The main influences on Foulkes and group analysis will be discussed briefly in the sections that follow. It will be illustrated that what Pines called “creative crises” in Foulkes’ life contributed to the conceptualisation and development of constructs in his theory. It was not only theoretical influences that shaped his framework but also his personal history (Pines, 1998, p. 396).



2.2.1 Neuroscience

After his initial medical training, Foulkes moved to Frankfurt in 1925 for postgraduate studies where he received training in neurology for two years under Prof Kurt Goldstein. Influenced by Goldstein, Foulkes applied principles of neuroscience to groups. Goldstein, (1939), postulated that the central nervous system is a network of interconnectedness. “The holistic view in my own case links up particularly with my apprenticeship with my teacher Kurt Goldstein who did pioneering work in that direction. What Goldstein could demonstrate was that the organism always reacts as a whole, that the central nervous system is an interconnected network which reacts as a whole” (Foulkes, 1975, p. 15). In response to damage, the central nervous system and the total person engage in a compensatory struggle. In illness, the damaged element ceases to be a nodal point and becomes a focal point. A nodal point is part of the total network as opposed to a focal point which has become isolated from the whole. Although Foulkes acknowledges the impact that exposure to a theoretical field had on the formulation of his ideas, his personal history quite likely also played a role. We can also draw some parallels between his conceptualization of the group and his personal experiences at the time.

Foulkes grew up in Germany, and, although Jewish, his family regarded themselves as integrated and assimilated into German society (Pines, 1998). The time when Foulkes studied with Goldstein (1926-28) was also the time of the rise of Nazism in Germany. Foulkes left for Vienna but returned to Frankfurt in 1930. Whereas a few years before, during World War 1, Foulkes had been part of the German army, he now progressively (as a Jew) became isolated and a target of hatred within the very society of which he regarded himself a part. Applying the principles of neuroscience, we can argue that Foulkes changed from being a nodal point to a focal point in the society. It is therefore very likely that not only

theory, such as Goldstein's (1939) view on the central nervous system, but also his personal history, informed Foulkes's central constructs.

The important implication of the conceptualisation of a network, was that it allowed Foulkes not to have to choose between the boundary of the individual or the group but to see both together.

2.2.2 Gestalt psychology

In addition to his training in Neurology, Foulkes also attended classes in Gestalt psychology, presented by Adhemar Gelb (Roberts and Pines, 1992). In Gestalt psychology the figure-group relationship is fundamental to the process of perception. Foulkes then combined the idea of the group as a matrix with the figure-ground concept. The matrix is the ground against which everything in the group can be perceived. The figure-ground also gave Foulkes the flexibility to switch between the individual and the group, sometimes focusing on an individual and at other times focusing on the group-as-a-whole. So, in addition to conceptually integrating the member and the group, he was now able to justify his technique of shifting focus between the member and the group-as-a-whole. "He was able to allow his attention to float and to alight eventually on the location of the currently most significantly active or meaningful element of the group process." (Roberts and Pines, 1992, p. 479.).

2.2.3 Psychoanalysis and sociology

Another source of academic and theoretical influence came from Psychoanalysis. Foulkes received psychoanalytic training under Helene Deutsch in Vienna from 1928 – 1930. The psychoanalytic training was in the Freudian tradition. In the Freudian tradition, the internal world is emphasised over the external world. Dalal (1998) is of the opinion that, although Freud oscillates between the internal and the external, "in the end he prioritizes internal reality over external reality." (p. 21)

In contrast to the individual analytical approach Foulkes had extensive exposure in Frankfurt to the Sociological Research Institute of Frankfurt from 1930 - 33. His association with the sociologist Norbert Elias extended over a number of years and is probably one of the important influences that helped tip the scale for Foulkes in favour of the social over the biological. "I am inclined to see the human development more in the light of transmission than in terms of direct, inherited, archaic repetition" (Foulkes, 1990, p.238). He came to regard the group and the community as the primary unit of consideration.

Although Foulkes claims that his theory is psychoanalytic, some of his ideas can be regarded as anti-Freud (Dalal, 1998). In some cases he does away completely with the inner drive and inheritance and replaces it with external influences and transmission from the social environment. Foulkes (1990) said that one of the driving principles in human existence is the need to belong. This is close to Fairbairn's (1952) notion that the infant is object seeking and not pleasure seeking as would be the case in the Freudian tradition.

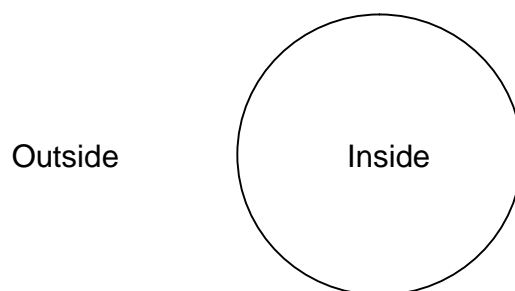


Figure 2.1. Interrelatedness of inside and outside: The circle and the group (Dalal, 1998, pp. 34-38).

Dalal (1998, pp. 34-38.) uses what he calls a simple example to explain Foulkes' position. If you draw a circle, it has an inside, outside and a boundary that

separates the two. These three elements are interrelated and not one can exist without the other.

The important question is not only whether they are interrelated but what the influence of the one on the other is? For Foulkes the influence, and also direction of flow, would be from the outside to the inside. "The individual is not only dependent on the material conditions, for instance economic climate of his surrounding world and on the community, the group, in which he lives, whose claims are transmitted to him through the parents or parental figures, but is literally permeated by them" (Foulkes, 1948, pp.14-15). This statement has a very important implication for Foulkes' conceptualisation of the group. 1) The individual in the group, as well as the group, is being permeated by what is happening in the context inside the group as well as the context outside the group. 2) The members are the "vehicles" of transmission of that which is external to the group to the in-group.

Dalal (1998) comes to the conclusion that, although Foulkes claims equality between the internal and external, in reality the external gets priority over the internal. This is in contrast with classical Freudian analysis which prioritises the internal over the external. We must, however, take note of the fact that not everybody is in agreement with the Dalal's interpretation of Foulkes. This is evident in the debate between Lavie (2005) and Dalal (2005). Lavie basically "accuses" Dalal of overemphasizing the group over the individual and says that this is not what Foulkes intended. Lavie (2005) states that "Foulkes never reified 'the group' nor 'the individual'. He always looked at the 'group-analytic situation' composed of 'interrelational individuals'" (p.523). Lavie argues that group analysis acknowledges that the interrelatedness in the group situation is preceded by the transpersonal and multi-personal *before* they assemble in the group. In his response, Dalal (2005), however, points out that he did not intend to portray Foulkes as prioritizing the group over the individual and that this would be a misinterpretation of him (Dalal). A point that Dalal emphasises once again is

that we should read Foulkes in the context of his generation and time, and that he sometimes had to be “radical” by promoting the group/social over the individual in order to make a point because of the context within which he found himself. What Dalal was referring to is the predominantly psychoanalytic context. Dalal postulates that: “...the enterprise that he was engaged in [which] was nothing less than a fundamental paradigm shift in a hostile context.” (p. 539). Dalal (2005) goes on to add that the radical Foulkes suggested that the social permeates the core and that to describe his position as ‘interrelational’, as Lavie suggests, would also not do him justice.

We have probably not seen the end of this debate, but what we can say is that Foulkes’s idea that the individual can never be separated from the social was, given the historical context that he found himself in, both radical and revolutionary.

2.3 Conceptual structure of the group

In group analysis, the conceptual structure of the group is multi-dimensional. Pines and Schlapobersky (2000) have provided a conceptualisation of the elements of the group.

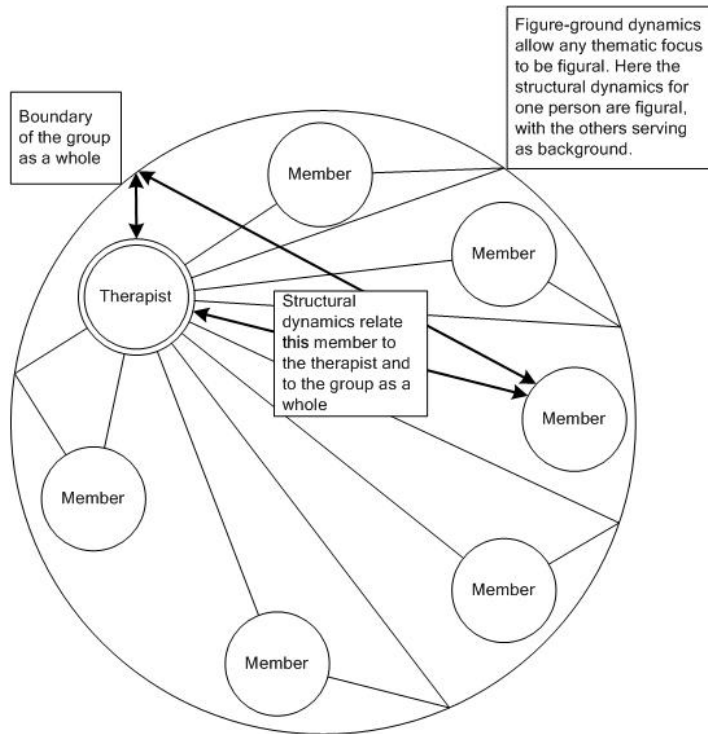


Figure 2.2. Figure-ground dynamics (Pines and Schlapobersky, 2000, p. 1448).

Their portrayal is largely two dimensional, showing the structural elements of the group such as the members and conductor and the communication that takes place in the group. These elements create primarily the structural boundaries of the group. In the adapted version of the graphical display, shown below, an attempt has been made to do justice to the multidimensional aspects of the group by adding dimensions such as depth, the connectedness and relation of the group with the context and the group space. The second figure will be utilized as a point of reference for the description of the conceptual structure of the group in the following sections.

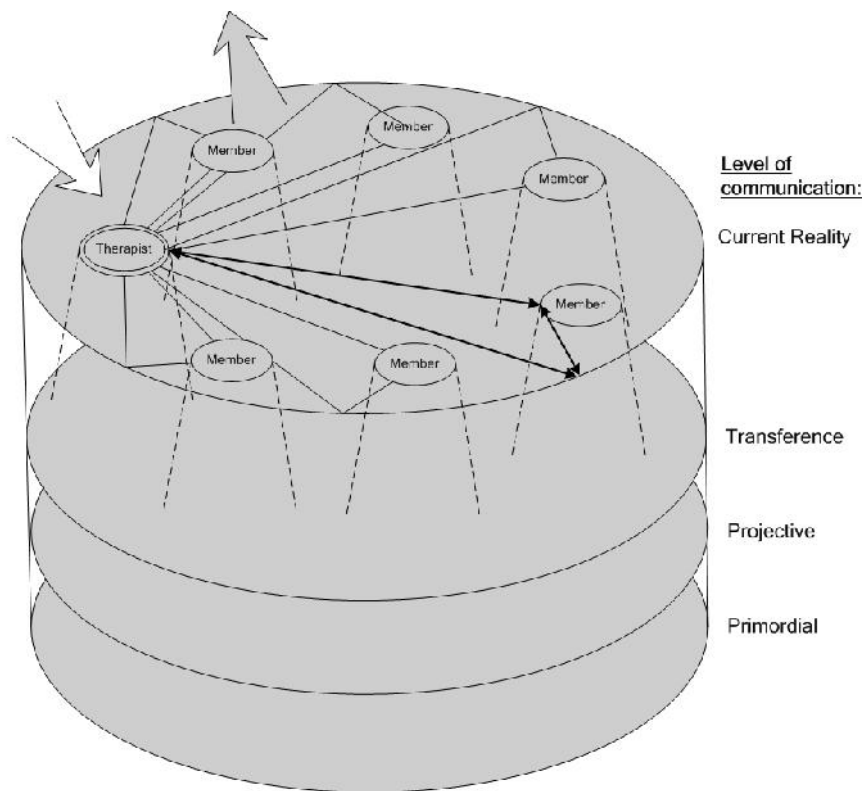


Figure 2.3. Group analysis: Conceptual structure of the group (Adapted from Pines and Schlapobersky, 2000, p. 1448).

In Figure 2.3 the multi-dimensional aspects are shown; however, as is the case with all representations, the figure seldom represents the full reality. Specific concepts, such as group space, cannot be adequately portrayed, and it is only through description that the meaning becomes evident.

2.3.1 Group matrix

A unique feature of the conceptual structure is the group matrix, which, according to Tubert-Oklander and Hernandez de Tubert (2004) was coined by Foulkes. In the graphical display, the objects (members) of the group are linked by a triangle of arrows. "When replicated for each of the members, the figure will produce a matrix of relational patterns, a complex relational field. It allows us to

accept that all events in a group will become part of an unconscious network that is intrapsychic, interpersonal, and transpersonal” (Pines and Schlapobersky, 2000, p. 1449)

The matrix can be described as the total network of communication. Foulkes (1964) suggests a general definition: “The hypothetical web of communications and relationships in a given group ... is the common shared ground which ultimately determines the meaning and significance of all events and upon which all communications and interpretations, verbal and non-verbal, rest. This concept links up with that of communication” (p. 292). The matrix becomes the framework within which to understand individual and group behaviour. It is as rich as well as a complex metaphor. Gildenhuis (1989) comments that the matrix as a metaphor sheds light on all the important relationships in the group. Different aspects of the human being as a social being can be located in the group. Behaviour is therefore contextualised by and in the matrix. Ahlin’s (1985) opinion is that to approach the matrix is, “to enter into the area of paradoxes and to test the limits of thinking” (p.111). The paradox lies in the fact that we are describing something that is experienced as real but at the same time cannot be seen or heard. It is therefore a concept that stretches the limits of verbal representation or formulation. One of the reasons for the difficulty in coming to grips with the complexity of the matrix is that Foulkes used the matrix as a metaphor for what he was describing but then used additional metaphors for describing the matrix – a metaphor described by metaphors. Ahlin (1985) attempted to unravel some of these metaphors. He comments that: “‘web’ and ‘network’ evoke limitation of space, catching and holding, at the same time allowing outlook, the breathing-in of what is outside and ideas about how the web and network are formed. In this way the matrix is boundary setting, demarcating inside and outside. Ahlin (1985) furthermore said that the metaphor of ‘ground’ brings the idea of support ... nourishment from the soil and so on” (p. 112). These ideas add qualitative aspects to the matrix.

Ahlin (1985) then goes to use two additional biological metaphors to describe the matrix. According to him (1985) the matrix is like the breathing process. Air passes through the boundary membranes into the blood. Excess and useless end products are then discarded through the same route. Outside becomes inside and inside becomes outside. “Persons in close enough physical proximity to each other virtually share the same air, need the same contents, get rid of the same excesses and so on” (p114). The second biological metaphor that he uses is that of *biochemical cultivation of cells in vitro* where the contents of the nourishing fluid move in across cell membrane boundaries. By active boundary maintenance the membranes import and export; regulating the life of the cell.

The construct of matrix simultaneously helps to conceptualise and set boundaries, linking the individual with the group and connecting the inner with the outer. The concept of matrix also assists in describing the invisible qualitative, mainly non-verbal aspects of the group.

Foulkes (1975) makes a distinction between the foundation matrix and the dynamic matrix. The foundation matrix is the basic things shared by members, such as language and culture, before the group starts. The foundation matrix can also be regarded as the socio-cultural context that a person is born in and grows in from there onwards. The dynamic matrix is that which develops in the group, the ever-increasing shared life that embraces more issues and more complexity. In conceptualizing the matrix, we can visualize the boundary of the dynamic matrix coinciding with the physical group boundary whereas the foundation matrix connects the inside with the outside as well as bringing the outside into the inside of the group.

One of the main conceptual contributions that the matrix makes is to place behaviour in a social context. This is opposed to psychoanalysis, which ascribes human nature to instinctual forces. “Group analysis attempts to deepen our understanding by contextualising experience and behaviour as broadly and as

deeply as possible, including the observer as part of the field.” (Pines & Hutchinson, 1993, p. 29).

2.3.2 Group space.

Group space is an invisible, mainly qualitative aspect of the group. In Figure 2.3, the group space is distinguished from the context by giving it a different shade. Group space was originally not part of the language of group analysis as documented by Foulkes and Anthony in 1957(2nd ed. 1965) and earlier. Much later Anthony (1983) comments that: “I would agree with him (Pines) very much that we need to have the notion of space, of transitional phenomena and of play to illuminate the process in the group. I always feel the group situation, when I first enter it, as a potential space between the group and myself ...” (p. 48). Foulkes and Anthony (1965) do not refer directly to the group space but to the group situation. The group situation is created through “free floating discussion”, which, according to them, is the equivalent of the “free association” in psychoanalysis. A free floating discussion is where the group is not given any content or programme to discuss, nor is any order or procedure suggested. Through the technique of free-floating discussion, a specific kind of group space is created. Foulkes and Anthony (1965) emphasised the qualitative aspects of the situation by saying that the situation which is created should make it possible to (a) “Translate” symptoms into problems which can be shared by the group, (b) let group members speak freely and not be censored by the group, and (c) allow the personalities of the members to come to the fore (pp. 55-56). The quality of the space is therefore also based on the amount of freedom of expression and the free flow of communication.

Hinshelwood (1994) refers to the group space as a reflective space, where there are emotional links between members in the group. He describes the construction of the reflective space in terms of linking and locating. Each individual has first to create a reflective space in his or her own mind where one

experience is linked to others, or a meaning or fantasy is attached to an experience. The process of linking does not only apply to individual minds but also between minds. “They may interact in such a way that one mind can accept, reflect upon (link up with) and contain the anxiety and emotions of the other” (p.97). Hinshelwood also refers to locating one’s self and the reflective space. Locating yourself in the emotion of the other would form the link that creates a space in which to relate one’s own experiences.

Neri (1998) regards the group space as a mental and relational space. He describes the group space in terms of the group boundary. He states that at a certain stage the boundary function rests no longer with the individual but is taken over by the group. A new boundary develops that includes the individuals in the group. This “mental skin” (Neri, 1998) or space is experienced by the participants on a sensorial, emotive and mental level. He indicates three ways in which individuals can experience the group as a group-as-a-whole:

- The physical impression that when people are seated in a circle they define a space.
- The perception that some sensations – in particular, those of excitement, fear, or tension – have group rather than individual rhythms: as through the group as a whole was regulating or not managing to regulate them.
- The realisation that thoughts and emotions can circulate in a wider context than the one which the members assign to their own experience when they think individually (1998, p. 50).

Neri (1998) goes on to describe the group space with an analogy of the Genius Loci. The Genius Loci is generally regarded as the spirit of a place. In Greek and Roman times a place was connected with a divinity - the Genius Loci - which acted as divine guardian. Disturbing the tranquillity of the god would mean the place would not then be guarded from any form of destruction (of some sort). Today the Genius Loci is used to describe a qualitative aspect of inanimate objects. For example, in architecture a building can fit into or disturb the Genius

Loci of the place where the building is to be erected. Applied to groups, Neri states that “the task of the Genius Loci in the small analytic group is to animate or reanimate the identity of the group, to link the progress of the group to its emotive basis” (p. 53). Based on this argument of the Genius Loci being the preserver of the group identity he added that a lack of Genius Loci would be indicated by rigid boundaries in order to protect the integrity of the group. The Genius Loci acts as conduit, enabling members to identify with the group.

Schlachet (1986) provides a different dimension to the group's space from that of both Hinselwood (1994) and Neri (1998) who emphasised the emotive basis or emotive linking as part of the group space. He describes the group space as a transitional space, based on the concept by Winnicott. Winnicott (1971) describes the transitional space as “a third area of human living, one neither inside the individual nor outside in the world of shared reality, this intermediate living can be thought of as occupying a potential space” (p.110). He also calls it an intermediate area of experience to which outer and inner reality contribute. When Schlachet (1986) applies this concept to the group, he says that this transitional space can distort or limit or create an entry into the individual psyche. He defines the group space as:

They (group members) thus construct a shared psychic space, which is common to them all, and the boundaries of which are defined by their respective dynamics and pathologies. It represents neither the subjective world of any member, nor the objective reality about which they may be discoursing, but rather something in between (p. 40).

He also suggests that a group not only develops a space but that members enter into a group with a personal space. This is evident when members from different cultures meet in a group and “The common, shared ‘space’ which is a given with others of their background must be slowly and painstakingly constructed” (p. 39).

The group space links the outside with the inside and *vice versa*. As such it is both boundary creating and also boundary transcending (indicated by the arrows

in Figure 2.3). Pines (1983b) uses a nuance on the concept of space developed by Abelin (1980) and applies it to the group. Abelin (1980) argues that through the process of triangular mirroring by the mother and father, the child develops a capacity for forming a mental image of both subject and object. Pines (1983b), continues to say that it is a psychic space that is created where the child now has an image of himself in space. “And only with the creation of that psychic space for the self can the capacity for perspective develop; without perspective the individual remains bound in an egocentric and narcissistic world” (pp.165-166). An important process in the group, therefore, is the presentation of perspectives by the group members for and of each other.

2.3.3 Communication in the matrix

Another important feature of the conceptual structure is the levels of communication distinguished by Foulkes. In the previous sections, the matrix and the group's space have been described. Communication is the medium through which the matrix and the group space come into existence. Communication is also the medium through which the individual is linked or connected to the group and through which the individual finds his own space and sense of self in the group. Through communication, boundaries are created, transcended and barriers are transformed into permeable boundaries. There are four levels on which communication can take place. The four levels are indicated in Figure 2.3, and they give the conceptual structure a vertical or depth dimension.

1. The level of current reality - directly observable by all participants.
2. The transference level (whole object level). Here the focus is on the manner in which different systems interact and link together- the transference of characteristic organisational features from one system to another, among intrapsychic systems of individual members, among members and the group as a whole, among members and the therapist, or various combinations of these.

3. The projective level (part-object level), which describes the movements and interchange of parts of members' intrapsychic systems (aspects of the self) and their relocation within the group network as a whole, and vice versa.
4. The fourth level is the primordial-collective unconscious of communication (Pines and Hutchinson, 1993, p. 35).

The distinction of the levels as a structural construct becomes an important operational construct for the group leader. Viewing the group communication process from different angles assists the group leader to make links across different boundaries. On each level different boundaries are at stake. For example, on the current reality level the structural boundaries, such as time and membership, would be relevant. On the transference level the boundaries between members, the members and the conductor and the group would be closely observed. The psychological mechanism on which projection is based is that of splitting. Tyson (1998) defines projection as: "Projection is an intrapsychic (intrapersonal) event whereby a person unconsciously splits off and gets rid of a bad feeling or an unacceptable aspect of their personality by attributing it to another person or, in some cases, an object (p. 34). To this Dalal adds that: "Splitting is not just the separation of the good and the bad, but also the annihilation of all linkages between them" (p.188). Splitting requires that a boundary be drawn between that which is acceptable and not acceptable, however, this is done on an unconscious level.

Although Foulkes identifies one of the levels of communication as the primordial collective unconscious, in practice, it does not seem that this level played a significant role in the development of the groups that he conducted. Dalal (1998) makes mention of an example where Foulkes and Anthony (1965) speak of a situation where "The individual brings his authoritarian problem, his father complex, into the center of events from the very beginning" (p.120). Here the authors locate the disturbance in the individual and they do not make mention of the role of the social unconscious. Dalal's critique of Foulkes centres around

what he calls the “social in the individual” where the social becomes so deeply embedded that it is unconscious. A more radical group concept according to him would be the “unconscious social.” “The social unconscious, as I use the term, describes the structured network of human existence itself” (Dalal, 1998, p.212).

2.3.4 Figure, ground

In Figure 2.2 each individual is shown to be linked to the group leader, other members, subgroups and the group-as-a-whole. These triangles portray one of the central concepts of Foulkes’s theory (Foulkes, 1948). He redefined the individual based on inputs from sociology and gestalt principles. According to him the individual cannot be conceptualised without the social: the individual being the figure and the social being the ground. The individual without the social and the social without the individual are absurdities. Abstracting a component of the whole can be useful only to comment on the part, but it can have meaning only if described as part of the whole.

“He is part of a social network, a little nodal point, as it were, in this network, and can only artificially be considered in isolation like a fish out of water,” (Foulkes 1948, pp. 14-15). Pines (1998) relates this story to illustrate the importance of the social as the ground:

There was a man who owned a fish of which he was very fond. He kept it in its little aquarium where it swam happily, but being a scientifically minded observer he wondered what would happen if he gradually replaced the salty water in which it swam, for this was a salt-water fish, with pure water. So day by day he replaced the salt water with pure water until the fish was happily swimming in unsalted water. The next step in this scientific odyssey was gradually to reduce the amount of water in the aquarium. Daily he took some water out and by the end of his experiment the fish was quite happily frisking about in no water at all! So he added a

perch and a swing and his fish occupied itself jumping around and swinging in the air. The sad end of my story is that one day whilst jumping from its trapeze, the fish accidentally fell into its bowl of water and there it drowned (p. 132).

In this somewhat light-hearted narrative, the point is driven home. When taken out of context, an object often becomes absurd – just like a fish on a swing. Or, to put it differently, the foreground can only be fully understood against the background. Members in a group can be understood only in the context of the group, and what happens in the group can be fully understood only in the context outside of the group.

At first glance this notion does not seem radical. It did however radically depart from the psychoanalytical thinking of the day, and it furthermore had some far reaching implications for the conceptualisation of the group. Dalal (1998) sees the following three points as inevitable consequences of the figure/ground view: “(1) the nature of psychological disturbance has to be redefined; (2) the cultural is made more important than the biology; and (3) the external is prioritised over the internal” (p. 37). When psychological disturbance is defined within a figure/ground frame it cannot be defined only as belonging to the individual, but the disturbance of the individual is also a disturbance of the social, just as damage to a part of the central nervous system affects the whole system. Whether the priority of the social over the biological, and the external over the internal, is an inevitable consequence is debatable. What we can say is that Foulkes (although he theoretically said ‘both and’), when he had to choose, placed a higher priority on the social and the external. For Foulkes, understanding the social life is the foundation of understanding the individual personality. “We must reverse our traditional assumption... The group, community, is the ultimate primary unit of consideration, and the so-called inner processes in the individual are internalizations of the forces operating in the group to which he belongs” (Foulkes, 1990, p. 212). He not only paid particularly

close attention to the context of the group but his focus would also shift from the individual to the group. He sometimes saw the group, sometimes the individual against the backdrop of the group, and sometimes subgroups of two or more members against the background of the group.

In group analysis, high emphasis is placed on the immediate context, with concepts such as *group matrix*, *holding environment* and *group as container* used to describe the structure, function and quality of the context. The context outside the group should, however, also be taken into account when attempting to understand the dynamics in (or “of the group”?) the group. The external context and the influence it can have on the group has been emphasised by authors such as Ettin (1993), Lawrence (1979) and Stone (2001). Lawrence points out that part of the context within which the group functions is reflected in the group when he says that: “We can expect a mirroring of aspects of society in group situations” (p. 15). Based on this argument we can deduce that the imaginary psychological boundaries of the individual in the group and the group-as-a-whole are permeable. Secondly, we can deduce that the boundaries are penetrated by all events, including past and present societal and political events.

2.3.5 Configuration and location, focal and nodal points

Two important concepts in the dynamics of the group are those of configuration and location. (Foulkes and Anthony, 1965) One of the main advantages of the conceptual structure of the group in the group analytical framework is the flexibility it offers in perceiving the dynamics in the group. The attention in the group is allowed to float until it settles on a point. This would not have been possible if they had not seen the group in terms of the matrix, nodal and focal point and alternating foreground and background. The nodal point can alternate amongst individuals, subgroups and the group-as-a-whole.

In Figure 2.2 the triangle of dark arrows shows how an individual member, at a certain point in time, becomes the foreground against the background of the group. The reason and function of an individual in the foreground can, however, be quite different from one another. A distinction should be made between the individual as a nodal point and the individual as a focal point. Foulkes derived the notion of nodal and focal points from Goldstein's neuroscientific theorising. Goldstein (1939) postulated that a neuron is always a part of, and has a function in, the nervous system; therefore, one part cannot be isolated from the whole. In illness or damage, the neuron as a nodal point will cease to fulfil its function, become isolated, and consequently disturb the whole central nervous system. In a group, by way of analogy, an individual can function either as a nodal or a focal point. The pattern of communication will appear to be similar, but the dynamics are in fact very different. As a nodal point the individual is free to express himself in an open communicating structure – a sign of healthy group functioning. A neurotic individual, on the other hand, becomes a focal point for the expression of destructive and aggressive tendencies. Rather than being free, such an individual is restricted by his own pathology as well as the dynamics of the group. Pines (1983a) agrees with this point when he says that Foulkes described the neurotic symptom as a disturbed expression in the group of the patient's conflict" (p. 269).

2.3.6 The Collective and Social unconscious in the group

Although the collective or social unconscious in group analysis could be compared to the collective unconscious of Jung, the two should not be equated with each other. Jung (1959) describes the unconscious as containing "not only personal, but also impersonal, collective components in the form of inherited categories or archetypes" (p. 119). The unconscious consists, therefore, not only of repressed content but also of inherited content. In the group situation, the group develops its own repressed unconscious, and the unconscious of the group is furthermore influenced by that which is outside the group, the social. A difference between Jung's *collective unconscious* and the *group unconscious* as

Foulkes would see it is that the group unconscious can be part of the dynamic matrix and is therefore constantly changing as opposed to Jung who regarded the collective unconscious as containing mostly archaic representations.

Brown (2001) developed the idea of the social unconscious further. He believes it is more useful to think of the social unconscious as the unconscious influence of the particular society rather than the inheritance of the entire human race (p. 31). According to him, the most powerful social defences are projection and denial. He summarises the four ways in which the social unconscious is manifested:

1. *Assumptions* - what is taken for granted and omits to recognize other potentialities in us and in others.
2. *Disavowals* – disowning knowledge or responsibility for things that are unwelcome.
3. *Social defenses* – what is defended against by projection, denial, repression or avoidance.
4. *Structural oppression* – control of power and information can ensure that awareness is restricted. The idea of institutional racism is an example that is now widely recognised.” (p. 36)

Brown (2001) comments further that the above classification should be seen as describing processes that block communication and awareness. It thus creates a boundaries or barriers between the unconscious and the conscious.

Dalal (1998) points out that one should distinguish between the unconscious life of the group and the social unconscious, and stresses that these are two quite different territories. The unconscious life in the group is normally described as a-social, which is the collective unconscious reaction of the group to a situation. On the other hand, the social unconscious is how the social events infiltrate and impact on the group. “People are affected profoundly by social and cultural facts and forces, and such constraints are largely unconscious at all phases of ‘life trajectories’” (Hopper, 1996, p.15). Used in this sense, the social unconscious

refers mainly to how a particular cultural system is reflected in the unconscious dynamics of the group; something of society will be reflected in the unconscious of the members in the group.

Volkan (2001) applies the notion of the collective unconscious to the individual and the large group. “While each individual in a traumatized large group has his or her own unique identity and personal reaction to trauma, all members share the mental representations of the tragedies that have befallen the group” (p. 87). Applied to the small group, it would mean that the group collectively would react to any real or perceived threat or trauma. In their reaction the group members are linked together.

The concept of the social unconscious in group analysis is used in a much more dynamic sense than it was used originally by Jung. The views of Brown (2001) and Dalal (1998) are not in opposition to each other but rather emphasise different aspects of the social unconscious. Two views mainly are put forward; that of the group unconscious that develops in the group and that of the social or contextual factors that are being *brought into* the group. Less emphasis is placed in group analysis on the unconscious as being a collection of archaic content. The dynamic aspect of the group unconscious lies in the fact that it changes constantly. The unconscious of the group changes as the group progresses and matures, and important events in the social context that occur during the lifetime of the group may influence the social unconscious of the group at the time.

2.3.7 Group as dynamic context and the role of communication

In the therapeutic process, communication is what connects the individual with the group matrix and in that with the other members. The group matrix is not static. As the network of communication evolves, so the matrix forms and continues to change with the ongoing communication in the group. In the group analytical framework, the matrix is regarded as a dynamic situation. “The



situation of the group becomes a negotiable changeable context” (Pines, 1981, p. 278). It has already been stated that individual disturbance will be displayed as communication blockages, located in a certain part of the group, which lead to isolation in the group. However, when the group context or matrix changes, the matrix can present opportunities for the isolated member or members to integrate into the group: “New identifications can take place between the individual members and between the members and that which the group as a whole represents for them – basically, maternal and paternal imago” (Pines, 1981, p. 278). Pines (1981) furthermore states that through those identifications, the boundaries of self and object representations become more permeable. First there is the merger and then a re-differentiation, which leads to a higher level of functioning.

Gildenhuys (1989) regards as one of the important contributions Foulkes made to the conceptualisation of the group the fact that he made the group more “visible” and managed to shift the focus from the intrapersonal boundary and the interpersonal boundary to what happens in-between the boundaries, in-between the interpersonal boundaries and the boundary of the group itself. This “in-between” is what can be referred to as the movable, changeable context of the group.

In the conceptual structure of the group, communication is very much at the centre. Foulkes (1964) regarded verbal communication as the highest form of communication. Psychological disturbance is an inability to express oneself appropriately. “Symptoms in themselves autistic and unsuitable for sharing exert from this very reason an increasing pressure upon the individual for expressing them. As long as he cannot express them in a better communicable way, he finds no real relief” (Foulkes, 1964, p. 89). Translation then becomes the therapeutic tool to help the individual to express himself more appropriately.

2.4 Development in the group

Development in the group essentially takes place through a continuous process of transformation of boundaries. Communication is the medium through which development can occur. A lack of development is signified by communication blockages. Earlier it was pointed out that psychological problems or neuroses of an individual will sooner or later show themselves in the group through the process of reenactment. The individual is then isolated in the group by becoming a focal point in the group. The manifestation of the disturbance will appear to a lesser or greater extent in the different levels in the group. The isolated individual and the manifestation are essentially communication blockages in the group. “The therapeutic process is directed towards increasing transformation from autistic neurotic symptoms formation to articulate formulation of problems which can be shared and faced by all in common” (Foulkes, 1964, p. 42). By working through these communication blockages, the individual can take up his position in the group and participate in the transactions in the group. Once the individual problem becomes a shared group problem the group can become the instrument of change. “It is a move from isolation, which is akin to repression, and it enables him to become part of the coherent whole of the group” (Pines, 1981, p. 27).

Urli (1999) refers to this process as the transformation of *barriers* into *boundaries* as a therapeutic challenge. (p. 535). He regards a boundary as positive and a barrier as negative.

The term boundary denotes that which is positive, desirable and constructive in its structuring and explicable role, or that which is obstructive and thwarting in its restrictive role, whilst implying a certain permeability and motion. If that permeability and motion are lost, and this loss is constant, then “boundary” becomes “barrier”, a non-flow, a halt, a strong division that accumulates strong powers but also strong threats (p. 536).

According to him (1999), individual “psychogenic autistic barriers” can be transformed into *boundaries* through a group process of mirroring.

If communication is taken as the medium, then development in the group essentially takes place through the widening and deepening of the conversations in the group. Widening of the conversations implies the reverberation of issues and incidents in an interpersonal context, and deepening increases the understanding of unconscious content. “Here the work of Foulkes differs significantly from that of his contemporaries Bion and Ezriel who do not allow for progressive maturation of the group and of the significant change in context” (Pines, 1983, p.265). In the next two sections the dynamics and group phenomena that enhance the process of group maturation on the one hand and those that are destructive in or stall the process on the other hand will be addressed.

2.4.1 Developmental enhancing dynamics

The dynamics that will be highlighted here are those that are specifically group related. These group dynamics are phenomena that occur regularly in small group situations.

As part of the dynamics in the group-analytic group, Foulkes and Anthony (1965) mentioned five specific factors that develop in the group and make a contribution to therapy (development) in the group. These are:

2.4.1.1 Socialisation

Socialisation through the group, where the “rejected and isolated are brought in on equal terms” (p. 149). The group-analytic group is much more tolerant than society in general. Instead of isolating and rejecting, thereby creating a boundary

between the socially acceptable and the neurotic, the analytic group works at including all members inside the boundary of the group.

2.4.1.2 *Mirroring*

Foulkes and Anthony (1965) and Pines (1998) have described the group as a hall of mirrors. The mirrors can contribute to the positive development of the group by reflecting the image back to the individual. The mirror reactions are reflections that assist the individual in gaining greater self-consciousness and thereby distinguishing between his own image and other images. Pines (1998) says that, “In the psychotherapy group the human mirrors offer us multiple perspectives on ourselves, on how we are seen by others... In the group I can see that in this way I am like another, but in this way I am not” (p. 22). Buss (1980) has proven that the mirror effect helps us to preserve our individuality when there is external pressure. Rather than enforcing conformity, and thereby losing individual boundaries, the group can assist the individual in restoring individuality and establishing personal boundaries.

2.4.1.3 *The “condenser” phenomenon.*

The condenser phenomenon is generally not well described in the group analytic literature. Foulkes and Anthony (1965) describe it as: “A sudden discharge of deep and primitive material following the pooling of associated ideas in the group” (p.151). The reason why it is a group phenomenon is that it is a collective reaction after group interaction. The discharge is not necessarily an emotional outburst; it can also be in the form of symbolic representations such as fantasies, dreams and phobias. An important aspect of this group factor is that it is often difficult to pinpoint a causal relationship between the discharge and a preceding event. It seems to be more a case of a series of events rather than a single event that leads to the discharge. Foulkes and Anthony (1965) seem to suggest that there is a gradual buildup that leads to a reaction that on the surface cannot be

linked with an occurrence in the group. Pine (1983a) calls it: “A pooling of associations in the group” (p.275), for which the symbolic presentation act as the condenser.

2.4.1.4 “Chain” phenomena and linking

Chain phenomena occur when group members make a link with a common theme but through different associations. It has previously been mentioned that the equivalent of free association in individual therapy is free floating discussion in the group. The free floating discussion allows the members to make their own *link* with the theme. “This (free floating discussion) may frequently, in a well-established group, show bursts of chain activity, each member contributing an essential and idiosyncratic link to the chain” (Foulkes and Anthony, 1965, p.151).

Linking is a term that is generally used to describe the action where members connect with each other and the group. Linking can occur on a fantasy and emotional level as described by Hinselwood (1994) or on a content level as described by Kennard, Roberts, and Winter (1993) where thematic links can be made through identifying a common theme in the group. Making these links and connections is regarded by Nitsun (1996) as a “basic psychotherapeutic function, but it becomes especially important in the face of the disintegratory impact of the anti-group” (p. 178). Linking is essentially a boundary issue. Through forming links individuals members can connect on an intellectual, emotional, conscious and unconscious level across boundaries. The term linking is related to the chain phenomenon in groups as described by Foulkes and Anthony (1965) where group members make a link with a common theme but through different associations and different levels of communication, for example on the current reality level or on a projective level through projective identification. A difference between linking as it is generally used and the chain phenomena is that the former seems to be an ongoing process whilst the latter is used to describe a response to emotionally intense moments in the group. Foulkes and Anthony

(1965) state that: “The chain phenomenon makes its appearance at certain tense moments in the group, when some ‘collective’ condenser theme is released” (p. 151). Attacks on linking and a lack of linking would affect the group and more specifically the group space negatively in the sense that members would feel more isolated than feeling part of the group. Attacks on linking may occur when members experience psychological pain or under conditions of psychological trauma as well as when expectations of group members are not been met. During these attacks boundaries become rigid barriers.

2.4.1.5 Resonance

Resonance is when a group event reverberates with members in the group. One can argue that it is merely a case of an emotional chord that has been struck by an event in the group. Foulkes and Anthony (1965), however, add an important aspect to resonance, and that is that the event resonates with a person on the level where he is ‘fixated’. This additional aspect to resonance is obviously based on a psychoanalytic interpretation.

2.4.1.6 Resisting re-enactment

Another group dynamic phenomenon that Foulkes (1975), Skynner (1983, 1986) and others have described is the re-enactment of a family pattern in the group. The conceptual structure that Foulkes had of the group can be regarded as multi-dimensional, with both horizontal and vertical axes. The vertical axis, represented by the levels of communication, gives the group a depth dimension. As part of the depth dimension, the group becomes the surrogate for the family group, and the original problem is re-enacted through repetition-compulsion in the group. Skynner (1986) postulates that: “At the start, each person’s different family pattern exists only inside his head, but each member will bring his family to the group in the form of projection: that is, projected expectations based on his own typical family experience, together with the family pattern of non-verbal signals by

which he will seek to manipulate other group members into joining in his particular family 'cover-up' (p.15). Originally Foulkes (1986) said that: "... the original family has become internalised and is brought into the new life situation and, in particular, into the transference situation during analytical treatment" (p.16). Given time, the problem reveals itself in the different levels in the group. The problem (neurosis) can be located on the horizontal axis and on the vertical axis.

Foulkes and Anthony (1965) furthermore say that illness in the group is revealed as blocked communication; "The neurotic (and psychotic) disturbance is bound up with deficient communicability and is therefore blocked." (p. 259). We can say that it is located in a specific individual or a group of individuals in the group. In order to be located, it is "bounded" in a certain part of the group. The individual can "coerce" the group-as-a- whole to re-enact the family pattern with the result that the disturbance will be located in the individual, but the configuration of the disturbance involves the group-as-a-whole. It can also occur that only a few members reenact the family pattern, and the disturbance will, therefore, be located in a certain part of the group. Although the blocked communication is located in an individual or part of the group, it is always a dysfunction of the group-as-a-whole.

Part of the curative power in the group lies in the fact that the group-members resist the re-enactment of the family situation. This can then lead to a corrective emotional experience. Foulkes (1975) describes this process when he says that: "Each individual has the tendency or even compulsion to turn the group as far as possible into a family, into his family... It is therefore of the greatest importance that we consider this repetition of the family situation as a cardinal and basic resistance and resolve it through continuous analysis and confrontation." (p.16)

It can be argued that the dynamics of re-enactment can be applied to a wider context than the family of origin. Significant events and experiences in later life

can also set in motion repetitive patterns of behaviour. These patterns of behaviour can then be re-enacted in the group. The dynamics in this case would be located mainly on a transference rather than a projective level of communication. Development takes place through a sensitive resisting of the re-enactment that allows for gradual growth and change out of the regression.

2.4.2 Destructive dynamics and defences in the group

In group analysis, individual defences and group defences can be identified. Group defences (those defences that arise in the development process of the group) are of greater concern in the framework than individual defences. Individual defences often manifest in an attempt to break the boundaries of the group structure through behaviour such as late-coming, absenteeism, etc. Group defences relate to the patterns and processes in the group and affect the abstract or psychological boundaries of the group. Roberts and Pines (1992) describe some group defences.

2.4.2.1 Resistant conversations

The group may engage in so-called harmless conversations from time to time. These conversations may indicate that the group is anxious about what may be revealed. These harmless conversations are usually interrupted by an individual who nominates himself or is chosen by the group to become the focus of attention. This has the possibility of setting in motion two different processes. On the one hand, it can take the group to a deeper level of operations, away from trivial matters to a more personal level. On the other hand, the individual can serve the same function as the harmless conversations, again diverting the attention from the group. The individual could also become the scapegoat for the group. Scapegoating is often an important dynamic in a group; it is, therefore, discussed in more depth.

2.4.2.2 Scapegoating

The occurrence of the phenomenon where a group chooses an individual towards whom to direct their hostile feelings is a quite common dynamic in groups. There are, however, considerable differences in the interpretation of the underlying dynamics of the phenomenon. Scheidlinger (1982a) expressed the opinion that although scapegoating is as old as human history it has not been well explored, specifically not in group literature. His first observation about the history of scapegoating is that in the original story in Leviticus, 16:8 (King James Version) there were two goats. The one was the recipient of all the “badness” of the group and pushed over the cliff, and the other the recipient of the “goodness” and offered to God. “Did these two goats represent the perceptual polarization inherent in at least one aspect of scapegoating..?” (p. 132) is the rhetorical question that he asks. Schoenewolf (1998) treats the phenomena of *scapegoat* and *holy cow* as co-occurring dynamics in a family which he then applies the dynamics to the group. He, however, makes no reference to the two goats. He describes the scapegoat and the holy cow as projective identification processes from one or both of the parents to the child. The child starts to enact the role that is being projected onto him. In group therapy, the child is then virtually predisposed to assume the scapegoat role in the group. “Thus, without saying a word a scapegoat may join a group and immediately become subject to attack. Similarly, a holy cow will join a group and immediately be viewed as an exalted and sacred object” (p.281). His explanation of the dynamics is very much from an individual perspective.

Scheidlinger (1982a) has a different view of the scapegoat. He postulates that there are two ways in which scapegoating occurs in small groups: 1) when the group projects onto a victim unacceptable emotions and impulses. The recipient could be either innocent or a willing partner, or 2) when there is a more primitive process, similar to projective identification, where there has been a longer ongoing unconscious interaction between the scapegoat and the scapegoater. In

conclusion he suggests that group psychotherapy literature fails to give the phenomenon the attention it deserves and that: “The few existing references appear to be overly general and inconclusive” (p.142).

Foulkes (1982) considers the scapegoat phenomenon to be a result of the group process whereby: “The conflict within the audience, within any given human being, is given expression by the conflict between Oedipus and the Chorus. The Chorus, which in present terms could delineate our group, plays the part of the superego; it remains detached and objective, but exerts a driving pressure on the hero to fulfil his destiny” (p.153). He added that the reason for the “driving pressure” is that Oedipus aroused feelings of guilt in the audience by activating their forbidden wishes. The audience projects their negative feelings and forbidden wishes onto Oedipus and drives him to fulfil his destiny on their behalf. In this way the group expresses itself through the individual.

Foulkes and Anthony (1965) also emphasise the role of the conductor or group leader in the phenomenon of scapegoating when they say that the aggression towards the scapegoat is often misplaced aggression towards the conductor that the group cannot direct towards the conductor for fear of retaliation. “They project their inner feelings on to some likely recipient, who submits to the projection for inner reasons of his own” (156).

Dalal (1998) shows an interesting progression in the description by Foulkes and Anthony (1965) on scapegoating. He points out that the authors start with an explanation of scapegoating as a group-as-whole dynamic but then end in attributing it to individual development whereby the individual projects feelings of aggression and guilt onto the chosen member. He is critical of the dynamic explanation by Foulkes and Anthony, saying that they had missed an opportunity for a social unconscious interpretation rather than an individualistic interpretation. He (1998) comments that: “They (Foulkes and Anthony) continue to individualize the model... and the most that can be said of their version of scapegoatism, is

that although the phenomenon is said to occur in groups, its cause is something inside the individual.” (p. 72).

However, Dalal's (1998) interpretation of Foulkes is problematic. His point of departure, when interpreting Foulkes, is dualistic in what he calls an “orthodox” and a “radical” Foulkes. (1998, p. 77). This leads him to an either-or argument instead of a both-and argument. Foulkes did not have a dualistic view of the individual and the social. This is evident when Foulkes (1982) states that: “He (Oedipus) embodies a kind of collective ego for the community... Furthermore, he has to be punished for the crime he has committed in the name of the community and is thus in some sense a scapegoat.” (1982, p. 153). Here Foulkes clearly links the social and the individual, the group and the scapegoat. He ascribes the dynamics to neither the individual nor the group but as a function of the interaction of the two.

In Lyndon's (1994) discussion on the phenomenon of scapegoat the important implications for the conceptualisation of the development of boundaries in the group are made clear. When “scapegoating” occurs, the group is split between an idealized leader and a vilified scapegoat. This occurs mainly when the group is dependent on the leader and hostile feelings towards the leader therefore cannot be directed towards him but are instead projected onto the scapegoat. ” In this way the discomfort of dependence is artificially relieved and the primitive anxiety of helplessness, fear of abandonment and disintegration are defended against.” (Lyndon, 1994, pp. 97-98) In this way the scapegoat takes on a social function in the group.

In summarizing the brief review of the phenomenon of the scapegoat it transpires that there are basically two forms of scapegoating. The one is through the mechanism of projection and transference on a whole-object level, and the second through the mechanism of projective identification on a part-object level. The boundary implications are that in the first case the individual is isolated from

the group whereas in the second case the group is split between the good and bad object in the group. In the first case the scapegoat is more likely to be an innocent victim, whereas in the second case he becomes the scapegoat as a result of a reciprocal dynamic process between the individual and other members in the group.

2.4.2.3 Resistance in joining the matrix

The centrality of the concept of the matrix in the conceptual structure of the group analytical framework has been emphasised. When a group member is resistant to join the group matrix by not taking part fully in the communication, but, instead, chooses to sit on the edge as an observer, it will have a negative impact on the development of the matrix and, therefore, a negative impact on the development of the group.

Through an individual's resisting joining the matrix, the cohesiveness, as a qualitative aspect of the matrix and the group, will especially be affected negatively. Cohesion can be described as how close to or far from the members of a group feel towards the figurative centre of the group. In a cohesive group the members will feel close to the centre. Yalom (1985) identified group cohesiveness as an important therapeutic factor. When a member does not join the group matrix, it will affect the cohesiveness and thereby the progress in the group.

Resistance to joining the matrix will also have a negative impact on the group space, or what Neri (1998) refers to as the "mental skin" of the group (p.49). Although people may share the space on a physical level by being in a group, they may not experience the group on a mental level as a whole, or their experience of the wholeness of the group will be negative. A second aspect of the group space that will be effected negatively is the "perception that some sensations – in particular, those of excitement, fear, or tension – have group

rather than individual rhythms: as through the group as a whole was regulating or not managing to regulate them” (Neri, 1998, p49). Resistance in joining the matrix can therefore have the effect of “collapsing” the group space and members will not experience the group-as-a-whole.

Reasons for resisting joining the matrix may vary. It could be as a result of “the collective underlying anxiety concern of what might be discovered under the surface”, or “an unconscious fear of belonging together” could be another reason. (Roberts and Pines (1992, pp. 486-487). The important role that free-floating discussions play in the creation of the group space has been mentioned (Foulkes and Anthony, 1965). However, when members are not “free” to express themselves and they are censored in their contributions boundaries will be set relating to what is permissible or not in the group. The “space” to make contributions will, therefore, be limited. As a result members may be reluctant to join the group in fear of being censored by the group. These dynamics are usually not fully on a conscious level but more on the transference and projective levels.

2.4.2.4 *The anti-group*

Foulkes had, to a large extent, a positive view of the group; that is that the group presents the norm from which the individual deviates. “The deepest reason why patients can reinforce each other’s normal reactions and wear down and correct each other’s neurotic reactions, is that collectively they constitute the very norm from which, individually, they deviate” (Foulkes, 1948, p.29) Without the statement’s being qualified, two possible mistakes can be made when interpreting its meaning. Firstly, one could say that the group represents a “healthy” norm, or, secondly, that Foulkes was promoting uniformity. Neither of these interpretations would be correct. Brown (1998) postulates that Foulkes may have blurred over the existence of “bad” groups for possible personal reasons. These “personal reasons” he learned from an interview with Elizabeth Foulkes

(third wife of Foulkes): “Talking recently to Elizabeth about the effect on Foulkes of the dramatic and traumatic social changes in his life made me rethink his optimism about groups” (p. 396). What Brown learnt about Foulkes was that he was an unwanted child and that his sister died in a concentration camp to name but two. Earlier reference has also been made to the Foulkes family, who regarded themselves as Germans but gradually were being isolated and persecuted by the very group (Germans) of which they regarded themselves a part. Taking his personal history into account, one could argue that it is impossible that he could have held an exclusively positivistic view on groups after having experienced the destructiveness that can be found in groups. It is, however, possible that these experiences were so traumatic that Foulkes applied a form of splitting, and, thereby, repressed the possible destructiveness in groups.

On the question of whether Foulkes promoted uniformity, Brown answers as follows: “In the sense that Foulkes meant it, socialisation is equivalent to normalisation; not uniformity, but humanity.” (p. 395) Pines (1981) also supports this view when he states that “it is a move from isolation, which is akin to repression, and it enables the member to become part of the coherent whole of the group” (p.283). We, therefore, cannot equate “becoming a part of and finding your voice in the group” as becoming the “same as the others.” The boundary implications are that the group assists the individual to progress from individual isolation (fixed personal boundaries) to socialisation (becoming a part of). Socialisation implies permeable individual boundaries and not a loss of individual boundaries (uniformity).

It is also interesting to note that in England Foulkes found himself in a situation described by Brown (1998) as “creative marginality”. First he was a Jew in Germany, and then a German in England. He was, furthermore, an analyst in psychiatry. His awareness of his own position in society could have contributed to the formulation of the concept of the matrix (as a transitional space) and the importance of the matrix in transformation and growth.

The general regard of the matrix is largely positive. Roberts and Pines (1992) state that: “just as the child is led to higher levels of development by being responded to from above as it were, so, in the group, the capacity of the group-as-a-whole to work with the primitive and conflictual is often very striking” (p. 480). To this they added that the group matrix could be viewed as a safe context in which a deep regression and new formation or transformation can take place.

Not all theorists share the positive view of the group. Nitsun (1991) opposes the idea of the exclusively positivistic view of the group and the group matrix when he says: “I believe that most, if not all, groups contain an anti-group, but that whereas in some groups it is resolved with relative ease, in others it can undermine and destroy the foundations of the group” (p. 9). To this he added that he doubts whether Foulkes’ early formulations of group analysis adequately account for the dark side of the social reality of the time – specifically the massive extent to which groups could be destructive and self-destructive. Nitsun (1996) based his idea of destructive forces in groups mainly on clinical observations of groups.

He speculates that one reason why Foulkes ascribes to such a positive view of the group is owing to his having to “sell” group therapy to his sceptic colleagues. A critical question is that, if there is such a thing as an anti-group, how does it come about? People and patients are often reluctant to join a group, and, especially during the beginning stages, there is a deep mistrust in the group. He hypothesises that the reason for the development of the anti-group lies largely in the individual’s wish to be in individual therapy where he can have exclusive attention and, so, regard it as a safer context. Part of this preference lies in the desire to restore the primary early mother-child relationship. James Hollis (1998) called this desire very aptly the “Eden Project”, the desire to return to a state of oneness and harmony. Inevitably the group will not and cannot meet these expectations of the group members, with the result that the gap between

expectation and gratification widens ever more. Eventually the members turn on the group which is perceived to be the bad object. This unleashes the negative destructive forces in the group where the anti-group attacks the group. The boundary of the anti-group could include one, more or all of the group members. There is the danger that the group could actually destroy itself, but as Nitsun (1991) remarks, this seldom happens. In scapegoating, as a form of anti-group behaviour, the hostility is directed by a subgroup or the group towards an individual in the group. In other forms of anti-group behaviour the hostility can be directed toward the group-as-a-whole. Conceptually there would be a difference in perceived boundaries between the two. In the first instance, a boundary or barrier is created between the group/subgroup and the individual, whereas, in the second case, the boundary is created between the group/subgroup and the group-as-a-whole – the group, as a symbolic representation of the “bad” in the group, becomes the object of hostility.

The anti-group could, however, also have a positive value and therapeutic powers in itself. Members could work through their own issues around dependency, and the group could become the dependable container. What initially had the potential of creating internal boundaries in the group through active sub-grouping, when worked through, can strengthen the external boundary of the group.

Nitsun (1996) applies the principle of a dialectical relationship of opposites, as articulated by Ogden (1992a, 1992b), as a frame of reference for development in the group. Ogden's view is that development comes through the constantly changing relationship of opposites. Pathology is regarded as the collapse of the dialectic relationship in the direction of the one or the other of the opposites. The danger is, therefore, not in the presence of the anti-group but in the collapse of the pro-group or anti-group in favour of the other, which leads to pathology.

Prodgers (1990) supports the idea of the group representing both constructive and destructive forces when he describes the group as an urobic container. The Urobos (Great Mother) contains an essential ambivalence, representing the active and passive, the affirmative and the negative, the constructive and destructive” (p. 18).

2.4.2.5 Malignant mirroring

One of the developmental enhancing dynamics in the group has been described as the “mirror” phenomena of the group, where the group reflects an image back to the individual. This reflection can be positively received, leading to growth, or it can be an intensely negative experience, leading to defensive manoeuvres such as flight and denial. Zinkin (1983) describes situations where the discovery of the truth can lead to catastrophe and destruction. Timing and manner is of critical importance for effective mirroring. He describes the mirroring that takes place in the group is far more complex than Foulkes described it as. Zinkin’s main argument is that a mistake is being made when the reflection is taken as the reality or when the “map is regarded as the territory”. The reflection by the group is different from that of a mirror in that it is a two way process that allows for dialogue which a mirror does not. He also points out that for malignant mirroring to occur one does not need to regard the image as bad. This point is illustrated in the myth of Narcissus where his love for the image becomes a trap that leads to his death. In the group situation this would imply that the narcissistic individual is incapable of creating or maintaining a personal boundary which separates him from the other group members. The reflective capacity of the member is limited, rather than seeing them as separate group members, he sees a reflection of himself in them. Pines (1990) argues that both the external and internal boundaries of the borderline patient are dysfunctional. The external boundary is effectively a barrier which leads to profound inner emptiness and the internal boundaries are insufficiently formed and fail to: “clearly differentiate the self-representations from that of the object” thus, “there is a state of blurring, of fusion

and confusion” (p. 36). Certain kinds of personality disturbances are largely disturbances of boundaries. Mirroring can have a catastrophic consequence for these individuals. Pines (1990) uses the analogy of a ship without compartments to describe this catastrophe. When the ship is holed it sinks rapidly owing to the lack of compartments. (p. 36).

Mirroring as a group phenomenon can furthermore lead to what Nitsun (1998) calls “boundary deregulation” (p.262). He describes functional and dysfunctional mirroring in terms of boundaries. In functional mirroring, the individual, as a unique, separate other, is recognized and affirmed. In functional mirroring, boundaries are therefore recognized and affirmed. On the other hand: “Dysfunctional mirroring, based on rapid, automatic identifications, is potentially damaging because it tends to undermine and impair boundaries. They lead to boundary deregulation” (p. 262).

According to Foulkes, through mirroring (that is not malignant): “The patient can find himself in others and others in himself, and, in this way, free himself from prejudices, as it were, and develop a more mature, creatively adaptable character” (1948, p.26). In this positive kind of mirroring, boundaries are upheld but they take on a permeable and flexible quality.

2.4.3 Group phase development

In the previous sections an account of development in the group in general, as described in group analytic theory, has been given. In this section, the emphasis is on phases of development in the life of the group. Gibbert, Hartman and Mann (1974) provide a useful categorisation of models of group development, namely the linear-progressive models, life cycle models and the pendular or recurring-cycle models. Models in the first category advocate that a group develops through distinct and recognizable phases that are largely sequential. Examples of these models are by Tuckman (1971), Bennis and Shepard (1956) and, more

recently, (Agazarian, 1997). The second category emphasizes the importance of the last or termination phase in the life-cycle of the group. Mills (1964) and Mann (1967) are two researchers and practitioners who represent this model. The third category postulates that a group goes through recurring cycles of issues or pendular oscillations between issues. Bion (1959) would fall into this category.

In the group analytic framework, the notion of a group developing through recognisable and generalizable phases is not well described. Pines (1979) and Usandivaras (1984) are two theorists who do give accounts of phase development in groups. In both of these accounts there seem to be a sequential order of phases until the psychological group is established, after which development takes place through recurring-cycles.

Pines (1979) describes the development of a group over time. In the beginning the group goes through phases, but, according to his description, once the group has been established, it does not develop further through distinct phases. Although he does not identify explicit phases, implicitly, in what he describes, phases can be identified to some extent. He (1979) provides a narrative description of what he sees as a natural developmental progression in the group. In his description he makes no claim for a sequential order, but his account does make provision for two phases during the initial stage of the group where the group has to establish itself as an entity. In each phase dynamics occur that serve a function during that particular phase but which are, in the long run, not sustainable, and, therefore, the group has to progress to another phase. Members, including the conductor, enter into the group with their own individual anticipations. Pines (1979) makes the interesting comment that our family of birth is the only formal group where we do not have to present our credentials. In all other groups we enter with a formality of which the initial step is to “cross the invisible, powerful boundary which demarcates group space from world space” (p.110). In phase one, or the early phase, the individuals do not constitute a psychological group as yet, and the main task is to establish this group. The

phase is characterized by fight/flight behaviour, disregarding differences, discovering and testing what is “in” and what is “out”, locating the bad outside the group and/or inside the group and to name it, all for the sake of forming a group. The group eventually discovers that these initial solutions or strategies are not sustainable.

When the group moves into the next phase, there is a “sense of group” in which the “members can afford, within the established climate of security of the group matrix, the mother group, to care, to love and hate though always with difficulty, to bring past and present together in a psychological space time zone” (Pines, 1979, p. 112). During the second phase, the paradigm shifts from establishing the group and testing what is “in” and “out” to behaviour that constitutes a power struggle in the group. The boundary focus during this stage is on all boundaries in the group, including the member-group boundary, away from the boundary of the group with the external world. It would seem that in his (Pines’) thinking, initially the group goes through phases, but, once the group is established, it follows a more recurring-cycle model of development. During the established phase, the group passes through many *little* phases within the bigger phase. The task of the leader in terms of boundaries is either to make rigid boundaries or barriers permeable or to establish boundaries not well formed boundaries.

Usandivaras (1984), as described in Marrone (1993), gives a more linear developmental account than that of Pines’ (1979) group phase development. “I have described four stages in the group process, which I call the “chaotic stage, the fusion-disintegration stage, the stage of ‘communitas’, and the individuation/termination stage (Usandivaras, 1984, p. 162). In Marrone’s (1993) interpretation of Usandivaras he says that in the first phase the difficulty or issue is that the members are asked to make a commitment before they are yet able to understand what they are committing themselves to. (p. 149). During the fusion-disintegration phase, the group is characterized by antagonistic forces: (a) a centripetal force that drives members towards union under fantasies of

undiscriminating fusion with the group, and (b) a centrifugal force, in which the patient reacts to the fear of fusion and consequent loss of identity by rebelling against the group norms and leadership. (p. 149). The phase of “communitas” is a phase of cohesion, when a new sense of individual identity, togetherness, inclusion and mutuality emerges. In a group that Marrone (1993) conducted he mentions that: “There was a feeling that the group had created a new tribal order which was intermediate between the individuals’ inner worlds and social reality” (p. 151). To describe what happens during the phase of ending or individuation, Marrone (1993) draws on Usandivaras saying that this is a period in the group’s life when members begin to abdicate their sense of belonging to an alternative tribe, acquire a greater sense of individuation, and begin to make personal projects independent from what was previously a sense of affiliation to the group” (p. 152). In boundary terms, the first two phases would be characterized by, first, a near loss or relinquishing of individual boundaries for the sake of establishing a group boundary, and, then, a redefining of individual boundaries in the group. In the third phase the group provides a secure space where other boundaries could be explored, tested, redefined or transcended. Once again this seems more like a recurring-cycle phase where there is not a sequential order. In the last phase, the individual has to establish himself independently outside of the boundary of the group.

2.5 Conductor of the group

Foulkes preferred the term “conductor” over that of “group leader”. The choice of word is based on the role that he assigns to the conductor. Conceptually, the conductor is seen as part of the group structure. Foulkes mentions: “That the conductor forms part of this group situation and is penetrated by it, like any other member, should be clear by now.” (1986, p.107) He also uses the term conductor to emphasise the paradoxical position of the conductor - the conductor is critical in all aspects of the ‘making of the music’, but he does not play an instrument himself. Elizabeth Foulkes (1986) emphasises this paradoxical position when she

says: “The conductor, (called thus rather than leader, since he does not generally lead the group) ...” (p. 8). In Figure 2.2 it is shown that the conductor is inside the external boundary, thus being a part of the group, but, at the same time, he is also differentiated from the members in the group.

Anthony (1983) describes the role of the conductor more explicitly: “He is a leader who does not lead, a leader who does not impose his views, a leader who does not plan the strategy for the group, a leader who often follows where the group leads and a leader who gradually abrogates much of the leadership credited to him by the group to the group itself” (p. 40).

Both Anthony and Foulkes agree that the leader is part of the group but that his role changes as the group develops. Initially the leader would be fairly active with the possible effect of the group becoming dependent on the leader. Gradually, the group would take over the maintenance and therapeutic tasks from the leader and thereby itself become the instrument of change in the group. Foulkes sees this as a gradual weaning process from dependence on the leader (1964, p. 61).

The function of the leader is generally described in terms of two areas, that of a dynamic administrator and that of a facilitator of therapeutic activities. Foulkes (1965) refers to the first as “maintaining the analytic situation” and the second as being “representative of the analytic attitude in the group” (p. 28). Maintaining the analytic situation has mainly to do with the management of boundaries; the selection of members, deciding on the time, day and place of meeting. As administrator, the leader is also responsible for managing the interface between the group and the context, that is the total group boundary, and how that which is outside the group interacts with inside the group and visa versa.

Pines (1983a) describes the therapeutic role of the conductor as comprising of leading, analysing and interpreting. The leading function is largely concerned with creating an effective group. When distinguishing between analysing and

interpreting, Foulkes (1986) gave preference of analysis over interpretation. “The conductor should only give an interpretation when he has patiently but in vain waited for this insight to come from the group defenses and resistances which prevent the patients from finding out for themselves” (p. 113). Foulkes and Anthony (1965) also emphasized the role of conductor in communication process. “The understanding and expression of the group as a whole is guided and brought up to a higher level” by the conductor (p. 263).

2.6 Context of application

From the very beginning of the development of the conceptual structure and theory of group analysis, the principles and method were not applied exclusively to therapy groups. The original application was in an organizational context rather than a pure therapy group. This happened before Foulkes published his first book in 1948. While he was still developing the group analytic theory, he introduced the principles and method on a large scale to establish a therapeutic community in the Northfield Hospital (1942-46). Group analysis has been, and continues to be, applied in a variety of contexts, namely organizational setting (Nitsun, 1998), higher education (Abercrombie, 1983), university chaplains training (Hawkins, 1983), family therapy (Skynner, 1983), cultural trauma etc. In many of the applications, the system is the “patient.” One of the reasons that makes it applicable in different contexts is that development is regarded not so much as healing, but as better communication. The therapy of a group of university chaplains, as described by Hawkins (1983), is an example of such an application of group analytic principles in a group where the main purpose of the group was to improve the functioning of the group as a working group. Given the purpose of the group, boundaries were set by the group as to what could be discussed and what was off limits. “It was agreed that interpersonal issues in the group could be explored as deeply as possible, professional problems discussed, but other personal matters were not to be dealt with” (Hawkins, 1983, p. 130).

Group analysis can be applied, and has not only to be applied, in different contexts but also for different purposes such as, creating a context for healing and growth, training of people who work with groups, organizational development and large scale system changes. The central constructs of the conceptual framework remain the same, but the purpose and context of the applications differ. The group analytic framework can, therefore, be regarded as a flexible, multipurpose framework for working with groups.

2.7 Summary with specific reference to boundaries

2.7.1 Introduction

One of the most important implications of the conceptual structure of the group analytical theoretical framework is that the concept of exclusive individual unconsciousness is basically an anomaly. The individual unconscious will always reflect something of the group. When a boundary is used as an abstraction of the conceptual structure of the group, the description of the dynamics underlying the boundary should always include that which is inside and that which is outside. The unconscious of an individual member will include, and reflect, something of the group. The group will always reflect something of society. The individual and the group are thus always linked to the external. We should, however, not conceptualise it as a mere binary structure with inside, outside and opposites but understand it rather as “the outside is also on the inside” or as Dalal (1998) suggests: “The social unconscious is both the contained and the container” (p. 49).

2.7.2 Historical roots

Foulkes’s personal history, and in particular his exposure to different theoretical fields as described in section 2.2, historical roots of the conceptual structure, led him to formulate a theory on groups that deals with boundaries in a particular and

sometimes complicated way. It is argued that his view on, and application of, boundaries was influenced both by his professional as well as his personal background.

In his professional career, he was, on the one hand, exposed to psychoanalysis which emphasizes the intrapsychic, that which is internal to the individual. On the other hand, he was exposed to sociology, neurology and gestalt theories, which emphasize that which is outside the individual as well as their interconnectedness. He overcame these two so-called incompatible opposites of the individual being inside and the community outside (the individual boundary) with a both-and approach. Foulkes would, therefore, find the interpretation of a boundary of: "That which separates the inside from the outside" problematic. In his definition, he says that "we cannot make a conventional sharp differentiation between inside and outside, or between fantasy and reality. What is inside is always outside, and what is outside is inside as well." (Foulkes, 1990, pp. 277-278) Boundaries in the group analytic framework have, therefore, simultaneously differentiating and connecting qualities. Some theoreticians and practitioners, such as Dalal (1998), are critical about the both-and approach whilst others, such as Gildenhuys (1989), regard the shifts from "outside" or "inside" to the "in between" as one of his most important contributions and, indeed, also his unique contribution to group theory.

In the previous section it has been highlighted that despite Foulkes' experience of a "bad group" (Nazi Germany), he nevertheless held a largely positive view of the group. Furthermore, that the positivistic view of the group was made possible by "splitting" and suppressing the traumatic experiences. It would, therefore, seem the Foulkes dealt with boundaries from a theoretical perspective and from a personal experiential perspective differently. Foulkes's positive view of the group could also have been reinforced by the "fruits" of his work, which were evident in his lifetime; he was acknowledged by his peers, the framework was being used for professional training and a group analytic journal was established.

2.7.3 Conceptual structure

When relating the conceptual structure of the group in group analysis (see Figure 2.3) to boundaries, the first important point is that the structure is seen as a dynamic whole. Boundaries are used as a linking, rather than a dividing, construct. The different components of the group, therefore, cannot be described in isolation, but they make sense only in relation to the other components and the whole. Based on the dynamic view of the group, boundaries are furthermore seen as movable, permeable and changeable. Boundaries are not a given of the group but rather abstractions made by the perceiver. The concept of boundaries is, therefore, used as a sense-making and operational mechanism that is movable and constantly shifts and changes in the group rather than being a fixed entity of the components of the group.

One of the ways in which boundaries and “boundarying” are used in the theoretical framework is to locate pathology in the group. Based on the dynamics in the group, the leader locates the pathology or symptom in an individual or a certain part of the group. In order to do this, he has to draw a mental boundary between where it is situated and where it is not situated. Yet the very same boundary may be “lifted” the next minute and then be drawn again after free floating discussion has been allowed to continue in the group.

The vertical axis or depth dimension in the group has been discussed. In boundary terms the group is seen as a layered structure from an observable current level to a deep collective unconscious level. Foulkes and Anthony (1965) viewed a disturbance/pathology as being “blocked communication” (p.259) This blockage can be located on one of the vertical levels of current, transference, projective or primordial.

As far as the position of the leader in the conceptual structure goes, he is conceptualized as being situated within the boundary of the group. He is both member and leader and fulfils these roles from within the group. Initially he is more visible and, therefore, bounded in the role of the leader. As the group assumes bigger responsibility for itself, so the boundaries of the leader (in the role of the leader) become more relaxed, with a consequence that he becomes less visible. Progressively, the group itself becomes the agent or tool for change. Foulkes' (1986) own words could be used in summary: "Analysis of the group, by the group, including the conductor" (p. 3).

2.7.4 Development in the group

Development in the group takes place through making boundaries more permeable. Foulkes (1986) mentioned that: "On the whole we can say that the conductor proceeds from what is manifest to what is latent, what is the underlying meaning" (p. 110). The main effort is to bring that which is latent or covert to an overt level. The boundary in focus is between the conscious and pre- or subconscious in the group. This is the main mechanism for change. When the latent is made manifest, the group will be able to work with it and thereby make progress.

2.7.4.1 Developmental enhancing dynamics

Development enhancing dynamics are closely related to boundaries in the group. All enhancing dynamics have the effect of relaxing boundaries in some or other way. Socialisation in the group assists the individual to move from a position of isolation to inclusiveness in the group. Constructive Mirroring, as a developmental enhancing dynamic, has the effect of relaxing the intrapsychic boundaries whereby the individual can be more reflective about himself and also about himself in relation to the group. It furthermore assists the individual with establishing individual boundaries by helping him to differentiate between himself

and other group members. “In the group I can see that in this way I am like another, but in this way I am not.” (Pines, 1998, p. 22)

2.7.4.2 Developmental destructive dynamics

Destructive dynamics in the group has to do with either rigid or fixed boundaries or a collapse of boundaries. In resistant conversations and resistance in joining the matrix, individual or subgroup boundaries are rigid (is this the correct word, or should it be “rigid”?) with a consequence that the group-as-a-whole boundary cannot be established adequately. The presence of an anti-group in the group does not necessarily have a negative impact on development in the group (Nitsun, 1996), but it can lead to rigid subgroup boundaries or to a collapse of boundaries. The notion of development through a dialectical process between opposites, as articulated by Ogden (1992a, 1992b) and applied by Nitsun (1996), has reference. A collapse of the boundary between the pro- and anti-group towards either one of these groups, would have a negative impact on development in the group. The danger is, therefore, not in the presence of the anti-group but in the collapse of the boundary between the anti- and the pro-group. When the collapse is in favour of the anti-group, it will lead to fragmentation or an unbounded group. (Nitsun, 1996, p. 205). On the other hand, if the collapse is in favour of the pro-group, the group will experience excessive cohesion and therefore a rigid outer boundary. This seeming stability has a self-deceptive component (Bohm, 1981), or may even conceal a striving for immortality (Lifton, 1981).

2.7.5 Role of the group leader

The dual role of dynamic administrator and analyst of the group leader has already been described. As the dynamic administrator, the leader's main function is to manage the structural boundaries of the group such as membership, time, place and duration of group meetings, etc.

As an analyst, his function is to manage the flow of communication through and across boundaries. Based on the notion that illness is blocked communication in the group (Foulkes and Anthony, 1965), the leader should assist to “unblock” the communication. This is done through translation of symptoms, interpretations and analysis. “Analysis” is used here as a term to describe the process whereby the hidden is made manifest. Foulkes and Anthony (1965) refer to this process as “translation; from symptom to meaning and from complaint to problem” (p. 53), which could be interpreted as “crossing a boundary into verbal acknowledgement and formulation.” Analysis can be regarded as the process where everything that happens in the group can be subjected to closer scrutiny in search of a hidden meaning. Interpretation is the mechanism used to reveal the hidden or unconscious meaning. They (Foulkes and Anthony, 1965) make a distinction between individual and group interpretations. In individual analysis the interpretations are made by the analyst, whereas in group analysis the interpretations are being made by the group leader and the group. A further difference is that in individual analysis interpretations are usually when the present is linked with the past. In the group analytic situation, the group is used as backdrop for the interpretation. Events are not necessarily linked with the past, outside the group, but rather with what has happened or is happening in the group. The emphasis is on relational boundaries in the present.

In the construction of the group situation by the leader, Foulkes and Anthony (1965, p. 56-57) mention three tools which have a direct bearing on the boundaries in the group:

- 1) Encouraging the relaxation of censorship. (This implies that the group members should not feel bounded or restricted to act or speak in a certain way.)
- 2) Encourage frank and honest disclosure of self. (In order to do this the individual boundaries have to be relaxed.)
- 3) Active participation by all members in the group.

The above imply that the group can perform its task optimally only when it is sufficiently cohesive and bounded.

2.7.6 New applications and developments

This section describes some of the new contexts in which the principles of group analysis have been applied.

Hopper's (2003) work introduced trauma as a theme in theory and practice. Prior to this, trauma had been largely ignored in group psychotherapy literature (Schermer, 2003, p.171). Hopper's (2003a; 2003b) theory of the fourth basic assumption: incohesion: aggregation/massification state, has been applied to groups, organisations and societies (Hopper & Weinberg, 2011; Hopper, 2012; Gantt & Hopper, 2008). In boundary terms, an aggregate can be seen as a group with a structural boundary that holds the group together, but on a member level, boundaries are impermeable, especially to emotional exchange. Massification, on the other hand, is a group where inter-member boundaries are completely open or even absent. To understand these as defensive reactions against feelings of helplessness, extreme fear and abandonment can be particularly useful in a society such as South Africa, which is arguably still a traumatised society.

In the field of psychopathology, Vosmer (2012) postulates that group analysis can be an effective treatment for personality disorders and complex post-traumatic stress disorders. She (2012) argues for an alternative to the medical conceptualisation of the two conditions and proposes several "attachment disruptions" as part of the conceptualisation (p. 499). Attachment inevitably takes place across boundaries. Within the matrix of the group, the members can form attachment bonds which enables healing.

In South Africa, where society was divided on racial lines, groups can contribute to healing, but leaders should be aware that race and culture boundaries can

“create a polarization of members into different camps” (Spiro, Becker and Beech, 2013, p. 291). This was evident in a large group training experience offered by the Centre for Group Analytic Studies (CGAS) in Cape Town in 2011, described by Spiro, Becker and Beech (2013). The authors (2013) nevertheless emphasise the relevance of group work in the South African context and a call for an “indigenous theory” on groups (p. 296).

When working with traumatised groups, group leaders need to be conscious of the effect of trauma on the group as well as their own internal processes. This is an aspect that both Hopper (2005) and Rubenfeld (2005) have emphasised. Rubenfeld (2005) states that the therapist needs to “continuously monitor personal experiences and feelings” (p. 133) and Hopper (2005) states that it is “absolutely essential” (p. 88) that the analyst tolerate and analyse his or her own processes.

Essential features of the group analytic theoretical framework					
Historical roots of framework	Essential components of the conceptual structure	Development of the group and group dynamics		Role of the group leader	Contexts of application
Main exponent: Foulkes Influenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- neurology- psychoanalysis- sociology- gestalt psychology- systems theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- matrix- levels of communication- figure, ground, nodal and focal point- location and configuration- leader as member and leader- free floating discussions- group as dynamic context	Translation of autistic symptom into common group problem, Widening and deepening of communication. Resisting re-enactment		Both member and leader Dual role <ul style="list-style-type: none">- dynamic administrator- analyst	Applied in: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- organizational- education and- medical settings Purpose varies between: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- development- training- healing Specialist groups <ul style="list-style-type: none">- family- adolescent- dependency
		Enhancing dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none">- socialisation- mirroring- condenser phenomenon- chain and linking phenomenon- resonance- resisting re-enactment	Destructive dynamics <ul style="list-style-type: none">- group defences- resistant conversation- resistance in joining matrix- malignant mirroring- scapegoating- blocked communication- anti-group- collapse of dialectical relationship of opposites		

2.8 Some limitations of the group analytic framework

In the group analytic framework, the “group-as-a-whole unconscious” has not been well developed or applied. The link between the inside the boundary of the group and that which is outside the boundary has been described mainly through the concepts of the foundation matrix (Foulkes 1948, 1964) and the social unconscious (Foulkes, 1948, 1964). Although Foulkes has provided these descriptions, his main focus has been on the relationship between the individual and the group “This question (division between the individual and the group), forms the basis of his (Foulkes) group analytic theory” (Dalal, 1998, p.1).

Gildenhuys (1989) regards one of the important contributions Foulkes made was the fact that he managed to shift the focus from the intrapersonal boundary and the interpersonal boundary to what happens in-between the boundaries in-, between the interpersonal boundaries and the boundary of the group itself.

Foulkes himself has said that he takes his frame of reference from the group-as-a-whole but that the individual is the centre of attention (1964). Given this focus on, and the inseparability of the individual and the group, it is possible that the group-as-whole has been somewhat neglected in the framework. What has not been well described is how the group-as-a-whole can react unconsciously to the current situation in the group. The dynamics underlying the boundary between the group-as-a-whole and the context needs further exploration, which will form the content of the following chapter.

Another aspect that might not have received adequate attention in group analysis is that of sub-grouping. The relation and dynamics around the boundary between the individual and the group has been well described, but not when boundaries are created around a few individuals in the group. Although pro-group and anti-group sub-grouping concepts have been explored and described by Nitsun (1991, 1996), other forms of sub-grouping which are not necessarily based on emotive feelings (pro or anti), either conscious or unconscious, towards the group may not have received adequate attention. The theory of living systems, as described and applied by Agazarian (1997), could make a valuable contribution

in this regard and will later be discussed as a complementary framework to that of group analysis.

Chapter 3

Group-as-a-whole framework

3.1 Introduction

At the outset the concept “group-as-a-whole”, as it is used in this chapter, requires clarification. Group analysis, the so-called Tavistock approach, and the group systems-theory approach can all be classified as group-as-a-whole approaches. What distinguishes the group-as-a-whole in this chapter from group analysis and group systems-theory is the almost exclusive emphasis on the group as a unit and the unique position and role of the group leader in relation to the group. Whereas in the other approaches the group-as-a-whole is a part of the structure and dynamics of the group, here it is central, and the conceptualisation of the structure and dynamics are dependent on it. Bion (1961) is regarded as the main exponent of the group-as-a-whole approach as described in this chapter.

The group-as-a-whole framework is an approach to groups that focuses on the group as a holistic entity. The roots of the framework can be traced to sociologists such as Le Bon and McDougall. Le Bon published his classic “The Crowd” in 1896, and some years later, in 1920, McDougall published “Group Mind” (Fraher, 2004, p. 29). Few texts have, however, had a bigger influence on advancing the idea of the group as an entity than that of Bion’s “Experiences in groups”, published in 1961. Pines (1985) regards this work as one of the shortest but most influential books in analytic group psychotherapy. Despite having had such a large influence on group theory, Bion worked actively with groups only for a few years.

In this chapter an overview is given of the group-as-a-whole framework, starting with the founding ideas by Bion through to current applications. Boundaries as a construct have always been central to the group-as-a-whole framework, and special attention will be paid to how boundaries feature in the framework. The chapter starts by tracing the historical roots of Bion, the main exponent of this framework (Pines, 1985), in an attempt to provide some possible reasons why he came to conceptualise the group in such a unique way. The essential components of the conceptual structure, as well as the underlying dynamics, are described after that. In the description, the emphasis is on how boundaries feature in the conceptual structure, including during the different possible group-states, as described by Bion (1961).

In the second part of the chapter, the application and institutionalization of the group-as-a-whole framework is discussed. The idea is not to give an historical account of how it was applied but rather to give an indication of how organizations, such as the Tavistock Institute, have implemented and built on the basic idea of the group-as-a-whole. The Tavistock Institute initiated annual conferences at Leicester University in the late 1950s which, over time, became instrumental in carrying the group-as-a-whole approach forward. Although the Tavistock/Leicester approach of working with groups is based on, and shares basic features with, Bion's framework, it should not be equated with his approach which will be discussed later in the chapter. The chapter ends with comments on some limitations of the framework.

3.2 Historical roots of the conceptual structure

In tracing the historical roots of the conceptual structure, an attempt will be made to answer questions that centre on the uniqueness of the framework. These questions are: Why did Bion emphasise the group-as-a-whole to the exclusion of almost everything else? What contributed to the central position given to the leader in his conceptualization of the group? Why are the issues of relations with

authority so important in the conceptualization and dynamic interpretation of the Tavistock framework and the Leicester conferences? The answers to these questions will be sought in Bion's history, his personality, and in the theoretical influences on him.

3.2.1 Personal history

There is no doubt that Bion's personal history had a determining influence on how he thought about groups. At the tender age of 19, Bion found himself in the role of being the commander of a tank battalion in World War I. During the war he was exposed to extraordinary trauma whilst, at the same time, being acutely aware of, and analysing, his own thoughts and feelings (Bion, 1982).

Commenting on his traumatic experiences, Symington and Symington (1996) state that "Bion was not the only one to pass through such an appalling trauma but we think he was probably one of the few who attempted to assimilate it and understand it. The mind can either dissociate from such an appalling experience or struggle to make sense of it" (p. 15). The roots of his later formulation of the "work group" and the "basic assumption group" (Bion, 1961) can possibly be discovered/found in these anxiety-provoking experiences and the accompanying attempts by him to "work" through them. The basic assumption group states (to be discussed later) could reflect something of his own struggle to work with and desire to "escape" the anxiety of the traumatic experiences. In one particular incident, where he led an attack with his battalion of tanks, many of his men died after he had been forced to obey an order that with which he did not agree (Trist, 1985). This incident could have contributed to his emphasis on, and opinion of, leadership and authority when he theorized on and worked with groups.

During World War II Bion played a very different role, being a member of the War Office Selection Board (WOSB) for the military. He proposed a selection process that was referred to as the "leaderless group" (Trist, 1985) where a group of

soldiers had to perform certain tasks without having a designated group leader in the group. Through observation the candidates with leadership potential were identified. This method proved to be very successful. Already here we can see the beginning of the conceptual structure by Bion; the group had to carry on and perform the task with the observers (who were the formal leaders) outside of the group.

Another major influence on Bion was his involvement in the Northfield hospital experiment (Bion, 1961). The role that John Richman specifically played in collaborating with Bion during this period should be acknowledged. Harrison (2000), in an excellent account of this period, stated that “whilst the latter (Rickman) never fully developed a theory of his own, his writings contain the seeds of many of his colleague’s insights” (p. 14). He also described Bion and Rickman as co-implements of the experiment. Bion joined Rickman, who at the time was working at the hospital, as the commanding officer of the training wing in 1943. Bion was filling the double role of being officer-in-command and also a doctor of the rehabilitation wing of the Northfield hospital. He conceptualised his task as a doctor using a military metaphor. He asked, “What common danger is shared by the men in the rehabilitation wing?” and the answer was “the existence of neurosis as a disability of the community” (Bion, 1961, p. 13). The aim of the treatment was to stand up against this enemy or, to put it differently, to make the members take up their self-respecting, thinking roles in peace and war. His experiment should be understood against this background. Does he make people dependent and send them home or does he give them self-respect and a capacity to think, take responsibility, and make decisions? Bion chose the latter. He identified a disability of the community (Northfield wing) as one of the major obstacles in the healing process. What needed to be treated was the social environment within which the treatment of the individual was taking place. Therein lies his legacy and genius. According to his reasoning, if the group is under threat, the members will prioritise the group over an individual. “From the basic assumption groups there springs a number of subsidiary assumptions,

some of immediate importance. The individual feels that in a group the welfare of the individual is a matter of secondary consideration - the group comes first" (Bion, 1961, p. 64). This then implies that, if the group is not relatively healthy, the members will not emerge from their submersion in and dependency on the group and, therefore, will be healed with difficulty. His pre-occupation with the group-as-a-whole can be understood better if it is read against the background of his choosing to focus on treating the immediate social context of the individual rather than the individual. According to him, the social context will determine the outcome.

The intervention in the Northfield wing was, therefore, aimed more at the social environment than providing therapy for the individual. Bion (1961) remarked that, "The unit was meant to tackle its job with scientific seriousness" (p. 19).

At the wing, he imposed a daily parade, which had both an overt and covert intent, namely that of making announcements and that of assisting the soldiers or patients to become observers of their own group. Bion (1961) stated that "Unknown to the patients, it was intended that this meeting, strictly limited to 30 minutes, should provide an occasion for the men to step outside their framework and look upon its working with the detachment of spectators" (p.16). Here we see evidence of his thinking about the group on two levels, the overt and covert.

The covert intent of the parade is particularly interesting. Not only can this be seen as the beginning of the treatment by the group of itself but also a challenge to the military ethos and authority. He had a legacy of standing up against authority and also had experience of people in authority making decisions on his behalf that had a traumatic impact on his life. Sher (2003) speculates that he was "challenging the so-called lack of quality of leadership, whilst treating the patients" (p. 132).

After six weeks, Bion's involvement with the Northfield training wing came to an abrupt end. There is much speculation as to the reason why he left and also

whether his leaving can be regarded as a failure. One explanation is given by Bridger (1985) when he says that, “He (Bion) had not sufficiently appreciated the effect it would have in its contrast with the psychiatric and organizational approaches of all the other psychiatrists and administrators (including the commanding officer) in the hospital” (p. 96). It is, therefore, possible that Bion, in focussing too much on “his group”, had neglected the larger group.

After the war, Bion joined the Tavistock clinic. Bion’s experience at Tavistock with groups was more the result of necessity than a personal preference to work with groups. Bion joined the Tavistock clinic when it was preparing to enter the National Health Service, and “it would not be permitted simply to give long-term, or even short term, individual treatment to a few patients” (Trist, 1985, p. 28). Tavistock clinic, as an organisation, was forced to develop more cost effective treatment methods, and a group approach was central to the plans that were made. Bion was one of the therapists who lead groups at the clinic.

Apart from leading groups, Bion also chaired an interim planning committee which was to consider the future role of Tavistock. In its report, two tasks were identified: “(1) exploration of the role of the outpatient psychiatry based on a dynamic approach and oriented towards the social sciences and (2) incorporation of the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations for the study of wider social problems not currently seen as being within the purview of the mental health profession” (Fraher, 2004, p. 63). Bion was not only instrumental in establishing a group approach for the treatment of patients but also in applying group principles in a wider social context.

Bion’s initial ideas about the group, which were formulations based on his experiences on an organisational level and not strictly with therapeutic groups, prevailed in his thoughts and he refined, rather than changed, these ideas when he started working with therapeutic groups.

3.2.2 Personality

Pines (1985) makes the comment that, “The relationship of the man to his work, his personality to his ideas, is a matter we often need not concern ourselves about. However, we cannot set aside the personality of a Freud, a Jung and certainly not a Bion” (p. xiv). In Bion’s case, then, how did his personality contribute to his work and, specifically, to the conceptualisation of the “group”?

Two traits are important, the first being his personal presence and the second his shyness. “Bion had the great advantage of an imposing military presence. He was a large man wearing the ribbons of his distinguished record as a soldier in the World War 1” (Sutherland, 1985, p. 48). Patrick de Maré (1985), who was personally acquainted with Bion, describes a not-commonly-known aspect of his personality: “He was an intensely shy man, which was belied by his imposing presence” (p. 112). In this statement some explanation can be found for his emphasis on leadership and on the position of the leader in his conceptualisation of the group as well as for his view on the dynamics in the group. If the leader of a group has an imposing presence, and, at the same time, makes few verbal interventions (as was the case with Bion), it is almost inevitable that the group will take issue with the leader. It is almost as if certain group behaviour was elicited by the personal presence of Bion in the group. Owing to his personality, the relationship between the group and the leader was emphasised, and it can be argued this contributed to his conceptualisation of the group.

3.2.3 Theoretical influences

A third major influence on how Bion conceptualized the group was his experiences with psychoanalysis and, in particular, the ideas of the Object Relations theorist Melanie Klein. Although Bion entered into analysis with Klein only after the war, he was exposed to her work through his first analyst and

colleague John Rickman. Sutherland (1985) comments that Bion's choice of Klein as his analyst was based on personal preference, "Bion's decision to have Melanie Klein as his analyst was based on a considerable knowledge of her work" (p. 54).

Bion (1961) uses the theories of Klein to interpret what he was seeing and experiencing in groups. The following quotation illustrates how Bion (1961) used Klein's theory to explain some of his observations of groups:

In his contact with the complexities of life in a group, the adult resorts, in what may be a massive regression, to mechanisms described by Klein (1931, 1946) as typical of the earliest phases of mental life. The adult must establish contact with the emotional life of the group in which he lives; this task would appear to be as formidable to the adult as the relationship with the breast appears to be to the infant, and the failure to meet the demands of this task is revealed in his regression (p.141).

Two concepts in particular that Bion borrowed from Klein and built on in his theorizing about groups are the role of anxiety and defences against anxiety. Klein postulated that the infant uses mechanisms of splitting, introjection, and projection, as part of the "paranoid schizoid position", to defend himself against experiences of persecutory anxiety during the very early stages of life (Fraher, 2004, p. 38). Bion (1961) hypothesized that the group at times experiences extreme anxiety and "whenever the pressure of anxiety becomes too great, the group is compelled to take defensive action" (p. 163). The positions that the group takes are the basic assumption states in which the mechanisms of splitting, introjection, and projection are used in defence against the anxiety. Bion (1961) even refers to "psychotic anxiety" (p. 163), signifying the absence of contact with reality in the basic assumption states.

It would, however, be a mistake to think that Bion was in total agreement with the Kleinian group. Symington and Symington (1996) comment in this regard that

“He (Bion) used portions of their theory to explicate certain phenomena but his analytic description also implies a rejection of some basic tenets of the Freudian and Kleinian corpus” (p. 13). One of the differences with Klein’s theory is that Bion (1961) suggested that the group can go back and forth between the group equivalent of the paranoid/schizoid position and the depressive position whereas Klein postulated that the child progressed from the former to the latter.

3.3 Conceptualisation of the group

One of the major contributions Bion (1961) made to group theory was to conceptualise the group on two levels: the conscious group-as-a-whole oriented towards reality; and the unconscious group-as-a-whole, orientated towards the irrational. The work group and the basic assumption group co-exist as two mental states of the group. Lawrence (2000) refers to the group as having “two configurations of mental activity, present at one and the same time” (p. 93). The group-as-a-whole oscillates between the work group and the basic assumption group.

3.3.1 Work group

The work group, apart from being orientated towards reality and operating mainly on a conscious level, is actively involved in pursuing the task of the group, which is the reason for their being together. Bion (1961) stated that:

Every group, however casual, meets to ‘do’ something; in this activity, according to the capacities of the individuals, they co-operate. Since this activity is geared to a task, it is related to reality, its methods are rational, and, therefore, in however embryonic a form, scientific (p. 143).

In the work group, the members assume a role in the group that contributes to the task. Earlier mention was made of Bion’s (1961) comment during the first Northfield experiment that “the unit was meant to tackle its job with scientific seriousness” (p. 19). This scientific seriousness reflects the attitude of the work

group. Lawrence (2003) comments on the experience of the work group as “They probe realities in a scientific way by hypothesis testing and are aware of the processes that will further learning and development” (p. 95). In the work group critical thinking is demonstrated, including a capacity to reflect.

3.3.2 Basic assumption group

The basic assumption group, in contrast with the work group, does not pursue the task of the group but rather the survival of the group. This is evident in Bion’s (1961) statement that in the basic assumption group “the basic assumption is that people come together as a group for purposes of preserving the group” (Bion, 1961, p.63). Survival of the group becomes the primary driver and not the task of the group. The basic assumption is an unconscious, irrational assumption that the group is under threat and that it should be preserved. The basic assumption group is a mental state that displays distinctive patterns of behaviour. These patterns of behaviour develop on the basis of a common myth or what Sutherland (1985) refers to as “magical fantasies”. The myth directs the behaviour in the group. Bion (1961) identified three basic assumption states which will be discussed later.

It can be argued that a group in a basic assumption state is implementing a survival strategy. But why does it feel compelled to do so; what is the threat to its survival? The threat seems to originate from inside rather than outside the group. In this regard Stokes (1994) states that “...in basic assumption mentality, the group’s behaviour is directed at attempting to meet the unconscious needs of its members by reducing anxiety and internal conflicts”. Bion (1961) also makes mention of the anxiety stating that “the group is compelled, whenever the pressure of anxiety becomes too great, to take defensive action” (p. 163). Again the question can be asked, what is the source of the anxiety and why is there the internal conflict? Answers to these questions will provide some reasons why the group feels compelled to preserve the group. There are two main answers to this

question and they will be discussed in the sections that follow. The first is to be found in the individual or group member, and the second in the nature of the group, based on the way it was structured and lead by Bion.

3.3.2.1 *Individual ambivalence towards group*

The individual is a source of anxiety even before the group assembles. Prior to joining the group the individual member has at least an ambivalent, mainly unconscious, feeling towards the group. Bion (1961) locates this ambivalence deep in the personality, stating that “the individual is a group animal at war, not simply with the group, but with himself for being a group animal and with those aspects of his personality that constitute his ‘groupishness’” (p. 131). The individual is, thus, both in conflict with himself and with the group. On the one hand, he is “object seeking” and desires to establish relational ties, but, on the other hand, he fears the group and also desires to be individually distinct from the group. In a later formulation, Nitsun (1996) ascribes the inner conflict to a clash between the individual desire to be special, wanting individual treatment, but unable to receive this treatment, and, therefore, feeling forced to join a group. This was most certainly the case when Bion worked with groups in the period after World War II. The historical context dictated that, owing to mainly financial constraints, patients could not be treated individually and were “forced” to receive treatment in groups.

Bion (1961), furthermore, suggests that individuals have the natural capacity to create – with others – the mental state of the basic assumption group. The individual, according to him, possesses “valency” – a term he borrowed from physicists to express a capacity for instantaneous involuntary combination (p. 116). An individual can have a high or low valency for a particular basic assumption state. In this regard, Hopper (2003a) states that “Bion argued that as a consequence of ubiquitous processes of projective identification patterns of ‘valence’ arise, based on the attraction that particular basic assumption

processes and their roles hold for people with certain kinds of personality” (p. 201). An individual in the group can, therefore, become the leader of the basic assumption group owing to his valency for the roles and processes associated with that basic assumption. Hopper (2003a), however, emphasizes that it is a function of the particular personality of the individual and not an indication of pathology in the individual.

3.3.2.2 *Unique structuring of the group*

A second explanation for the anxiety and conflict in the group is that it is a consequence of the way in which the groups were structured and lead by Bion. In the first paragraph of “Experiences in Groups” (1961), he contrasted two possible meanings of “group therapy”. On the one hand, it can be interpreted as a number of individuals assembled in a group for treatment, and, on the other hand, it can be interpreted as “therapy of groups” (p.11). Bion opted for the latter.

The group became Bion’s focus of attention as opposed to the individuals in the group. His view about the treatment of the group was the radical opposite of the “doctor/patient” model where the doctor takes responsibility for the treatment of the group. In his view, the group had to take responsibility for “treatment”. His approach was, however, in conflict with the expectations of the group members. That he was quite aware of the tension created by his approach is evident from his reflections on groups that he conducted. He stated that, “the group always makes it clear that they expect me to act with authority as the leader of the group, and this responsibility I accept, though not in the way the group expect” (p.82). His approach to groups and leadership in groups was evident, even before he actively started working with groups, in the ‘leaderless group project’ during World War II (described earlier) and also in the Northfield experiment.

Torres (2003) refers to Bion’s approach to leading groups as “suspension of leadership” (p.92), one in which he does not abdicate his responsibilities (as

confirmed in his own statement) but as an approach through which he gives the responsibility for development to the group. He resists the temptation and the pressure from the group to become the “doctor” and they the patients. The dilemma is that the group members are familiar with the doctor/patient approach but unfamiliar with Bion’s approach. They, therefore, experience his leadership not as a different kind of leadership but as the absence of leadership.

Bion (1961) was aware not only of the effect of his approach but he would at times even acknowledge the group’s struggle to come to terms with his approach. “I point out that it is hard for the group to admit that this could be my way of taking groups, or even that I should be allowed to take them in such a way” (p. 30). His awareness of the tension did, however, not alter his conviction that his approach was justified and should be maintained.

On a technical level, he prioritized the group over the individual, and he was quite unyielding in this position. “In short, I shall insist that I am quite justified in saying that the group feels such and such when, in fact, perhaps only one or two people would seem to provide by their behaviour warrant for such a statement” (Bion, 1961, p.58). Conceptually the group is the focus of attention and interventions are aimed at this level. The tension created by Bion’s approach of not meeting the expectations of the group is now compounded by the fact that Bion did not respond to individuals in the group (as would be expected in the doctor/patient model) but only group-as-a-whole comments and interpretations.

The way in which Bion conceptualized the group, and conducted it accordingly, undoubtedly contributed to anxiety in the group, thereby also contributing to creating the conditions for the basic assumption group to emerge.

3.3.3 Function and effect of the basic assumption group

A second question that can be posed is, once the work group has been replaced by the basic assumption group, does the basic assumption group achieve its aim of reducing anxiety and lessening conflict? The answer is “yes” in the short term, but “no” in the long term.

In the short term, the basic assumption group has a relational effect of forming emotional ties between members in the group and creating a common sense of purpose, both of which reduce the anxiety and conflict. Klein, Bernard and Singer (1992) describe the effect on relationships saying that, “Where the task group promotes anxiety, basic assumption life enables participants to limit their feelings of isolation” (p. 91). The relational effect that is created is a feeling of unity or emotional oneness. As stated earlier, the basic assumption group is an emotional reaction, and it, therefore, creates emotional links. Rice (1992) goes a step further and equates this unifying effect with the undifferentiated bonding between mother and child, “Just as with the mother infant relationship, the early process of undifferentiated bonding in the group enables the members to cope with the ‘object anxiety’ generated by meeting strangers, permits attachments to be made and allows for the development of a boundary that clearly distinguishes those who belong from those who do not” (p.39).

With regards to the aim of the group, Lawrence (1979) suggests that another unifying effect is the common purpose the group experiences. He (1979) states that the group creates a myth (basic assumption) and “it is this shared myth, usually unspoken, which holds the group together” (p. 9). It, therefore, has an important integrating function and unifying effect in the group.

The unification, however, comes at a cost. On the one hand, the basic assumption group unites the group members, but, on the other hand, members lose their individuality. Bion (1961) is also very explicit about the second point,

“Individual distinctiveness is no part of life in a group acting on the basic assumptions” (p.136). Sutherland (1985) draws attention to this dual effect stating that, “Once elicited, these patterns or basic assumptions bond the individuals together to give security by preserving the group as a unity and by seeking a course of action for it is governed largely by magical fantasies. These patterns remove the individual's distinctiveness”(p. 61).

In the short term, the basic assumption group seems to be quite effective in reducing and containing the anxiety and inner tension, but, in the long term, it cannot resolve the tension. Bion (1961) postulated that in the basic assumption state “the group was reacting emotionally to one of three basic assumptions” (p. 165). In general emotions are not enduring and can easily fluctuate; a feeling of unity can easily be replaced by another feeling in the opposite direction. Furthermore, the emotional reaction is based on a myth and a myth cannot solve a problem in reality. It, therefore, alleviates the initial anxiety only temporarily by providing a temporary solution. Bion (1961) was quite emphatic about this point when he stated that, “I do not consider that any of them in practice provides any lasting solution” (p. 130).

Instead of resolving the anxiety and tension, the basic assumption state now becomes a secondary source of anxiety. The basic assumption state leads to regression in the group which releases renewed anxiety in the group. Bion says that “investigation (of the basic assumption group) discloses that the elements in the emotional situation are so closely allied to phantasies of the earlier anxieties that the group is compelled, whenever the pressure of anxiety becomes too great, to take defensive action” (p. 163). He refers to this kind of anxiety as “psychotic anxiety” (p.163). The group is now compelled to replace the one basic assumption group with another. The basic assumption group now emerges as “a formation secondary to an extremely early primal scene worked out on a level of part objects, and associated with psychotic anxiety and mechanisms of splitting and projective identification such as Melanie Klein has described as

characteristics of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions” (Bion, 1961, p. 164).

3.3.4 Common characteristics of basic assumption groups

Bion (1961) identified three different basic assumption groups. The main difference among the states is that each basic assumption group has a unique defensive pattern. The basic assumption groups, however, also share some common characteristics.

One of the shared characteristics of the basic assumption groups is that they are essentially leader centred in group dynamics. Bion (1961) commented on this aspect by stating that, “All basic assumptions include the existence of a leader, although in the paring group, as I have said, the leader is ‘non-existent’ i.e. unborn” (p. 155). Earlier the argument was made that groups experience Bion’s approach to leadership as an absence of leadership. In the basic assumption groups the pattern of the dynamics is centred on leadership and is directed at an attempt to create a leader. Yalom (1995) is in accord with this notion by stating that “each type of group searches for a leader – one who will meet its needs” (p. 185).

A second common characteristic is that group members appear to lose their critical functioning. Although the group can appear to be pursuing a goal or task, the mental activity does not demonstrate a critical functioning. In this regard, Bion (1961) commented that, “Anyone unaccustomed to this kind of group would be surprised to find how long a group of supposedly intelligent people can go on talking round this very limited field as if the discussion were emotionally satisfying” (p. 63).

In the basic assumption group, furthermore, no development takes place, and there is also no wish for development. In Bion’s (1961) own words, “The second

characteristic, which I mentioned earlier, is the absence of any process of development as part of the basic assumption mentality; stimuli to development meet with hostile responses” (p. 159). He then goes on to say that, “For, if a group wishes to prevent development, the simplest way to do so is to allow itself to be overwhelmed by basic-assumption mentality and thus become approximated to the one kind of mental life in which a capacity for development is not required” (Bion, 1961, p. 159). In the basic assumption group there is not only an absence of critical functioning but also an active resistance to critical function that can lead to development.

Another common characteristic is a lack of awareness of time. An awareness of time in a group is most often related to the occupation of the group, or, to put it differently, a group that is engaged with the task of the group is also aware of how much time it has to accomplish the task. On the other hand, if the task of the group is to preserve the group, as would be the case with the basic assumption group, there is no need to be aware of time, and, if there is an attempt to create an awareness of time, it could be met with a hostile response. Bion’s (1961) statement on this matter is, “Time plays no part in it; it is a dimension of mental function that is not recognized; consequently all activities that require an awareness of time are imperfectly comprehended and tend to arouse feelings of persecution” (p.158).

3.3.5 Graphical display of the work group and the basic assumption group

The purpose of the graphical display is to highlight boundaries in the work group and the basic assumption group. The three main elements of Bion’s (1961) conceptualization of the group, the individual, the group and the group leader, should always be seen in relation to one another. In the work group, the individual members are distinct and have taken up their member role in the group. The mental activity is “scientific in nature”, i.e. demonstrating,

hypothesizing, critical thinking, capacity to reflect, etc. In the work group, the group boundary is well established, giving members a clear sense of inside versus outside. Members in the group are recognizable as individuals. In the basic assumption group, on the other hand, there is a state of fusion or “undifferentiated bonding”, and, therefore, there is a loss of individual distinctiveness. The group appears to be bounded.

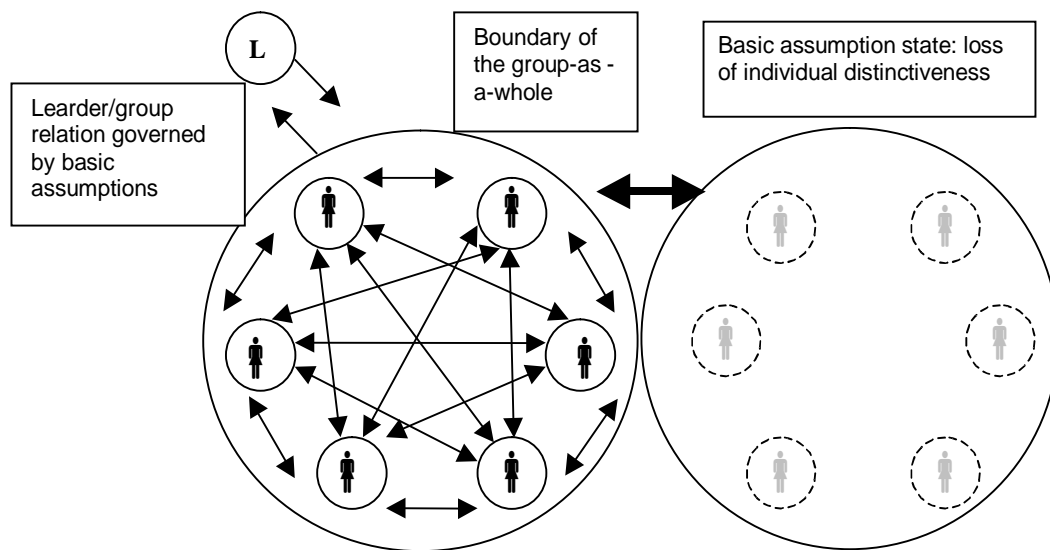


Figure 3.1. Elements and boundaries of the group-as-a-whole framework

The group oscillates between the work group on the left and the basic assumption group on the right. Adapted from Pines and Schlapobersky, 2000, p. 1448.

The boundary is of a temporary nature because it is constructed through emotional activity in the group which is based on unconscious fantasies. A threat to the mental activity (basic assumption state) will, therefore, also be experienced as a threat to the boundary of the group, which will be experienced as a fear of disintegration.

3.4 Development in the group

With regards to development, a distinction is made between group development and individual development. In the sections that follow, a description is given, firstly, of how development in the group-as-a-whole takes place, and, secondly, how individuals in the group develop. After that, the role of the concept of container/contained in development is discussed.

3.4.1 Development of the Group-as-a-whole

Bion (1961) suggested that the group does not progress through stages of development but rather oscillates between the basic assumption group and the work group. During any time in the life of the group it can enter a basic assumption state only to re-emerge later. As described earlier, the basic assumption state never provides a lasting solution, and it has to be replaced by another solution. According to Bion (1961), a group can go through several basic assumption states in an hour but can also stay in one state for months.

He did not provide a clear reason for why, or under what conditions, the group would progress from the basic assumption group to the work group. What seems to have been his guiding principle is his belief in his method combined with the belief in the group. Sutherland (1985) commented on his method saying that, "What characterized Bion's method of work is his waiting for development to occur spontaneously no matter what the pressure on him 'to help'" (p. 77) Bion's "waiting" was, however, based on the belief that the group would, in the end, take responsibility for itself. His (1961) opinion was that, "one of the striking things about a group is that, despite the influence of the basic assumptions, it is the work group that triumphs in the long run" (Bion, p.135).

In later theoretical developments, theorists such as Schermer (1985) and Gibbard, Hartman, and Mann (1974) postulated that the group has the capacity

to grow and develop and not just oscillate between the basic assumption states and the work group. In particular, they refer to role development and assignment that propel the group to change its boundary conditions so that the basic assumption states are modified and the group functions on a higher level. Although Bion (1961) did not believe that the group develops, he did suggest that there could be different degrees of disturbance in the basic assumption groups. “The more disturbed the group, the more easily discernible are these primitive fantasies and mechanisms; the more stable the group, the more it corresponds with Freud’s description of the group as a repetition of family group patterns and neurotic mechanisms” (p. 165). It is possible that progression from more to less disturbed could constitute development in the group.

3.4.2 Individual development in the group

With regards to individual development, Bion has been criticised about his limited view on individual development, and he seems to have suggested that when the individual takes up his role in the work group, individual development will inevitably follow. This interpretation of Bion is in accordance with Yalom’s (1995) view when he states that, “Bion’s therapeutic goal was to help members to become effective members of the work group” (p. 195). Brown (1985) takes the critique a step further by saying that Bion is not only not clear on individual development but also about the goal of a therapy group. He stated that, “In fact, as stated earlier, it is striking how Bion failed in his writing to state what work a psychotherapeutic group should do” (p. 210). Bion did, however, regard intellectual work in the work group as forming part of the therapeutic process.

Psychotherapeutic change is a development process requiring considerable time, and Bion mentioned, as evidence of intellectual work going on in spite of its covert nature, the fact that patients came back to his comments in later sessions. In other words, reflection on what is happening in the group with delayed assimilation is a necessary part of the individual’s ‘work’ activity (Sutherland, 1985, p. 81).

Regression played an important role in Bion's (1961) thinking about groups and also about the development of the group. He seems to suggest that regression is not only natural but also critical for development. Development of the group, and in the group, takes place essentially through a process of regression and transformation. Regression is both a part of the developmental life of the group and, simultaneously, an essential part of the individual's progress in the group. With regards to regression, Sutherland (1985) states that "for him (Bion) it was imperative that members should experience the primitive nature and power of these states, and to have contact with these layers of his personality contributes to a greater self-integration in that the boundaries of his self-understanding are thereby extended" (p. 77). For Bion regression was desirable in the group.

Not all theorists share Bion's ideas on regression in a group. Kauff (1993) quite emphatically states that "it is unquestionably true that the group does not foster such regression; indeed within the group context it is neither encouraged nor deemed necessary" (p. 11) The kind of regression that Kauff was referring to is prolonged and intense, which is encouraged in individual psychoanalysis. She also emphasized the fact that, for regression to be effective in the therapeutic process, it should be accompanied by emotional content. The difference between individual and group therapy is that, in individual therapy the emotional content is released through regression, whereas in the group, because of its intense emotional climate, regression is less critical.

3.4.3 Development through containing

The concept of container/contained is central to Bion's (1962/1984, 1963/1984) thinking on development. The container/contained was, however, not an explicit part of his original theorization on groups. He developed the idea only later in his theory of thinking. He developed the idea of container/containment, however, based on projective identification, which was a central concept in his theory on

groups. The concept of containing, is borrowed from object relations theory.

James (1994) states that containing:

refers essentially to the mother's capacity to receive, through projective identification, primitive elements of experiences (not of whole persons), and to make the 'contained' available for the infant to take them back in a modified form into its awareness, in order for it, the child, to be able to more understand its experience – modified, that is by the mother's functioning (pp. 66-67).

According to object relations theory, it is inevitable that the infant will be frustrated owing to its expectations not being met. The infant does not have the capacity to tolerate frustrations and these are split off and projected onto the mother. The mother acts as container, and, if the containment is adequate, the split off elements will be given back in such a way that they can be integrated. The mother acts as a container for the unwanted, split off elements of the infant. The healthy development of the infant is largely dependent on the ability of the mother to act as container (James, 1994). According to Billow (2003), container/contained is a complex model describing different processes. He emphasizes the developmental aspect in the mother/child relationship stating that, "by containing the infant's primitive affective and perceptual reactions, and interesting the infant in them, the receptive (m)other fosters the development of a normal part of the infant's personality that concerns itself with psychic quality" (p. 111).

Bion (1963/1984) applied the concept of containing/container inter-subjectively, i.e. to the mother/child, analyst/patient, group/member relationship as well as intra-subjectively i.e. internally through a thought that needs a thinker. He regarded containing as a process that affects both the container and the contained. In this regard he (1962/1984) stated that "as mother to infant, the container and contained are transformed in relationship to each other" (p.93). Once containment has taken place, it forms the basis for the next cycle.

Earlier reference has been made to Bion's (1961) statement that, in the group, "the adult resorts, in what may be a massive regression, to mechanisms described by Klein (1931, 1946) as typical of the earliest phases of mental life" (p. 141). To progress from this stage to the next requires containment, and, because Bion (1961) postulated that the group oscillates between different states, going back and forth, containment would, therefore, be a permanent concern in the dynamics of the group.

Containing is one of the ideas of Bion that has received substantial attention over the years, leading to expansion and different formulations. Ashbach and Schermer (1987) regard the group-becoming-a-container as an essential part of development in the group. They state that group development takes place, "via the formation of (1) a definitional boundary (the possibility of communication and conjoint action), (2) a 'spatial' container, and (3) an object" (p. 116). Initially the group space is empty and unsaturated, but it quickly becomes "filled" with the basic assumptions and thus becomes a container for mental content. Gradually the way in which the members perceive and experience the group changes to a point where the group is perceived as an object. The formation of an initial group boundary is a pre-requisite for the development of the group as container and object.

Symington and Symington (1996) postulate that these intra-subjective processes apply not only to thoughts but also to emotions. In the absence of a container or the inadequacy of the container there is, "pain which cannot be suffered, guilt which cannot be endured and regret which cannot be remembered" (p. 55). They also point out that the activity between the container and the contained is not always integrative but it can also be destructive. Instead of linking a pre-conception with a realization, "thoughts can increasingly become depleted of meaning" (p. 55). Bion (1970) proposes three types of relations between the container and the contained, it can either be commensal, symbiotic, or parasitic. In the commensal relationship, the emotional link between the container and the contained serves to "develop the individual's capacity to invent language forms

which then aid emotional development” (Symington and Symington, 1996, p. 56). In the parasitic relationship, both the container and the contained are destroyed, in contrast to the symbiotic relationship where the container and contained are mutually beneficial. The authors provide an example where a row between a therapist and patient leads to an angry silence – exemplifying a parasitic link when emotions destroyed the speech and the link produced angry silence – and, later on, when the incident was discussed with mutual understanding, it exemplified a symbiotic link. They come to the conclusion that “a row can be constructive if, through thoughtfulness, it leads to evolution in emotional communication” (p.57).

Smith and Berg (1987) draw attention to the ambivalence and paradoxes of boundaries in groups, and they then extend the argument to the concept of containing. The paradox of boundaries in groups is that boundaries make it possible for groups to take action, but, at the same time, they limit the action of groups. A boundary is also an essential feature of a container. If boundaries are paradoxical, it implies that the containment is also paradoxical. These paradoxical qualities of boundaries and the container become evident in the basic assumption groups. Earlier mention was made of basic assumption groups as being defensive patterns of actions against anxiety. Once in a basic assumption state, the group feels bounded, or what Rice (1992) refers to as being in a state of “undifferentiated bonding which...allows for the development of a boundary that clearly distinguishes those who belong from those who do not” (p.39). This, however, leads to “a formation secondary to an extremely early primal scene worked out on a level of part objects, and associated with psychotic anxiety and mechanisms of splitting and projective identification” (Bion, 1961, p. 164). On the one hand, the group contains the anxiety, but, on the other hand, because it is contained it stimulates further anxiety. The very boundary that contains also contributes to the anxiety. Smith and Berg (1987) come to the conclusion that, “in its role as container, the boundary is both the life and the death of the group. It is the essential precondition for a collection of individuals to

have a life together as a group; at the same time, poorly defined, it can be the vehicle for a group's demise" (p. 107).

3.5 Patterns of the basic assumption groups

The basic assumption group is indicative not only of the mental state of a group but also of a distinctive pattern of behaviour in the group. The appeal of Bion's theory lies to a large extent in his description of the distinctive patterns of the different basic assumption groups. In this regard, Pines (1985) comments that, "Bion gives to therapists the sense of safety that comes from recognizing that group phenomena follow definite patterns. If the therapist can recognize these patterns, he or she will be able to release the group members from their anxieties and resistances and enable the work of the group to progress" (p. xi).

In this section, a description of these patterns is given with specific emphasis on how they impact on boundaries in the group. The graphical displays highlight the boundaries in focus and movement around those boundaries when a specific pattern unfolds in the group.

Pines and Schlapobersky (2000) created an awareness of the dynamic interplay between the structure, process, and content in groups. Each of the elements has a determining influence on the other. To these elements a pattern could be added. A pattern can be described as a consistent or a repetitive dynamic interaction between different elements of a structure. The emerging communication pattern in the group is a function of the structure, process and content. The inter-link is displayed in Figure 3.2.

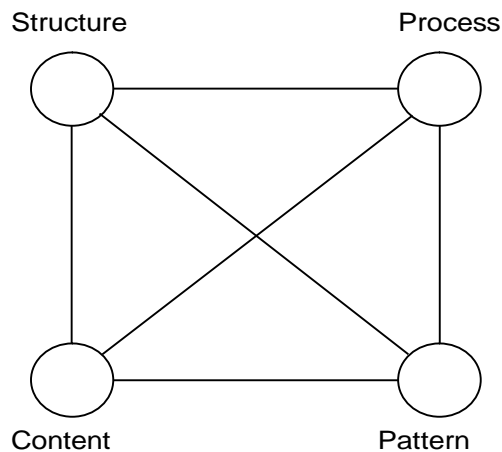


Figure 3.2. Dynamic elements of a group. Adapted from Pines and Schlapobersky (2000, p. 1447).

In the following subsections, the interplay between the structure and the patterns, as postulated by Bion, will be described. Within the structure and the patterns, the group unconscious processes and the group-leader relationship will be highlighted.

The patterns that develop in the basic assumption groups are based on basic assumptions of how the group should be preserved. Sutherland (1985) states that, “Once elicited, these patterns or basic assumptions bond the individuals together to give security by preserving the group as a unity and by seeking a course of action for it is governed largely by magical phantasies.” (p. 61). The basic assumption is, therefore, revealed in the actions of the group.

Bion (1961) identified three basic assumptions: the basic assumption dependence (ba D); the basic assumption pairing (ba P); and the basic assumption fight/flight (ba F). The dependency group holds the unconscious fantasy that the leader will rescue it. Omnipotent powers are being ascribed to

the leader, and the members, in contrast, feel helpless. The mood in the fight/flight group is one of paranoia, and it is this feeling that holds the group together. With the pairing group, the members have the hope that two members will be paired to bring forth a messiah. Stokes (1994) noted that the cultures in the three basic assumption groups are quite different from one another. In the dependency group, the culture is one of subordination, in the fight/flight group the culture tends towards paranoia and the pairing group gives rise to a culture of collusion.

The different basic assumption groups and accompanying patterns of behaviour are illustrated below. In the illustrations the boundaries in focus in the different basic assumption groups are indicated. The arrows illustrate the common defensive pattern operative in the group. In identifying these patterns the leader can identify the basic assumption and accompanying unconscious reality of the group.

1. Basic assumption dependence: The dependency group holds the unconscious fantasy that the leader will come to their rescue.

The illustration shows that the communication pattern is directed at the leader whilst he/she feels pressurised to rescue or help the group. The leader will recognise this pattern not only through the content of the communication but, more so, by the pressure exerts on him by the group to become the leader they want him to be. Through the process, a group boundary is established that gives the group a feeling of security and alleviates the anxiety in the group.

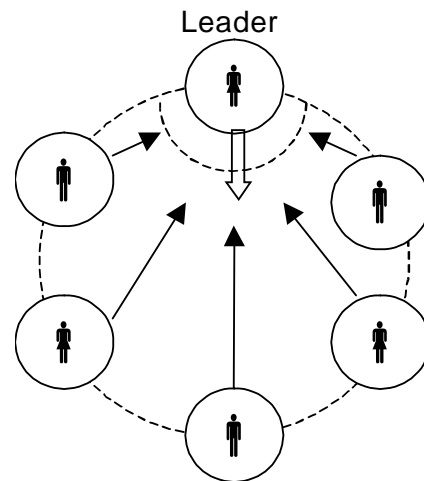


Figure 3.3. Basic assumption dependence

2. Basic assumption fight/flight: The mood in the fight/flight group is one of paranoia, and it is this shared feeling that holds the group together despite internal and interpersonal tension and conflict.

In the fight/flight group the group cannot tolerate any opposition to the “ideology” of the group. This could lead to an attack on an individual, the leader, or subgroup if

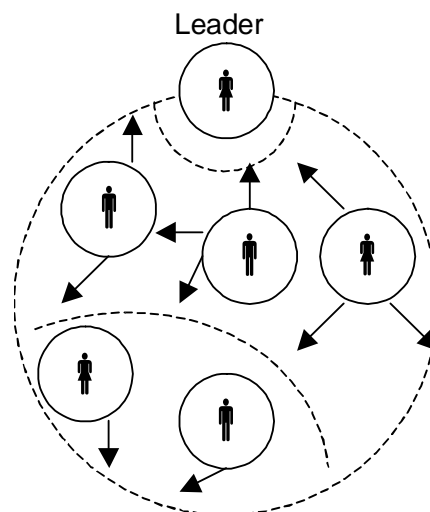


Figure 3.4. Basic assumption fight/flight

any are perceived not to be in support of the group ideology. The most common feature in this group is the infighting. The environment is seen as dangerous, and the members have to agree on this. The concern is with the outer boundary of the group. The main mechanism used is projection among the members of the group. In all three basic assumption groups, there is little evidence of self-reflection and insight.

3. Basic assumption pairing: With the pairing group, the members have the hope that two members will be paired to bring forth a solution or someone that will save the group. The basic assumption in the group is that the group comes together for the “purpose of preserving the group” (Bion, 1961, p. 63).

The focus of the group is on two of the members, and the group lives in the hope that these two members will rescue them from the uncomfortable position and the anxiety in the group.

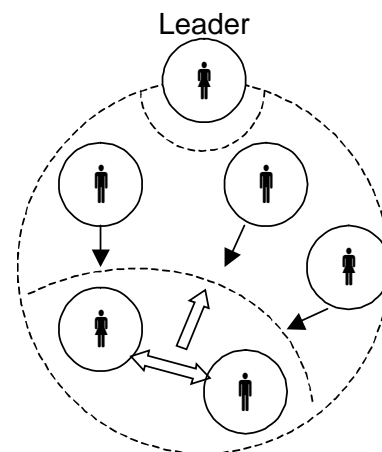


Figure 3.5. Basic assumption pairing

Although different patterns can be identified, as described above, the commonalities between the basic assumption groups are of greater significance than the differences. Bion

(1961) even made the comment that, “They appear, furthermore, to have some common link, or, perhaps, even to be different aspects of each other” (p. 189). Common to all of the basic assumption states is the link to the primal scene and the defensive actions that the group is compelled to take. In this regard, Bion (1961) stated that the basic assumption groups are reactions to primitive phenomena that are linked to “early primal scene worked out on a level of part objects and associated with psychotic anxiety and mechanisms of splitting and projective identification” (p. 163).

The basic assumption states are distinct boundary structures (as displayed in the above diagrams), created, both as a consequence of and as a container for, the mental activity in the group. The effect of the basic assumption state boundary structure is, however, never adequate, specifically in the sense that it does not create conditions for the emotional content to be resolved or to be saturated.

3.5.1 Subsequent conceptualizations of basic assumption groups

Over the years, the basic assumption groups, as described by Bion (1961), have been revisited often, and new formulations have also been made. Bion identified only the three basic assumption groups described above. Turquet (1975) applied the concept to large groups and identified a fourth state, the basic assumption Oneness/Fusion (ba O), where oneness is promoted and any form of individual difference is denied. The boundary structure of this state corresponds to the other basic assumption states where individual boundaries are denied and the group boundary only is acknowledged. The basic assumption Oneness state is, according to Turquet (1975), more applicable to large groups.

Hopper (2003b) also identified a fourth basic assumption state, viz. Incohesion: Aggregation/Massification or (ba I:A/M).

An aggregate is characterized by a minimum attraction between three or more people. In contrast, a mass is characterized by a maximal degree of mutual attraction and involvement among three or more people... who share the illusion of solidarity with respect to beliefs, norms and values, usually for a brief period of time (p. 67).

In the basic assumption I:M group there is a complete collapse of boundaries among individuals and the group becomes a single mass without individual distinctiveness. Hopper (2003) used a metaphor of candles that have been melted together “becoming a mass of hot wax” (p. 213). The basic assumption

I:A group is the opposite pole of massification - boundaries between individuals are rigid and members do not listen to, or communicate with, one another. In both cases there is essentially a collapse of the dialectical relationship between the individual and the group. The basic assumption Incohesion:

Aggregation/Massification or (ba I:A/M) is specifically applicable to groups that have been exposed to traumatic experiences. These traumatic experiences are not once-off events but rather the cumulative effect of experiences that occurred over a period of time and which have become part of the social unconscious.

Lawrence, Bain and Gould (1996) proposed a fifth basic assumption which is in opposition to Turquet's basic assumption Oneness/Fusion. They argue that group members could have a desire to be separate from the group, not wanting to become part of the "we" in the group. They referred to this temporary transitional state as Me-ness (ba M) and speculate that the need to be separate is embedded in the Western industrialized society which does not acknowledge the individual adequately. In the basic assumption Me-ness group individuals would be polite to one another but with little emotional contact. The boundary implications are that both the group and the individual would appear to be "bounded". This is in contrast to the other basic assumption groups where the individual loses individual distinctiveness.

3.6 Application of group-as-a-whole framework

3.6.1 Tavistock Institute and AKRI

Over the years, the Tavistock Institute has been the main "vehicle" for the implementation and expansion of Bion's ideas on groups. Fraher (2004) provides an insightful account of the organizations that worked with and studied groups, including the National Training Laboratories (NTL), the Tavistock Institute, and the AK Rice Institute (AKRI). One common denominator amongst these organizations is that they all used experiences in the group as a reference point

for learning through, and about, groups. The differences between the NTL and the Tavistock Institute are that the NTL focuses on the individual in the group and observable behaviour as opposed to the Tavistock Institute that focuses on the group and unconscious processes. As this chapter centres on the group-as-a-whole framework reference will be made only to Tavistock and AKRI.

Initially, the Tavistock clinic was established between World War I and World War II to deliver a mental health service. After World War II, based on the recommendations of a committee of which Bion was the chairman, the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations was established as a separate unit “for the study of wider social problems not currently seen as within the purview of the mental health profession” (Fraher, 2004, p. 63). Under the auspices of the Tavistock Institute the first conference for the study of interpersonal and intergroup relations was held in 1957 at Leicester University. These conferences later became known as the Leicester conferences. Initially these conferences did not follow a specific format or model. It was only under the leadership of Rice that a model that is still being used today for these yearly conferences was established in the 1960s. Bion did not actively take part in the development and establishment of these conferences. The design was, however, based on his ideas and conceptualization of groups. The Tavistock/Leicester model can, therefore, be regarded as having been “founded on the theory of Bion” (Lawrence, 1979) but “designed” by Rice (Fraher, 2004).

As an organization, the Tavistock Institute has been through many internal struggles and organizational restructuring processes, but the Tavistock/Leicester conferences in their current format have remained basically the same since 1960. At the time of the publication of Fraher’s historical account in 2004, the Tavistock Institute was once again revisiting its strategy and goals. It should be noted that the Tavistock Institute does not represent only one, specific framework and approach to groups. Nor does it refer to a fixed set of ideas. According to the tradition of Tavistock the framework is a living one, being constantly revised and

adapted. Obholzer and Roberts (1994) commented in this regard that, "...they often have the idea that there is a 'Tavistock framework'. To a large extent, this is a myth" (p. 9). For a start, Tavistock consists of several different divisions that are fairly independent from one another. Furthermore, rather than having one underlying theory, Tavistock draws from and combines central concepts from psychoanalytic theory, open systems theory, and contributions from human relations training. Lawrence (1979), however, emphasised the fact that the Tavistock framework is closely related to Bion's ideas. "Of these (books and pamphlets) W.R. Bion's *Experiences in Groups* (1961) stands preeminent because it elaborates the working hypotheses and methodology on which this (Tavistock) framework is founded" (p. 5). The Tavistock/Leicester model was "exported" to America during the 1960s by Rice. He directed a number of conferences in America which lead to the founding of the AK Rice Institute (Fraher, 2004).

Boundaries play a very important role in the Tavistock/Leicester model. Structural boundaries, such as membership, time, and role boundaries, are strictly managed; for example, the sessions would start and finish exactly on the allocated time. Boundaries are also emphasised as a working construct.

As a working construct, explicit reference has been made over the years to exploring boundaries as part of the working procedure. Lawrence (1979) quotes one of the earlier conference brochures which reads:

The Institution affords opportunities for examining the nature and meaning of such boundaries, including experience of the member – staff boundaries in a variety of settings. Within this framework, members may also explore such related boundaries as those between the individual's inner and outer worlds, person and role, individual and group, leader and followers, group and institution, institution and environment. In this context authority is vested in and accepted by individuals and groups to manage transactions across these boundaries (p. 15).

The Tavistock Institute (2008) invitation to the Leicester conference also makes reference to boundaries explicitly:

The next Leicester conference invites you to find out about the different boundaries with which we engage in our daily professional encounters, including the boundary relationship between mind and body, yourself and your colleagues, colleagues and the environment, the creative potential within these relationships and your capacity to transform organizational life into a meaningful experience of citizenship in this world (The Tavistock Institute, 2008).

During the Leicester conferences, boundaries that are emphasised in the theoretical framework, such as group-as-a-whole and the group-leader boundary are specifically explored. The application and exploration seem to be guided by, and, therefore, also limited by, the theoretical framework.

The importance attached to boundaries in the Tavistock/Leicester model is highlighted by Fraher's (2004) account of two boundary incidences during conferences. The first occurred in 1969 in America when Rice, who was the director of the conference, consulted with a group outside of the working session boundaries. This sparked intense reaction from the staff members. Gould (2000) recalled the staff members struggling with questions such as "And how about the impact on the rest of the conference membership? And didn't this violate everything that he taught us about primary task and boundaries, and sticking to them? And wouldn't doing this destroy the conference" (p. 45).

A second incident, which had far-reaching negative implications, occurred in 1990 at an AKRI conference. The conference director admitted to speaking to someone outside the conference and injecting that information into the conference. Carr (in a personal conversation with Fraher) related that "the conference, in my judgment, began to get out of hand ... as the outer boundary was being broken quite regularly, the inner boundary became 'un-holdable'".

because people can't hold the inner boundary unless the outer boundary remains utterly secure" (Fraher, 2004, p. 146).

In both of these accounts the central role of boundaries in the conceptualisation the group as well as in the conducting of the group are highlighted.

3.6.2 Application in a therapeutic environment

The group-as-a-whole conceptual structure did not originate from, nor was it originally applied in, therapeutic groups. Sutherland (1985) states that "None of Bion's Tavistock colleagues who engaged in group therapy, in contrast with those concerned with group dynamics, adhered to his view about the sole use of the latter in his work" (p. 83). Bion started developing his ideas about groups when he was part of the war office selection board during World War II. Later he applied group principles in an attempt to establish a therapeutic community in the rehabilitation unit of the Northfield hospital as described earlier in the chapter. After the end of the war, Bion worked with groups for a few years at the Tavistock clinic (Bion, 1961). At the clinic Bion worked not only with therapeutic groups, but with all kinds of groups and with different intent – a fact confirmed by Trist (1985) who was a colleague of Bion during this period.

Bion's framework (exclusively group-as-whole) is currently not regularly applied in a therapeutic context. The often-cited study by Malan, Balfour, Hood and Shooter (1976), which found that the framework is associated with poor outcome in therapy groups, could be one of the main reasons why it is not used regularly for therapeutic purposes. It did, however, make very valuable contributions to the conceptualisation of the group and group processes in a therapeutic setting.

Sutherland (1985) made the observation that it was because Bion did not work specifically and extensively with therapeutic groups that he developed a framework which is not specifically applicable for therapy groups. "I never heard

Bion discuss Foulkes, and I do not think he knew much about his work because he had left groups by the time Foulkes was publishing his accounts of it. Foulkes was convinced that the total group interactions had to be used in therapy, and I believe that Bion, had he done more group therapeutic work, would have accepted that position” (p. 83).

3.6.3 Training and consulting applications

In the Tavistock Institute, the framework is currently used as a framework for training, such as during the Leicester conferences. It is also well suited for consulting, including the exploration of intergroup and other relations, as well as issues of authority and leadership in an organisational and social context (Lawrence, 2000). The framework has stood the test of time in the Leicester conferences, and, therefore, it seems to be well suited for training in group dynamics. Yalom’s (1995) comment on its suitability for training: “The Tavistock method is probably the single most effective method for training group psychotherapists in group process observation, but it does not appear to be an effective style for group psychotherapy” (p. 52).

Apart from being applied in training groups, the framework is being extensively used in consulting, for example by Biran (2003), who uses it in an organizational setting, and Lawrence (2000, 2003) who applies it in an organizational as well as socio-political context.

3.7 Synopsis of structure and dynamics

In the table that follows a summary is given of the main elements of the conceptual structure and the associated dynamics.

	Conceptual structure of a group	Historical roots of structure	Group dynamics including defences	Development of the group
Bion Group-as-a-whole	Three main elements: Group-as-whole, member and leader Two levels of group: Overt work group & covert basic assumption group	Bion's personal history Psychoanalysis Object relations	Defensive patterns associated with basic assumption states to contain anxiety	Regression and transformation through group as object and container Personal development takes place in work group

3.8 Some limitations of the group-as-a-whole framework

3.8.1 Theoretical limitations

Bion's theory on groups was formulated more than half a century ago. Despite this, it is still regarded as valid and applicable. Hopper (2003b) argues that:

The theory has stood the test of time: we are still talking about it, and although we play with the phrase 'beyond Bion', few of us have been able to get there. Rarely have we been able to identify and to explain so many diverse phenomena on the basis of so few concepts and positions (p. 37).

A glance through the indices and glossaries of current publications on groups reveals that the ideas of Bion still permeate current thinking on groups. This point is emphasised by the first point in Hopper's statement. The second point is also true; Bion did manage to explain a plethora of phenomena with a relatively simple conceptual structure.

The question can, however, be raised as to whether the conceptual structure is not an oversimplification of a group and, therefore, limiting the possible dynamics that can be perceived? A second concern also is that, despite Bion's observational and conceptual brilliance, the fact that he had such a fixed idea on the structure of the group could have limited him in "seeing" group dynamics beyond his frame. Brown (1985) argues that Bion's affinity to, and influence by, Klein, "with whom he went into analysis in 1945 and would have been in analysis with her when he was taking groups at Tavistock" (Symington and Symington, 1996, p. 136), could have limited him in his conceptualisation of the group. According to Brown, "it remains true that most Kleinian analysts tend to view man's social existence through eyes which do not look beyond the crib" (p. 199). He postulates that it is then possible that Bion described only the beginning of group development and that his conceptual framework is not equally applicable during later stages of the group.

Another criticism of Bion's theory centres on regression in the group and the loss of individual distinctiveness. Scheidlinger (1982) is critical of Bion's idea on regression from a psychoanalytical perspective:

In touching on the idea of the loss of individual identity involved in group belonging, Bion links this automatically to "psychotic" depersonalization. It is as though he does not recognize ego functions as intervening between the emerging impulsive derivatives and actual behavior (p 45).

It is as if there is no in-between state. The individual has either lost his individuality in the basic assumption state group or he/she is a distinct individual in the work group. Although Bion's theory is based on psychodynamic principles he did not make provision adequately for ego functioning.

3.8.1.1 *Restricted role of group leader*

Most of the critique of the theory of Bion is directed at his approach to leadership. Yalom (1995) found the role that he assigned to the leader limiting. "My objection

to the Tavistock approach has always been based upon the limited role of the group leader. Bion prescribed a role that was entirely limited to interpretation - an impersonal mass group interpretation at that.” (p. 195). Brown’s (1985) criticism of Bion is based not only on the level of interpretation but also on the content of the interpretations. “Bion seems to imply that when the group is told when it is not working, it will know how to and get on with it” (p. 200). What Brown is referring to here is that Bion would stop short of giving members a reason for the interpretation. This hampers understanding from the side of the group members. It should be added that this is a unique method of Bion and not necessarily of all other exponents of the Tavistock tradition.

Sutherland (1985) makes an interesting observation about Bion’s position on the group leader:

Bion was an extremely caring person and so one is left wondering whether he was in part fascinated by the assumption behaviour to the neglect of how much help from the leader the egos of the members required to be re-asserted for the learning task. The assumption made about the leader’s role is that the group will by itself progressively learn to tackle the reality of the task through the leader pointing out what it is doing (pp. 77-79).

Bion’s fixation on the group-as-a-whole structure could have left him oblivious of some other dynamics that were not linked to his conceptual structure.

There are others, such as Piper (1995), who make a case for the group-as-a-whole interpretations, arguing that these interpretations: (1) highlight the commonalties amongst members; (2) frequently link with individual interpretations; and (3) enhance receptivity.

Most group practitioners would agree with him. The problem is not with group-as-a-whole interventions but with an overemphasis on, or exclusive use of, group-as-a-whole interventions.

3.8.2 Limitations in application

Malan et al. (1976) and Yalom (1995) are critical of the exclusively group-as-a-whole conceptualisation and the implications thereof for the outcome of group interventions. The effectiveness of the conceptual structure and consequent implications for interventions has been questioned. The critique is not so much on the validity of the conceptualization of the group but more on the application in practice. In this regard, Brown (1985) states that, “few of us have not been to him (Bion) for helping us to understand something of why our institutions and committees get stuck” (p. 192) but, “we rarely speak about basic assumption states or use them as guides in our work” (p. 193). Alford (1995) argues that group leaders may rigidly adhere to a group-as-a-whole perspective in practice as a defence against a chaotic and fragmenting experience. Malan et al. (1976) claim to have shown that the exclusive group-as-a-whole framework is not effective as a therapeutic framework. This is not to say that it cannot be applied with great effectiveness in other contexts. It provides, for example, an excellent framework for examining relations on different levels or for application in a training context.

Earlier mention has been made of the abrupt ending of the “First Northfield experiment” of which Bion was the main designer and implementer. In reflecting on the reasons why the project was terminated after only 6 weeks, one of the comments that Bridger (1985) makes is that, “without taking one iota from his great insights and creative work, I believe that Bion was not at ease with the group as an open system” (p.97). In his focus on the group-as-a-whole, Bion possibly did not take into account sufficiently the influence that the context could have on the group.

In both above-mentioned cases, that of the lack of individual change in a therapy group and not adequately taking into account the impact that the external

environment may have on the group, the common denominator is an over emphasis of the group-as-a-whole.

3.8.3 The training group and the development of “anti-thinking”

In an earlier formulation on the mental activities in the group, Bion (1961) made the statement that, “Work activity is obscured, diverted, and on occasion assisted by certain other mental activities...The activities, at first sight chaotic, are given a certain cohesion if it is assumed that they spring from basic assumptions common to all the group” (p. 146). With that statement Bion acknowledges that the basic assumption group can either obstruct or assist the work group.

In the following section the impact that a training group could have on the conditions for the emergence of a basic assumption group is explored. Bion’s (1962/1984) theory on thinking is utilized in the exploration.

Bion (1962/1984) described thinking as “the process of establishing a mental relationship with a personality – and of that personality’s emotional experience – either the individual’s own or that of another person” (p.53). He, furthermore, said that thinking depends on the social capacity of the individual and that its absence would make “scientific communication impossible” (p. 185) or, from the opposite viewpoint, “Intellectual activity of a ‘higher order’ is possible together with awareness (and not evasion) of emotions” (Bion 1961 p.175). Emotional linking becomes a prerequisite for higher order intellectual activity. The capacity to form emotional ties and also to think would, therefore, become a feature of the work group. On the other hand, anti-thinking is prevalent where there is a lack of emotional linking or attacks on linking and the capacity to integrate thoughts and feelings are diminished. Billow (2003) comments that, under these circumstances, the “individual or group may halt or even reverse the developmental process in which experience emerges into awareness and come to be understood” (p. 75).

According to Bion (1961), the basic assumption states are secondary formations based on what he referred to as “proto-mental phenomena” (p.101). The proto-mental phenomena are undifferentiated emotional states that precede the basic assumptions. “Starting, then, at the level of proto-mental events we may say that the group develops until its emotions become expressible in psychological terms. It is at this point that I say the group behaves ‘as if’ it were acting on a basic assumption” (p.101).

Bion later refined the concept of proto-mental phenomena by introducing concepts of premonitions, alpha functioning, and beta elements. A premonition is a basic pre-conceptual awareness of our basic feelings and needs. Bion (1963/1984) referred to these basic feelings and needs as primal effects, and he formulated alphabetic shorthand for what he regarded as primal affects: L stands for love; H for hate; and K for knowledge. An affect could either hinder an emotional link, in which case it would be indicated with a minus, e.g. – L or it could further the link in which case it is indicated with a plus e.g. + K.

According to Billow (2003), the primal affects, and the corresponding basic assumptions, are “In the fight/flight hatred (H), in the dependence state of mind, intense, immature idealized love (L), and in the pairing state, exaggerated curiosity (K)” (p. 197). The importance of the primal affects is that they form the basis for emotional links without which there can be no emotional knowledge. In the group there can be attacks on linking with a resulting negative effect on learning in the group. The basic assumption states, which are based on the primitive affects, can, therefore, be in the service of, or a hindrance to, the work group (Hopper, 2003a).

Symington and Symington (1996) state that, “Forces against the emotional experience being understood are legion, both within the individual and within society” (p. 29). Two such forces were discussed earlier: (1) the ambivalence of

the individual towards the group; and (2) the specific way in which a “Bionian” group is structured. To these two a third is added, and that is that the conditions created by a training group contribute to the depth of regression in the group which makes it difficult for the group to cross the boundary between fantasy and reality, the basic assumption group and the work group.

Earlier mention was made of Bion’s (1961) statement that the group can be on different levels or stages of regression. He stated that, “the more disturbed the group, the more easily discernible are these primitive fantasies and mechanisms; the more stable the group, the more it corresponds with Freud’s description of the group as a repetition of family group patterns and neurotic mechanisms” (p. 165). What is proposed here is that the anxiety inherent in a training group can make the group particularly prone to deep psychotic-like anxiety and accompanying regressive defensive actions of splitting, introjections, and projections. The reason is that the pre-group expectations could be in conflict with the in-group experience thereby exacerbating the tension in the group and contributing to the anti-thinking. A training group is by definition a group which participants join to learn, usually “learning through experience”. Participants come with the expectation of gaining knowledge. Knowledge, however, can have different meanings for the group leader and the members. Group members have the expectation of gaining cognitive knowledge, devoid of emotions, to extract facts from the group leaders or other members rather than to risk emotional engagement.

The group leader, from a “Bionian” perspective, will regard emotions and engagement as an integral and essential part of learning and gaining knowledge in the group. Billow (2003), furthermore, states that “Psychoanalytic treatment is not about eliminating pain and anxiety, but rather transforming the experience, to enlarge the capacity to ‘suffer’ meaning” (p. 200). In psychoanalysis, pain is an inevitable part of the process.

The experience, in particular in a training group, may not only be an unwanted, but also an unpleasant at times, painful experience. The anti-thinking forces could, therefore, be particularly high owing to their being fuelled by tension created by expectations not being met. Instead of the primary affects of L, H and K being transformed into +L, +H and +K they are transformed into -K, -H and -K resulting in a basic assumption state that hinders the emergence of the work group mentality. A training group could, therefore, be particularly resistant to “suffer meaning”. Although the group may appear to be bounded through sharing the basic assumption mentality, the internal relational links are of such a nature that they inhibit the development of the group, and hinder the transition from basic assumption group to work group mentality.

3.8.4 Groups in traumatized societies

The contextual impact on group was emphasised by Brown (2003) when he proposed that Bion’s ideas on basic assumption states reflect the negative processes in groups which are most likely to predominate in certain conditions. In this section the conditions created by traumatized societies, such as South Africa, are explored. It is argued that groups in these societies are prone to display characteristics of the fourth basic assumption state as described by Hopper (1997, 2003a) which was briefly discussed earlier in the chapter. Hopper (2003a) defines traumatic experiences as “a fear of annihilation in response to the experience of profound helplessness arising from loss, abandonment and damage within the context of the traumatogenic process, which spans generations and involves the relationship between victims and perpetrators, and the responses to the traumatized” (p. 210). There is no doubt that South Africa is a traumatized society. It was characterised by severe oppression of the largest part of the population, on all fronts, for generations. Furthermore, it was, and to a lesser extent still is, characterised by violence, both socio-politically and criminally motivated. The question is not whether the society was traumatized, but to what extent the traumatising is still prevalent in the social unconscious.

According to Hopper, two social formations can develop in reaction to the traumatisation and these are bipolar states of incohesion. He (2003a) postulates that an aggregate is characterized by a “minimal degree of mutual attraction and involvement among three or more people who are neither interdependent nor in sympathy with one another, on the basis of shared beliefs, norms and values” (Hopper, p. 213). A mass, on the other hand, is characterized by “maximal degree of mutual attraction and involvement among three or more people who are neither interdependent nor in sympathy with one but who share the illusion of solidarity with respect to beliefs, norms and values, usually for a brief period of time” (p. 213).

Based on the concept of social unconscious (discussed earlier) and the systemic principle of a “hierarchy of systems” (to be discussed in the next chapter), it is not only the society at large that is traumatized but trauma will permeate all groups on all levels in society. The effect on a group in a traumatized society is that, as is the case with all basic assumption states, the trauma will hinder the development of the work group. In comparison to a “non-traumatized” society, the group in a traumatized society may struggle more to make the transition to a work group. A second effect on a group could be that individuals in the group can assume roles that are personifications of the qualities of an aggregate and a mass. The roles associated with massification will display qualities of “traumatized, merger-hunger amoeboid characters” and those associated with aggregation “traumatized, contact-shunning crustacean characters” (Hopper, 2003a, p. 221).

Groups in the South African context could be expected to display symptomatic behaviour of the fourth basic assumption where the members oscillate between, on the one hand, contact-discarding defences, or, on the other hand, fusion-desiring behaviour. A group leader in a society such as South Africa should,

based on the above argument, be particularly sensitive in relation to behaviour associated with traumatization.

3.9 Group-as-a-whole/Tavistock framework and boundaries

In this concluding section, a summary of the Group-as-a-whole/Tavistock model is presented with specific reference to boundaries and boundary dynamics in the group. In the section, when reference is made to the Group-as-whole/Tavistock framework, it is used in the sense of a “typical” Bionian or Tavistock/Leicester conference structured group.

Apart from providing a brief summary, it will also be argued that the framework is conditional, implying that the group, as Bion (1961) described it, is dependent on conditions created by the specific conceptualisation of the group, the leadership style and technique applied, including how boundaries were managed. The framework is, therefore, not to be generalised, either theoretically or practically without qualifications and/or modifications, depending on the context of application.

3.9.1 Summary with reference to boundaries

The group-as-a-whole/Tavistock conceptual structure is fairly simple; it consists of two main elements, the group and the leader (Pines and Schlapobersky, 2000). Despite the simplicity it captures complex phenomena and creates a technical focus. In the conceptualisation, the leader is not regarded as a group member, and the conceptualization is, therefore, mainly two bodied, consisting of the group and the leader. The main boundaries in focus are the group boundary and the boundary between the group and the leader. The conceptualisation of the group has a profound effect on the group dynamics and basically provides the frame for thinking about the group.

The group organizes itself in three constellations of defensive reactions against primitive anxiety or basic assumptions. The constellations are referred to as basic assumption groups. The basic assumption groups interfere with the work group, which functions on a higher and more rational level. In all three of the basic assumption groups, there is a temporary loss of individual boundaries for the sake of creating a unity and establishing a group boundary (Sutherland, 1985). The group boundary, created by the basic assumption group, is, however, temporary; it provides a sense of relief from the anxiety in the short term, but, because it is based on a collective fantasy, it cannot last. The basic assumption group is both a mental state, and it displays distinctive patterns of behaviour. The relationships between the basic assumption groups are reciprocal, making the boundaries fluid and permeable.

Leaders and leadership play a central role in the basic assumption groups. Bion (1961) commented that each basic assumption group “includes” a leader; Yalom (1995) stated that the basic assumption groups are “in search” of a leader, and Pines and Schlapobersky (2000) said that basic assumption groups are leader centred in which transference is directed at the leader who represents authority. The group, therefore, cannot be conceptualized and described without making reference to leadership.

In the Group-as-a-whole/Tavistock framework three boundaries are primarily in focus: the group-as-a-whole boundary; the group/leader boundary; and the group conscious/unconscious boundary.

3.9.2 Conditional appearance of basic assumption groups - did Bion create the basic assumption group?

In the section that follows, the conditions under which the basic assumption groups appear are elaborated upon. The main thesis is that conditions created by Bion, which are also applied in the Tavistock/Leicester conferences, in particular

elicit the basic assumption group. These conditions are mainly boundary conditions, established by and managed through the conceptualisation of the group, the leadership style, and the technique applied.

Bion is often quoted as saying that, “analysis should be approached ‘without memory or desire’ - so as to avoid contaminating his evaluation of what is happening in the ‘here and now’ of the analytic session” (Grinberg, 1985, p.188-189). With this statement, Bion promoted an attitude rather than a technique. This attitude served Bion well; it allowed him to formulate a unique group theory based on his experiences in groups. With this attitude, Bion wanted to be “close” to the group, not wanting anything to come between him and the group.

Yet, at the same time, through his technique of interpreting only the group transference relationship between the group and leader a relational matrix was created that led to a distinctive behaviour akin to the Kleinian view of object relations. Within the relational matrix a boundary was created between him and the group that was maintained by a consistency of technique.

Bion’s style of intervening in the group could, furthermore, have led to an exaggeration rather than an alleviation of anxiety in the group. Earlier mention was made of Torres’s (2003) referring to Bion’s approach to leading groups as a “suspension of leadership” (p.92), one in which he does not abdicate his responsibilities but resists the temptation and the pressure from the group for him to become the doctor and they the patients. Sutherland (1985) also posed the question, “We may then ask if Bion fosters an exaggerated degree of basic assumptions behaviour by not giving help sooner” (p. 76). Bion not only restricted himself to interpreting transference but also seems to have limited the number of interpretations he would make. In this regard he (1961) stated that, “Only some of these occasions are used by me; I judge the occasion to be ripe for an interpretation when the interpretations would seem both obvious and unobserved” (Bion, p. 143).

Being without “memory and desire” is, however, an unattainable ideal. Bion’s intent was to understand the group; conceptually, he could also have seen himself as part of the group but the effect of his technique was that boundary between group and leader was overemphasized. In practice, this boundary between the leader and the group was almost rigidly maintained, and the group became a leader-centred group. This conceptualization and maintenance of the group as two-bodied could have had a restricting effect on the group, allowing for only certain patterns to develop.

Along the same lines, Grinberg (1985) commented on the Tavistock approach by saying that, “because it emphasizes interpretation by the therapist, it would seem to foster ‘basic assumption dependence’ and excite feelings of frustration” (p. 200). This comment refers to specifically group-as-a-whole interpretations. Grinberg implies that the technique contributes to creating conditions for basic assumptions. With a leader in a position of perceived or experienced and untouchable authority, the group is being kept “bounded” by the over emphasis of the group boundary. As a result, the group regresses to a mental state where it employs defences against psychotic-like anxiety. In this regressed state, Billow (2003) argues that –L, -H and –K are prevalent.

It can, furthermore, be argued that conditions that create the dynamics in the group also perpetuate it. Grinberg (1985) makes reference to the effect of technique stating that, “My impression would be that the mere interpretation of basic assumptions could perpetuate them and not lead to group work on the basis of mutuality and joint endeavour” (p. 210). It is, therefore, possible that the technical approach assisted the basic assumption group to regress further rather than assisting progress in order to become a work group.

In the above argument the value of Bion’s contribution to group theory is not being questioned. What is being questioned is the applicability of the framework.

It is postulated that, through his attitude and personality, Bion made his presence felt in the group; through his technique, he created a boundary between him and the group and, through his style of intervening, a relational matrix is created, one in which there is a clear boundary between the group and the leader and a preoccupation with this boundary. His technical approach exaggerated the anxiety and, therefore, the regression in the group.

3.9.3 Conditional application of the framework

The theory and practice of the group-as-a-whole/Tavistock framework cannot be applied without qualification or adaptation. Grinberg (1985) suggested that, if one wants to move beyond Bion, “we may need to digest and replace Bion’s original concepts of basic assumptions – grasp what it contains and modify what is distorting in it” (p. 216) In the following section a brief account is given of how the framework has been applied, and some suggestions are made with regards to further applications.

3.9.3.1 *Selective application*

When the framework is applied without adapting the conceptual structure and technique, it is advisable to apply it selectively and with a clearly stated aim suitable to the framework. One such application is in a learning context. Earlier, mention was made of Yalom’s (1995) comment on the exceptional suitability and effectiveness of the framework as a training method for group therapists. If conditions are created, such as during Tavistock/Leicester conferences where the two bodied conceptual structure is applied and boundaries are strictly managed, the basic assumption behaviour in the group becomes visible and recognizable, which then provides for a powerful learning opportunity. In the training context, the aim is to promote basic assumption behaviour so that it can

be studied. This kind of application in a learning context has stood the test of time.

3.9.3.2 Group dynamics related to boundary conditions, leadership, technique and context

In the case of the framework being used to analyse and describe behaviour, specific reference should be made to leadership and authority, boundary conditions, and the context in which the basic assumption behaviour manifests, thereby giving recognition to the conditions absent or present. Grinberg (1985), for example, stated that, “They (basic assumption groups) are therefore more likely in settings where personal contact is forbidden, inappropriate or best avoided – e.g. committees, large groups, and work situations where disturbed or fragile personalities have to coexist or be supported” (p. 217). In these kinds of groups the framework can be exceptionally useful to describe the dynamics in the group.

Hopper’s (2003b) description of a fourth basic assumption state I:A/M, is an example where explicit recognition is given to the context of the group. In the basic assumption I:A/M group, the conditions for the manifestation are created by a society that has been traumatized. The state is, therefore, in reaction to society at large and not in reaction to a questioning leader.

Intervening in groups, where basic assumption behaviour is not desirable or when it becomes an obstacle in the progress of the group, seems to require an adaptation of both the conceptualization of the structure of the group and the technique of intervening. In the next section such an example is provided.

3.9.3.3 *Adapted conceptualization and technique*

Billow is an example of a theoretician and practitioner who made some adaptations to the group-as-a-whole/Tavistock approach. Pines (in Billow, 2003) refers to Billow as “the most able author in our field to present the theoretical and clinical thinking of Wilfred Bion” (p. 11). Despite, or perhaps owing to his knowledge of Bion, Billow (2003) had a different view on the position and function of leadership in the group and, secondly, related to the first, he had a different technical approach and focus, specifically on how boundaries should be managed. Billow (2003) leaves the reader to decide. “It remains for others to decide whether my formulations and applications represent a significant departure from his ideas and clinical intentions” (p. 40).

Billow (2003) acknowledged that his style of leadership is more active than that of Bion. In his position as leader of the group he did not see himself as separate from the group. He, furthermore, endeavoured to act spontaneously and maintain a “down to earth manner” (p. 40). The boundary between him and the group was deliberately made permeable. As a leader he would at times be transparent and supportive. He would, furthermore, emphasise that the group is co-created by the leader and the group. The group was, therefore, not conceptualized as two-bodied but as one, co-created by the group and the leader.

In his technical approach he advocated a relational, rather than a group-as-a-whole, approach. Technical efforts were directed at fostering relationship and group interpretations were used to a limited extent. He emphasized the interpersonal boundaries rather than the group boundary.

Billow (2003) provides an insightful account, based on his relational emphasis and Love (L), Hate (H) and Knowledge (K) of an incident that involved him, as the group leader, and a training group. The incident he described started with a group member commenting on the group’s resistance to study the prescribed

material for the training course. He came to the uncomfortable realization that, whilst he thought that he and the group were operating in +K mode, they were actually in –H and –K. One of the problems in the group was that the dread of H had led to a splitting-off and disguising of H, resulting in –H. In rectifying the situation, Billow's willingness to reflect on his own behaviour and motives, as well as allowing H to be expressed, transformed the barrier between him and the group to into a contact relationship. This is in contrast to Bion's approach which would most likely have maintained the boundary between him and the group thereby limiting the problem to a problem of the group and not a leader/group problem.

3.10 Some working hypotheses

In the last part of this chapter the some propositions are made with regards to the group-as-a-whole/Tavistock framework and boundaries. These propositions are working hypotheses for later interpretation of the data.

3.10.1 Anti-thinking: a state of entrapment

Proposition: Anti-thinking is a state of entrapment where boundaries have become barriers.

Thinking or anti-thinking mainly involves two boundaries, the unconscious/conscious, and the interpersonal. Anti-thinking essentially transforms boundaries into barriers. Members become entrapped in their own minds where thoughts cannot connect with the thinker, emotions cannot be felt, and ties cannot be formed between members. The group is, furthermore, characterized by a pre-occupation with the group/leader boundary where attempts to bridge the boundary are done mainly through projective-identification. The leader experiences restriction and is confined in a role cast upon him/her. In this regard Bion (1961) commented that, "the analyst feels he is being

manipulated so as to be playing a part, no matter how difficult to recognize, in somebody else's fantasy" (p. 149).

3.10.2 Cooperation and learning

Proposition: Cooperation is no guarantee that learning is taking place in a training group.

A training group is conducted with the aim of learning. Membership of a training group can be either voluntary or compulsory, e.g. as part of a course. When the membership is voluntary one can assume that participants have a desire to learn and, therefore, one can expect participation and cooperation in the activities of the group. On the other hand, when membership is compulsory, the training group is often linked to some form of evaluation, which would encourage cooperation in the group. Cooperation *per se*, however, is no guarantee for learning; on the contrary, apparent cooperation can hinder learning. In this regard, Hinshelwood (2003) states that, "The individual is co-operating in a kind of way – co-operating in forming a stable group in which co-operation is impossible!" (p. 189). Cooperation, as referred to by Hinshelwood, is for the sake of creating and maintaining a group, effecting the boundary demarcation of the group. This kind of cooperation can be devoid of emotional links, and the group would act mainly on a part-object level. A training group can be prone to cooperation without linking, the reason being that the pre-group expectations could be in conflict with the in-group experience thereby exacerbating the tension in the group and contributing to the anti-thinking rather than meaningful-thinking.

3.10.3 Linking and learning

Proposition: Emotional linking is a pre-requisite for meaningful learning.

Meaningful learning can be described as a developmental process where experiences emerge into awareness and where they come to be understood (Billow, 2003). This kind of learning is possible only where there are emotional links characterised by the sharing of emotional experiences among group members.

Billow (2003), furthermore, made reference to psychoanalytic treatment as a process that is accompanied by the “suffering of meaning” (p. 200). This would be no different for a training group where deriving meaning is more often than not an uncomfortable experience. The group, therefore, has to develop, over and above being cooperative, the capacity to share emotional experiences so that meaning can be derived.

A training group could be particularly resistant to “suffering meaning” owing to the fact that pre-group expectations and in-group experiences can be two very different things. Participants may come with the expectation of gaining cognitive and factual knowledge, but they discover that the process requires of them to take risks and engage on an emotional level in order to “learn” from the group. It is only when affect is integrated with cognition that meaning is derived.

3.10.4 Groups in a traumatized society

Proposition: Owing to a heightened dread of expressing H, groups in traumatized societies may appear to be particularly co-operative while in fact members are disconnected and isolated.

When a society has been subjected to an intolerance of differences, suppression, and violence, the effect on groups can be to cause them to act in the opposite extreme. Groups would reflect elements of the basic assumption group: I: A/M (Hopper, 2003a, 2003b). The group could have a heightened dread of expressing H; expressing H would not only cause ‘dis-ease’ but it is also perceived as

dangerous in the sense that it could have catastrophic destructive consequences. H is, therefore, expressed as –H in superficial co-operation and agreement reminiscent of the basic assumption aggregation group.

3.10.5 Trauma and the capacity to think

Proposition: Trauma leads to a reduced capacity to think.

Bion (1962/1984) brought a relational dimension to thinking, describing it as a process of establishing an emotional experience with another person.

When an individual or community has been subjected to trauma, the capacity to think would be diminished. In this regard, Symington (1990) proposed that “...in the human community, tremendous pressures, arising from personal traumas and social catastrophes, impair the capacity for thinking in those individuals who are victims of these disasters” (p. 98). In a traumatized society, such as South Africa in general, the effect could be that groups and members are restricted.

The boundary effect of trauma is that the person cannot link with himself personally and equally so not with the other person. The person is compelled to react rather than to respond. Trauma, therefore, has a restricting effect, creating a barrier rather than a permeable boundary. What is required to move from a position of reacting to responding is to connect or link with the emotional self and others and be able to articulate and express the emotional content without violence.

3.10.6 The group and the leader in a traumatized society

Proposition: A group in a traumatized society could display amplified attacks on leadership.



In his description of the fourth basic assumption, Hopper (2003a) suggests that failed dependency leads to attacks from the group. Although Hopper based his description on society or large groups, one can assume that some of the behaviour in the large group will be reflected in the small group. If, in the small group, the members perceive the leader as being capable of, but failing to contain and hold the group, the leader may be subjected to particularly fierce attacks in both intensity and frequency.

3.10.7 A Work group is a passionate group.

Proposition: A work group represents a presence of passion and not just an absence of basic assumptions.

To some extent, basic assumptions will always be present in the group. A group in a passionate state will, however, continuously endeavour to experience, integrate, and use primal affects rather than suppress or deny them. Billow (2003) writes about passion, stating that it “represents the ideal of thinking; an optimal level of personal meaning from LHK is achieved and utilized in emotional participation” (p. 219). Passion is, thus, always a part of the work group.

3.11 Contemporary developments

The Tavistock and A.K. Rice Institutes continue to advance the thoughts of Bion and apply the approach in different contexts. Schermer (2012) suggests that these two institutions have facilitated “important breakthroughs in group consulting and training” and that the Tavistock approach has led to new developments such as “social dreaming” (Schermer, 2012, p. 485).

The group-relations training conferences, remain one of the main activities of the Tavistock and A.K. Rice Institutes. The aim of the annual Leicester conference, the flagship event of the Tavistock Institute, has remained largely the same over

the years, despite some changes in design. The 2012 brochure of the Leicester conference states that the aim is: “To study the development and exercise of authority, role and organisation, through the inter-personal, inter-group and institutional relations that develop within the conference” (The Tavistock Institute, 2012). Although boundaries are not explicitly mentioned in current promotional material, the concept of boundaries is implicit in the approach and has consistently been a focus point during training events.

As a consulting service, the Tavistock Institute applies a systems psychodynamic approach. Systems psychodynamics integrates three fields – psychoanalysis, group relations and an open system perspective (Fraher, 2004, p. 65). This approach is used with a range of clients on a local, national and international level (Cytrynbaum & Noumair, 2004; Whittle, & Stevens, 2013 and Sher, 2012).

3.12 Concluding comment

In the South African context, which is currently in a transitional phase, recovering from a dramatic and traumatic past, a heightened sensitivity to address boundary issues can be expected. Groups are likely to display defensive patterns where the group oscillates between contact-discarding behaviour, on the one hand, and fusion-desiring behaviour, on the other hand. The leader, being part of the society and group, could collude with the group in their defensive behaviour by encouraging co-operation without emotional linking, thereby avoiding the possibility of an emotional eruption. The group, akin to the Hopper’s (2003b) basic assumption I:A/M group, could develop rigid boundaries in defence, which would hamper the transition from the basic assumption group to the work group. In such a group the members will not feel free to think and speak their own thoughts. The capacity to think will be diminished and avoided.

A leader who is in tune with his own cultural heritage, and, at the same time, who is attuned to the boundaries in the group can be more effective in assisting the

group to become a work group, where emotional interpersonal issues can be addressed, than a leader who is not aware of the contextual impact on the group.

Chapter 4

General systems theory and system-centred therapy

4.1 Introduction

No study of boundaries in small groups can be undertaken without exploring the concept in general systems theory as is it applied to groups. General systems theory (from here onwards referred to as GST) is, however, not a coherent group theory. It is a meta-theory that provides a conceptual framework for looking at the world, including groups. It is applied not only in group theory but also used in many other fields. Coburn (2000) states that

By the 1930s and 1940s, general systems theory was conceptualized as an interdisciplinary doctrine of principles and models applicable to systems in general irrespective of the field in which they were found. Accordingly, it infiltrated and influenced many disciplines, including physics, chemistry, engineering, computer science, information theory, psychology, family theory, linguistics, philosophy, politics, meteorology, economics, and, of course, the study of slime mold (p. 2).

Almost 30 years ago, Helen Durkin (1983) argued that GST could possibly address some of the inadequacies of the analytical theory. Some of these inadequacies which she refers to are that psychoanalysis does not provide an adequate theory of energy, and that it also does not account adequately for the role of the environment. Note should be taken of the fact that she identifies these inadequacies mainly in individual psychoanalysis and not necessarily in group theories based on analytical principles. On her recommendation a task team was established under the auspices of the American Group Psychotherapy Association to conduct research into the application of GST for group therapy. The incorporation of GST concepts into group therapy, conducted from a

psychoanalytic perspective, was, however, not met without resistance, even prior to establishing the task group. Slavson (1953) and later Schwartz and Wolf (1960), argued that the psychoanalytic approach should be kept “pure” and that groups should be conducted exclusively from an individual perspective and not combined with group-as-a-whole perspective.

Independently from the efforts of Durkin and the task team, certain GST concepts started filtering into analytical group theories, for instance in group analysis and the group-as-a-whole/Tavistock frameworks. Ganzarian (1989) comments on Bion, the “father” of the group-as-a-whole/Tavistock framework, “his ideas on groups have different relations with these theories: Melanie Klein’s psychoanalysis; Lewin’s field theory and general systems theory (GST)” (p. 24). Concepts from GST also infiltrated into group analysis. Durkin, H.E. (1983), who corresponded with Foulkes, the founder of group analysis, stated that, “although he did not claim the title, Foulkes’ thinking is along the same lines as GST. His brilliant concept of the group matrix is a case in point” (p. 77). She (Durkin, 1983) argued, however, that concepts from GST were not used in a systematic way but rather loosely.

The work of the task team under Durkin’s leadership continued with limited success, and it was “not until Yvonne Agazarian began to develop the theoretical notion about ‘the invisible group’ that these ideas begin to take shape as a viable theoretical basis on which to formulate clinical interventions in group therapy” (Schlachet, 2000, p. 45-46). Agazarian (1997) developed a group theory that is based mainly on GST and which goes beyond the mere use of GST constructs on a “loose” basis or to address so-called inadequacies in other theories. Brown (2003) regarded her theory as rigorously intellectual, integrating systems theory and Lewinian field theory. Agazarian (1997), in her system-centered therapy framework (from here on referred to as SCT), gave boundaries a very central place in the theory as well as in the technical aspects of leading groups. She

(1997), for example, stated that “the SCT goal is to make the boundary permeable between apprehensive and comprehensive knowledge” (p. 18).

In GST, boundary is a central construct in the theory and very explicitly used in the practical application. In this regards, Motherwell and Shay (2005) commented that “systems theorists developed theory and technique that used a concept of ‘boundary’ as a primary building block” (p. 9). This is the case in the classic work of Durkin (1981) “Living Groups” and most certainly the case with Agazarian (1994, 1997).

The influence that GST had on group theory and practice cannot be discussed without reference to field theory. Field theory and GST are different theories, but they share many underlying principles, for example the emphasis field theory places on the context as part of the group. In the section that follows, a brief description is given, firstly, of field theory and, then, of GST as they are applied to group psychology. Following that, an account of system-centred therapy (SCT) is given. SCT, as developed by Agazarian (1997), can be regarded mainly as a technical application of the field theory and GST. A brief overview will be provided of the historical roots of SCT, after which the development of the group, with its focus on boundaries and defences, is described. The contributions of GST and SCT to the study will be highlighted. In the last part, some critical impressions of GST and CST, as they are applied to groups, are provided.

4.2 Field theory applied to groups

Field theory, which originated from physics, was applied by Lewin (1951) in social settings. According to Durkin (1964), Lewin was an astute scientist. She, furthermore, suggested that “the field theoretical principles which he laid down for individuals were applicable to groups as well. This method was representative of the best group dynamics research, and he was the first to use the term group dynamics” (p.17). When applied, the field theory approach is radically different

from the empirical scientific approach which endeavours to isolate the effect of various factors. Lewin (1951) describes the principle attributes of field theory as:

the use of constructive rather than classificatory method; an interest in the dynamic aspects of events; a psychological rather than physical approach; an analysis which starts with the situation as a whole; a distinction between systematic and historical problems; a mathematical representation of the field (p.60).

Based on the field theory, Lewin (1951) formulated his theory that a person's behaviour is a function of his life space made up of a field of forces. The life space becomes the basis for understanding and predicting behaviour. Lewin (1951) stated that, "A teacher will never succeed in giving proper guidance to a child if he does not learn to understand the psychological world in which that child lives" (p. 62). According to the theory, the child exists in a field of forces some of which are driving forces and some constraining forces. This statement holds an important boundary implication; in our endeavour to understand groups, understanding what is outside the boundary is at least equally as important as what is inside the boundary.

In the application of the field theory, temporality is treated uniquely. Lewin (1952) postulated that, "any behavior or any other change in the psychological field depends only upon the psychological field at that time" (p. 45). This view of time has often been misinterpreted, it has being seen as saying that the past is not important. Ganzarian (1989) is a proponent of this view, advocating that Lewin does not take the historical adequately into account, especially early emotional development. Lewin (1951) was aware of this critique, and his reaction was that the suggestion is flawed. The field theorists do not pronounce that the past is not important, but they postulate that the past and future are contained in the present. Lewin's (1951) own view can be summarized in his view on regression.

The problem of regression, like that of development, includes an historical aspect which refers to the sequence of styles of behavior in the life history,

and a systematic aspect which refers to the conditions of the change occurring at a given time. Both questions are entirely legitimate and are necessarily dealt with in a psychological approach to regression (p.21)

The conditions referred to are structural and dynamic properties in the field at a given point in time. The value of applying the field theory for group therapy lies in the fact that it coherently integrates the individual and the group, and also the group and society, to such an extent that the one cannot be conceptualised or analysed without the other. The individual is in the field of forces in the group, and the group is in the field of forces in society. Fraher's (2004) opinion is that one of Lewin's most important contributions was the emphasis he placed on the psycho-sociological influences on the group. Lewin's (1951) conceptualization of time and the "life space" had a strong influence on other group theories, especially those that emphasize the here-and-now and group-as-a-whole approach.

4.3 General systems theory

Earlier mention was made of a task team that was established by the American Group Psychotherapy Association under the leadership of Helen Durkin. The mission of this task team was to "explore ways in which GST can clarify the theory and improve the practice of group psychotherapy" (Durkin, 1981, p. xiii). The task team discovered, soon after it began working in 1971, that GST is not an easily definable theory; it has many versions and permutations. After many years of investigation, the main findings of the task team culminated in the publication of "Living groups" (Durkin, 1981). This work will be taken as one of the main sources in the discussion of some theoretical aspects of GST in relation to groups, rather than making any attempt to explore GST in general, which is not in the scope of this study.

The task team formulated two basic models of GST. The first model was object-centred and the second process-centred. In the discussion that follows more

emphasis is placed on the second model. The rationale for highlighting the second model is that it placed greater emphasis on a system as a living-system, built on the paradigm of autonomy which explicitly makes reference to boundaries and boundary functioning. A foundational idea of a living-system is that it is self-bounded through the autonomous regulation of its boundaries. Furthermore, living structures generate, maintain, evolve and, finally, dissolve autonomously. They regulate boundaries to achieve wholeness, self-regulation and progression towards self-transformation (Durkin, H. E., 1981).

4.3.1 GST concepts applied to groups

4.3.1.1 Hierarchy of systems

When GST is applied to groups, a group can be regarded as a hierarchy of systems consisting of individuals who form subgroups, which in turn form a group, which exists in a context. Each system exists in an environment of the system above it and forms the environment for the system below it. According to the theory, in the hierarchy of systems, a system can move up and down the hierarchy. A system has the ability to “complicate” itself by becoming involved in a network of relationships with other systems, for example an individual can become part of a subgroup or a group. On the other hand, it can also “self-simplify” itself, for example, by withdrawing from a group (Durkin, H.E., 1981, pp. 45-46).

4.3.1.2 Isomorphic nature of groups

From a general systems perspective, a group can be regarded as isomorphic in nature which implies that groups in the same hierarchy are similar in structure and function. (Durkin, H.E., 1981) They are, however, different in different

contexts. MacKenzie (1981) emphasizes that, although isomorphism is an important concept in GST, it is not easily applied in group therapy.

When the principles of the isomorphic nature of groups are applied to a therapy group, it means that the personal system, the subgroups, and the group share the same structural features. Viewed from this perspective, the tension of the false dichotomy of making a clear distinction between individual and group is alleviated. Furthermore, the question of whether the individual or group is the real therapeutic agent becomes to a large extent inappropriate. The therapist can conceptualise the group on different levels but can apply methods to the different levels in a uniform way. “For the first time he will be able to view the group, its members, and their personality structure defences as three levels of systems which can be treated in a uniform way” (Durkin, 1983, p.85).

4.3.1.3 Self-referential capacity and autonomy

A very important attribute of the living systems is that every system has the potential to restructure itself, thereby behaving autonomously. The capacity to achieve autonomy is what makes it a living system (Durkin, H.E., 1981). The restructuring can take place as an evolutionary, adaptive, long-term process and on a short-term, day-to-day basis. Durkin (1981), furthermore, draws attention to the paradox in this self-referential action, “the paradox here is that the selfsame structure that opens itself up for transformation is the structure that is initiating and controlling the transformation” (p. 49). The structural features which make this possible are the permeability of boundaries and, furthermore, the possibility of regulating and manipulating the permeability of the boundaries.

The concept of *linear feedback* and *dynamic interaction* are important in the self-referential and autonomous behaviour of the system. In linear feedback “part of the law-guided energy output of the configuration is ‘fed-back’ in a loop to become one of the inputs to the system” (Durkin, 1981, p. 49). The use of the

term linear can be confusing. When used in GST it does not mean unidirectional but circular. Information provided by the circular feedback enables the living system to establish whether there is a discrepancy between the ideal and the actual, and, then, to take action based on the discrepancy. In linear feedback the system takes adaptive action but the structure remains the same as opposed to *dynamic interaction* where there is a structural change. In dynamic interaction, “two or more living structures autonomously open their boundaries to each other, and in doing so they temporarily abdicate their individuality-defining rule structures and define themselves as a single united system” (Durkin, 1981, p. 52). Both of these actions are in the service of autonomy.

4.3.2 Conceptualisation of the group

In the conceptualization of the group from a systems perspective, the focus is on boundaries. MacKenzie (1990) regards the conceptualization as a boundary abstraction. Since the conceptualisation is an abstraction, it is conceivable that different abstractions can be made depending on the purpose. In this section the conceptual structure by MacKenzie (1990) is presented as a general boundary conceptualization. Later in the chapter, the conceptualization by Agazarian and Peters (1981) will be presented as an operational structure.

MacKenzie (1990) refers to the boundaries as, “psychological dimensions within the group space” (p. 36). He also adds that it is more important to focus on the psychological boundaries than the physical boundaries in working with the group. MacKenzie (1990) proposes a structure with seven boundaries, which are presented in Figure 4.1 (p. 37). According to him, this system of boundaries, when superimposed on a group, will alert the leader to the important boundary structures.

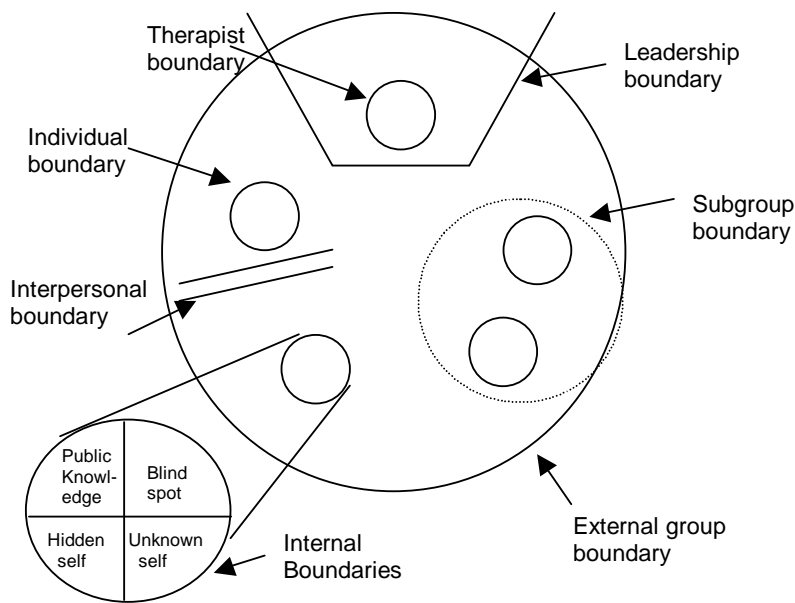


Figure 4.1. General systems group boundary model (MacKenzie, 1990, p.37).

Mackenzie (1990) distinguishes between the leadership and therapist boundaries on the grounds that the leadership boundary may extend beyond the actual group to that of, for example, the organisation the leader represents as opposed to the therapist boundary, which is the role boundary of the leader as he reveals himself in the group. The internal boundary is based on the Johari Window concept (Luft, 1969), which is a two-dimensional model of things known and unknown to self and others.

4.4 From theory to practice – system-centered therapy (SCT)

4.4.1 Roots of SCT

It was stated previously that systems theory is not a group theory but is, instead, a meta-theory that can be applied to groups. One such application of GST on groups is system-centered therapy (Agazarian, 1997). System-centered therapy (SCT) is essentially an integration of force field and GST applied to groups and therapy. Yvonne Agazarian, who developed the theory, came into contact with

GST and force field theory only at a later stage in her career. In the next section, a brief overview of her personal history and how that can contribute to the understanding of how she made the transition from theory to practice is given.

Agazarian (1997) describes how she first came into contact with psychology and psychiatry when she started work as a student in a psychiatric ward with no training or experience. In the ward she took a very active role in organising the ward and changing the culture through getting all capable patients involved in general work, including caring for fellow patients. In a short space of time, a considerable difference had been made, not only to how the ward functioned but also to the mental health of the patients. She implemented the changes based on intuition and not on theoretical knowledge. Her current method and the technical application of her theory can partly be traced back to how she managed the situation in the ward where she took an active role in restructuring the functioning of the ward. As a therapist, she takes an active role in “organizing” the group through working with boundaries and subgroups, changing the culture of the group, and getting all members involved in the work of the group (Agazarian, 1997, 2006).

In her career as a therapist, she initially started practising as a psychodynamic therapist after receiving training in psychoanalysis first in London and then at the Psychoanalytic Studies Institute in Philadelphia. During the early 1960s, she came into contact with the force field theory of Lewin (1951) and, later, with systems theory, specifically the living systems theory as interpreted and applied by Helen Durkin (1981).

Agazarian (1997) describes how she often felt split as a result of thinking psychoanalytically about the individual in the group and group dynamically (force field and GST) about the group. This dualistic view permeates one of her major publications, written together with Peters (1981) “The visible and invisible group.” A turning point came in 1989 when it dawned on her that the psychotherapist

could possibly have an iatrogenic effect on the group based on the “unconscious pathogenic belief, common to both the therapist and the patient, namely, that it is the therapist who is really the center of the world” (p. 9). Through this belief, the therapist can unconsciously induce certain behaviour, with negative consequences in the group. This realization tipped that scale towards general systems theory, which eventually led to her formulation of CST. CST is ultimately a departure from one of her historical roots in psychoanalysis.

A second major turning point, specifically in the application of technique, came after she gained experience in Davanloo’s (1987) short-term dynamic psychotherapy (STDP). The method of STDP, where defences are actively confronted, was in stark contrast with her methodological orientation in therapy up until that stage. Working with defences became a major influence in the technical application of SCT.

Agazarian started her training, in the field of mental health, in psychoanalysis. After having been exposed to other fields, such as force field and general systems theory over a period of time, she progressively adopted a systems oriented framework, away from psychoanalysis. She was, furthermore, also influenced by her own research. By the time she formulated SCT (1994, 1997), the systemic perspective constituted the main theoretical framework in her thinking.

4.4.2 The Visible and Invisible group

The “Visible and invisible group” (1981) was the first major publication by Agazarian (with Peters). Therein they integrated different theoretical perspectives. They (1981) stated that:

Since systems theory and field theory have a common ancestor in Gestalt psychology, systems analysis is compatible with field theory, which in turn is compatible with psychoanalytic theory. These three theories are the

major conceptual foundations from which the theory of the invisible group is based (p. 33).

The visible group can be observed from an inductive perspective, and the invisible group can be understood from a deductive perspective. Agazarian and Peters (1981) regard the conceptual structure as an abstraction of the group and, therefore, see it as a way of thinking about the group. Conceptually, their group model consists of four systems. The visible group comprises the individual personal and the individual member systems. The invisible group consists of the group role and the group-as-a-whole systems. These four systems can be displayed in three levels of abstraction.

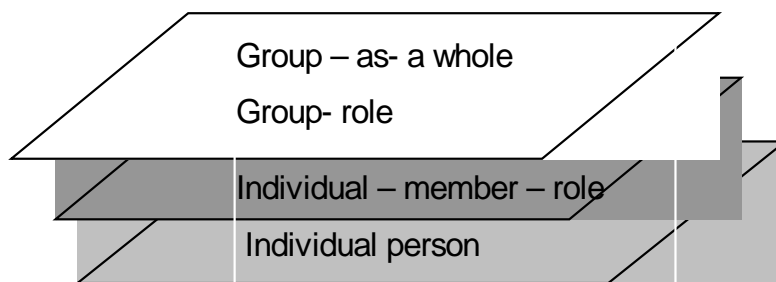


Figure 4.2. Four systems group model (Agazarian & Peters, 1981, p. 40).

In conceptualizing the group and formulating their theory, Agazarian and Peters (1981) attempted to integrate the individual and the group-as-a-whole. According to Agazarian (1982), role is a bridging construct and, as such, a property of the group. The construct of a role can be elucidated against the background of the force field theory of Lewin. Lewin (1951) postulated that behaviour is a function of the life space of the individual. The life space is a result of the conceptual map that an individual creates based on his perception of his life and his environment. If the life space is understood then behaviour becomes predictable. The role that a person takes on in the group would, therefore, be based on an integration of his perception of himself and the perception of the group.

The conceptualization of the group also reflects the notion of isomorphism which allows the group, its members, and their personality structures to be treated in a uniform way (Durkin, 1983). The conceptualisation of the invisible group seems to have been a significant moment in the development of an applied theory. Schlachet (1998) postulates that it was Agazarian's formulation of the invisible group that enabled her to develop ideas on clinical interventions in the group.

4.5 Development in the group

4.5.1 Individual development

Individual development in the group is inextricably linked to subgroup and group development in the group. People enter into the system as a self-centred system. Through embracing a member role they begin to cross the boundary between the individual and the group system. Natural progression is from individual to subsystem to group-as-a-whole. The goal for an individual in SCT is, however, not to become a group member but to make the boundary permeable between apprehensive and comprehensive knowledge. Comprehensive knowledge is derived from cognitive knowledge whilst apprehensive knowledge is derived from intuition. According to Agazarian (1997) it is apprehensive knowledge that changes people. Apprehensive knowledge is gained from experiences and understanding what is/was not known.

Scholnick (1992) equates individual development with boundary development when he states that, "From the systems perspective, the psychotherapy group offers the patient an opportunity to transform the relatively closed, archaic aspects of the inner self-other work into a more open system that can serve as a springboard for development of the self" (p. 331). In the group, the internal world of the individual is first externalised, and the group then provides the opportunity to re-internalise the experience with greater acceptance and consciousness.

This notion of individual development is not new. The manner in which defences are dealt with in SCT is, however, rather exceptional. This point will be taken up further in the section on leadership and the technical aspects of GCT.

4.5.2 Group development

Group development will be described with reference to goals, phases, and defences. These aspects are central to Agazarian's (1994, 1997, 2005) view on development in the group.

4.5.2.1 Group goal

Group development takes place towards a goal, which is inherent in all living systems and, therefore, in all groups. The natural tendencies of a system of self-perpetuation, self-sustaining, and self-correction, as described in GST, are translated in CST into the primary goals of the system, namely survival, development, and transformation (Agazarian, 1997). When applied to groups, this would mean that, provided that the driving forces are stronger than the restraining forces, the group will naturally develop and progress.

The group can also have a secondary goal, such as pursuing a specific task. When there is a clash between the primary and the secondary goals, the systems will choose the primary goal over the secondary. The implication of this is that survival will always be more important than the task of the group.

The natural progression of the system (group) towards the goal could be interrupted when the system experiences frustration. Frustration is the result of an impulse to act being prevented or hindered. Agazarian (1997) has a particular view on frustration, energy, and anxiety. When frustration is contained, it is potential energy that can be utilized to resolve conflict. "In SCT terms, 'containing' means maintaining potential energy within a related state of focused

alertness and readiness, without allowing it to be discharged, bound, or constricted” (Agazarian, 1997, p.42). When frustration becomes difficult to contain, however, it generates anxiety and tension, against which the system has to defend itself. A distinction can be made between primary and secondary anxiety. Primary anxiety is generated by frustration that is difficult to contain, and it is, therefore, restricted. Secondary anxiety arises from a defence against the primary anxiety.

4.5.2.2 Phases, defences, driving and restraining forces

Group phase development plays an important role in SCT. Agazarian’s (1997) formulation of group development phases is based on phase development as identified by Bennis and Shepard (1956). The phases of development, as she describes them, are not new but the way the process is managed is different from other theoretical perspectives. Agazarian’s main contribution was, therefore, not the identification of, and description of, the phases but the formulation of defences around each phase and her suggested sequence of techniques on how to deal with the defences.

It is important to note that defensive actions are actions taken for the sake of preserving the system. They can, however, become restraining forces that inhibit the system from developing, surviving, or transforming (Scholnick, 1992).

Defences can be divided into three categories: (a) social defences which are relatively superficial; (b) symptomatic defences; and (c) defences against knowledge and common sense, which are at the deepest level. (Schlachet, 1998). Schlachet (1998) also stated that, “Each group developmental phase also revolves around a specific content issue, with sub-phases delineating particular group dynamics” (p. 47).

In summary, the phases, as identified and described by Agazarian (1997), with accompanying defences are:

Phase one: Authority, with defences against communication, anxiety, retaliatory impulse and role lock. (Role lock occurs when someone is trapped in a role where the boundary of a role becomes a barrier.);
Phase two: Intimacy, with defences against separation and individuation; and
Phase three: Interdependent Love, Work, and Play, with defences against knowledge and common sense (p. 92).

In SCT, defences become one of the primary working constructs where they are systematically and pro-actively modified (Agazarian, 1997). When defences are modified, the permeability and structure of boundaries are changed.

Development in a group is, furthermore, influenced by driving and restraining forces. A driving force directs the life force toward the primary goals of the system, which are survival, development, and transformation, and the secondary goal of environmental mastery. A restricting force opposes the driving force and makes boundaries less permeable (Agazarian, 1997, pp. 302- 306).

Defences can create a secondary, or 'as if', reality. The 'as if' reality is mainly the experience of symptoms as opposed to the reality which is the authentic experience of conflicts, impulses, and emotions generated by challenges in the primary reality. The primary goal of SCT is to develop a problem-solving system that can solve the conflict. This is done by reducing the restraining forces in the communication across system boundaries and by increasing the ability to "discriminate and integrate communication in the system." (Agazarian, p. 32). Agazarian (1997) goes on to say that, "In SCT work, energy is always vectored toward reducing the defensive restraining forces that are maintaining the symptomatic status quo" (p.90).

4.5.3 Leadership and technical aspects in a GST group

Leading a group based on GST constitutes boundary management. This is the general agreement amongst practitioners who work within the framework. (Agazarian, 1997, Durkin, 1981, Scholnick, 1992) From a systems-boundary management point of view, Scholnick (1992) articulates the task of the therapist as that he:

- (1) Defines and monitors the task; (2) selects and takes in members; (3) delineates intragroup boundaries (roles, ground rules, culture, and contract); (4) delineates and manages his own role/person boundary; (5) delineates and manages group/environmental boundary; (6) serves as catalyst and protector; and (7) processes information and interprets. (p. 336)

Apart from the first two tasks, all the tasks are directly related to the management of boundaries in the group.

As a theory, SCT draws from and integrates different perspectives on groups such as force field theory (Lewin, 1951), psychodynamic group psychology (Bion, 1961; and others), general systems theory (Von Bertalanffy, 1968), living systems theory (Durkin, 1981) and cognitive psychology (Beck, 1976). The technical aspects of leading a SCT group are, however, to a large extent based on an adapted version of the force field theory of Lewin (1951) and cognitive psychology. Agazarian (1997) stated that, "I adapted Lewin's formulation (behavior is a function of perception of the environment) to read 'behavior is a function of perception of the problem that lie along the path to the goal'" (p. 4). Based on this notion, the group, in Agazarian's approach, is viewed as a problem-solving situation in which the leader actively assists the members in continuous problem solving (Pines, 1994, 52).

In response to being presented with a group scenario, Agazarian and Stone (2005) made statements about leading a GST group that shed light on her understanding and thinking on technique. They stated that,

The greatest difference between SCT and a psychodynamic groups is that little or no interpretations, no explanations, and no questions appear, three kinds of communication that remove people from themselves and from others (p. 129).

In this statement, she basically implies that the technique of psychodynamic group psychology is counter-productive in groups and thereby she distances herself from it. The difference is not so much in the understanding of the dynamics in the group as it is in the application of techniques. As was the case with the development of CST as a theory, the development of the technical application also occurred over a period of time.

In assisting the members in becoming a problem-solving group, the leader is active in changing the norms in the group in a pro-active approach. This will entail developing a climate in the group that is non-defensive and not characterised by anxiety.

In GST, the main concern is with the structure and not with content. This is one of the differences in the application of psychodynamic therapies and therapy based on GST. Whereas psychodynamic therapies pay attention to all communication, SCT is concerned mainly with actively managing the flow of communication across boundaries.

Two specific methods which are unique to SCT are discussed next.

4.5.3.1 Subgrouping

Subgrouping is at the centre of the method of SCT. Group members are encouraged to form subgroups around shared experiences and also to support

one another's exploratory efforts, thereby forming subgroups. The group is formed through developing subgroups. Agazarian (1997) sees the development of subgroups as natural and desired in the process of developing a group-as-a whole (p. 17).

In systems-centred groups, a distinction is made between stereotypical and functional subgrouping. Both serve an important function in the group. The stereotypical subgroup contributes to stability in the group but can hamper the development of the group in the long run. Examples of stereotypical subgroups are 'identified patient' and 'scapegoating'. In both cases, split off hostility is projected onto an individual or subgroup. If the group is unable to integrate the split off hostility, this will hamper the development of the group although it may create the illusion of moving forward. Functional subgrouping, on the other hand, provides a structure whereby the split off hostility can be contained and worked with. The functional subgroup is, therefore, a structure in the service of the working group (Agazarian, 1997, pp. 42-43).

Unlike an indirect approach, in which the group norms emerge gradually from the way that its members' interact with one another, and unlike the direct approach where members's behaviour is modified after it is brought into the group, SCT modifies behaviour immediately, before it becomes established as a norm in the group, by shaping communication as soon as it crosses the boundary into the group (boundarying) and, at the same time, it establishes functional subgrouping, so that no member has to work alone while group behaviour is being shaped.

4.5.3.2 Boundarying

The second technique that is unique to SCT is boundarying. Boundaries are regarded as the structure of the system within which information is located in time, space, reality, and role. Boundarying is the technique applied in the group to assist the group with the transferring of information or energy (used

interchangeably in SCT) across the boundaries. Time and space boundaries consist of boundaries both in real time and space and psychological time and space. One boundarying technique is the distraction exercise. The distraction exercise assists members in crossing the boundary from outside the group to inside the group.

Boundaries and boundarying are dealt with in a systematic and progressive way that is linked to the phase development of the group. For example, the middle phase boundary has first to be crossed before a member can become a system-centred member (Agazarian, 1997, p.72).

4.5.4 Summary

SCT is essentially a theory of influencing the structure of the group. The underlying assumption is that, if the structure changes, the dynamics change. The general movement in the group should be from self-centred to group or system-centred. To become a system-centred group, members have to cross a number of boundaries that are associated with group phases.

In the table that follows a summary is given of the main elements of the conceptual structure and the associated dynamics.

Theoretical group model	Conceptual structure of a group	Historical roots of structure	Group dynamics including defences	Development of the group
General systems theory and systems-	Individual, member, subgroup, group	Force field theory, group analytical psychology,	Dynamics explained by boundary permeability	Group develop through phases Manipulating

centered therapy	Main Exponent: Agazarian	general systems theory, living systems theory	and defences at boundaries	structure and boundary permeability aid group development
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In SCT, the concept of boundary plays a central role in the conceptualisation and the technical application. The technique of SCT hinges on the manipulation of boundaries in order to facilitate system transformation. Defences around boundaries become the target of all interventions. In essence, SCT is an applied framework based mainly on force field theory and general system theory that focuses on boundaries.

4.5.5 Contribution to the study

4.5.5.1 *Boundary focus*

Boundaries are a central concept in GST and SCT, in both theory and in practice. The emphasis that is placed on boundaries as an operational construct, furthermore, makes the concept a particularly useful framework for the exploration of boundaries which is the purpose of this study.

4.5.5.2 *Interdependency of the individual, the group and the context*

Both GST and field theory, as discussed earlier, naturally integrate the individual and the group and also the group and society. Schlachet (1998) comments in this regard that, “nowhere has the notion of interdependence been more dramatically and comprehensively articulated than in general systems theory...” (p. 45) In field theory, as applied to groups by Lewin (1951) the interdependence is taken a step further where he postulates that a person’s behaviour is a function of his life

space made up of a field of forces. The life space becomes the basis for understanding and predicting behaviour.

It is not the link between the individual, group, and context only that is emphasised but the fact that the one cannot understand the one without the other which brings a certain perspective to the study; what is inside the group boundary should be interpreted in the context of what is outside the group.

4.5.5.3 Conceptualisation of the group

The conceptualisation of the group in GST is largely a boundary abstraction. (MacKenzie, 1990 and Agazarian and Peters, 1981) An adapted version of MacKenzie's (1990) systemic conceptualisation of the group played an important role in a method that was developed for the exploration of boundaries in this study. The method is described in the next chapter.

4.5.5.4 Leadership and boundaries

A further contribution that GST and SCT bring to the study is that, in the emphasis that is placed on leadership and technique, attention is directed to the link between the leader and boundaries in the group. In SCT, as an applied theory based on GST, the leader is pro-active rather than re-active, and one of his main tasks is to modify boundaries. Based on the framework, through acting pro-actively, the leader modifies boundaries in a predetermined sequence (Agazarian, 1997, p. 91). In order to decide on a sequence, the leader needs to have a conceptualisation of the development of the group, specifically the boundary development. In the exploration of boundaries in a group this then emphasises the inextricable interplay between leader, group, techniques, and boundary development.

4.6 Some comments and impressions on GST and SCT

4.6.1 Compatibility of technique and theory

The contributions that Agazarian (1997, 2003) make to group theory and practice is largely a methodological contribution on how to lead groups. She describes clearly how to lead a SCT group where the leader is highly active and goal directed. Agazarian (1997) goes so far as to refer to her method as a “blueprint for constructing” (p. 32) a group. Of particular interest is the emphasis she places on creating a context within which development and change can take place. In this regard, Brown (2003) states that, “She claims that her approach has contributed ‘an understanding’ that it is not the human dynamics themselves that contribute to the success or failure in therapy, but the development of a context in which they can be addressed and explored rather than acted out” (p. 160). In this very claim, however, the shortcoming of SCT could be situated. Despite its excellent method and techniques, it does not shed new light on the dynamics of human behaviour in a group. Schlachet’s (1998) opinion is that it relies on existing theories of group dynamics to understand the underlying mental phenomena (p. 50).

It would seem that, whilst SCT makes a unique contribution to the conducting of groups, it still has to be supplemented by other theories to come to a more dynamic and full understanding group interaction.

4.6.2 Technical language

As a meta-theory, GST does makes a distinctive contribution to group theory, specifically by viewing the group from a holistic, systems-interrelated perspective, and the focus it places on boundaries. In addition, CST, based on GST, contributes specifically to clinical methods and techniques. Despite this, Ganzarian (1989) posed the question, “What does general systems theory add to

group psychotherapy, beyond what may appear as the mere translation of well-known terms into the new words?" (p. 64).

It would seem that some concepts used in GST and SCT are old concepts described in a different technical language. For example, when Agazarian (1997) describes the concepts of apprehensive and comprehensive knowledge it closely resembles aspects of Bion's (1962) theory of thinking. Concepts such as "apprehensive subsystem" and "comprehensive subsystem" necessitate further definition, explication, and refinement (Schlachet, 1998, p. 50). The practice of describing a concept in different technical languages can, on the one hand, lead to an enriched understanding of the concept, but, on the other hand, create some confusion. The latter might have been one reason why when Agazarian (1981, 1997, and 2005) progressively started using GST and force field theory as the main sources to inform her practice. Her technical language became more GST-oriented as opposed to incorporating psychodynamic terminology.

The technical language of GST applied to groups and human behaviour remains somewhat problematic. Skolnick's (1992) view on the language of GST is that "the terminology of systems theory may seem at first to have a cold, mechanical ring.... and in itself does not provide enough psychological content to guide work with human beings in the empathic or feeling way required in psychotherapy" (p. 329).

4.6.3 Underlying psychological phenomena

As a meta-theory applied to groups and human interaction, GST falls short, or at least has difficulty in giving a dynamic interpretation of intra- and inter-psychic functioning. Despite referring to Agazarian's theory as an impressive feat, Schlachet's (1998) view is that there is the other side of the coin; GST and SCT contribute greatly to understanding structures in general, but they were never intended to be a theories of psychic structures and it they fall short of addressing

the internal operations of the substructures. As such they have to rely on old truths to explain some of the internal dynamics of the structures.

Schlachet, (1998) comments that, with the use of forces as one of the main underpinnings of her theory, “it seems as if we are impelled backwards to an old context of drive-based theorizing, one which contemporary psychoanalytic thought has long left behind” (p. 50).

Despite the above mentioned deficiencies, GST and SCT can contribute to this study by providing a meta-perspective that specifically emphasises boundaries as an operational construct.

4.7 Contemporary developments

The system-centered approach has centralised the concept of boundaries in theory and practice (Gantt & Agazarian, 2006, and Agazarian, 2010). Functional subgrouping as a technique, has become a re-occurring theme in this approach over the recent past (O'Neill, Constantino, & Mogle, 2012). Schermer (2012) concurs that “the key interventions of SCT therapists are aimed at subgroups rather than individuals or the group as a whole” (p. 492).

A further contemporary development is the linking of interpersonal neurobiology with SCT, specifically functional subgrouping (Gantt & Agazarian, 2010). With these developments, SCT is progressively focusing more on the concept of boundaries and boundary management.

Chapter 5

Methodological orientation

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, the concept of boundaries was explored in different theoretical frameworks. As a concept in group theory, boundaries have been applied extensively to the structure of the group where reference is made to, e.g. membership, time and space boundaries. In the theoretical exploration in the preceding chapters, a deliberate attempt was made not to let a narrow view of boundaries restrict the exploration. The concept of boundaries was explored and described from a structural and dynamic point of view, thereby applying the concept as widely as possible.

Boundaries as a concept has also been applied as a guiding factor in practice. Agazarian (1997), for example, stated that, “the goal of SCT (system-centered therapy) is to make the boundary between comprehension and apprehension (intuition) appropriately permeable so that the patient has access to both cognitive and emotional experience” (p. 189). In her latter (1997, 2006) theorisation about groups, boundaries form an integral part of theory and practice.

At times, the concept of boundaries has been applied as a specific working construct. In a somewhat outdated brochure (1979) of the earlier Leicester conferences, explicit reference is made to exploring boundaries:

The Institution affords opportunities for examining the nature and meaning of such boundaries, including experience of the member – staff boundaries in a variety of settings. Within this framework, members may also explore such related boundaries as those between the individual’s

inner and outer worlds, person and role, individual and group, leader and followers, group and institution, institution and environment. In this context authority is vested in and accepted by individuals and groups to manage transactions across these boundaries. (Lawrence, 1979, p. 15)

During these Leicester conferences, boundaries that are emphasised in the theoretical framework such as group-as-a-whole and group-leader boundary are specifically explored. The application and exploration seem to be guided by, and, therefore, also limited by, the theoretical framework. In the current information on the Leicester conferences, boundaries are not as prominently mentioned, although the methodology of the presentations remains the same. The 2008 Leicester conference brochure states that, “You will have the opportunity to learn about ... the relationships and relatedness within and between individuals, groups, organisations and individuals” (The Tavistock Institute, 2008, para. 6). In its current approach where psychoanalytic principles are combined with an open system perspective the emphasis on boundaries have remained, if not amplified (Fraher, 2004 and Sher, 2012).

In this part of the study, boundaries are explored as a concept in practice. Applying a concept is, however, not without pitfalls. Gildenhuys (1989) made a noteworthy comment on the use of constructs or concepts when he said that, “The elucidation of the clouded reality of human existence is still the aim of the subject activity in the social sciences, but it is being qualified by the restrictions of the constructs that we use as conceptual vehicles/tools” (own translation from Afrikaans) (Vol. 2, p. 93). Concepts can, therefore, be functional and valuable, but, at the same time, also restrictive. Exploring and enhancing the understanding of a concept, such as boundaries in this case, can increase the value of a concept, and, at the same time, limit the restrictions it could have more effectively. The objective of this study is, therefore, not only to explore the application of the concept but also to expand the understanding of the concept itself.

In the first part of this chapter, a brief overview is given of qualitative research. The reason for providing such an overview is to create a foundational framework to design a method for the study. Currently there is no method that can identify boundaries and boundary movement systematically over a period of time.

In the second part, a description is provided of how the research was operationalized, including the research design and the method used for the analysis and interpretation of the data.

5.2 Qualitative research

5.2.1 Historical roots of qualitative research in the social sciences

The qualitative research paradigm developed largely out of discontent with, and perceived insufficiencies of, the quantitative paradigm which is based on positivistic principles (Flick, 2006). Many accounts of what qualitative research is, therefore, include a section that counter-poses qualitative with quantitative research. Qualitative research has, however, progressively become a more independent research paradigm and not merely a counter or complimentary paradigm to the quantitative paradigm. Flick (2006), for instance, uses the description of qualitative research of Denzin and Lincoln (2000) as an example of a theory of qualitative research independent of quantitative research. He emphasised that they hardly make reference to, or provide a comparison with, quantitative research. Parker (1994), furthermore, sounds a warning when the two traditions are compared, "It is not necessary to put the quantitative and qualitative traditions in diametrical opposition to each other, and we would lose sight of the value of much qualitative research if we do so" (p. 2).

Babbie and Mouton (2006) identify two shifts away from the quantitative paradigm - stemming from anthropology - as the beginning of the qualitative research paradigm. The first was a shift in orientation of the researcher (also

emphasized by Parker, 1994) from being an “outsider” to being an “insider”, from working with second-hand accounts to gaining first-hand accounts. Although Franz Boas (late 19th century), to whom this shift is contributed, insisted on first-hand involvement, he himself spent little time in the field in order to gain a first-hand account.

The second shift came with taking the first-hand involvement one step further to what today is known as the *participant observer* role of the researcher. In the participant observer role, the researcher sees himself as part and parcel of the research situation. Although the shift started in anthropology, it rapidly permeated to other disciplines. Tesch (1990) gives an account of how qualitative research practices entered into different disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, education, etc., and, as new academic fields entered the arena, such as nursing and organization studies, they also adopted some qualitative methods.

Qualitative research can, however, not be regarded as a unified field or paradigm of research. Flick (2006) points to the fact that qualitative research developed differently in different parts of the world. In the German-speaking areas, higher emphasis is placed on methodological and procedural issues than in other areas of Europe and the United States where qualitative research is strongly linked to an attitude of openness and reflexivity by the researcher.

Flick (2006) provides a summary of what, according to him, are the three current perspectives in qualitative research:

Theoretical points of reference are drawn, first, from traditions of symbolic interactionism and phenomenology. A second main line is anchored theoretically in ethnomethodology and constructionism and interested daily routines and in the making of social reality. Structuralist or psychoanalytic positions assume unconscious psychological structures and mechanisms and latent social configurations and are the third point of reference (p. 21).

Currently the qualitative research paradigm is regarded as a paradigm in addition to, and not in opposition to, the quantitative paradigm.

5.2.2 Characteristics of qualitative research

In their description of qualitative research, Cassel and Symon (1994) capture the essential characteristics well. According to them, qualitative research is characterized by focusing on interpretation, the process of research, subjectivity, and on linking behaviour and context. Interpretation and subjectivity go hand in hand. When the researcher interprets, his own person inevitably becomes part of the process of elucidating and extracting meaning from, the data.

To the above-mentioned characteristics, Babbie and Mouton (2006) add two more key features, “The primary aim is in-depth ‘thick’ descriptions and understanding of actions and events and the research process is often inductive in its approach, resulting in the generation of new hypotheses and theories” (p. 270).

5.2.3 Qualitative research design types

Research design can be approached in more than one way. Mouton (1996) states that:

It is useful to compare scientific research to travel. A journey, and also scientific inquiry, has at least four facets or dimensions: a traveler, a destination, a route and a mode of travel. In the world of science, these components are the researcher(s), the goal, the object of enquiry and the methodology that has to be followed. (p. 24)

The usefulness of Mouton’s analogy lies in the fact that it assists with organizing the research in a logical order and, at the same time, maintaining a picture of the

whole. The basic components of the analogy have been utilized in the description of the research design and methods.

Making a calculated decision on the research design is an important step in the qualitative research process. A research design is basically a plan, including the aim and guidelines to address the research problem. A research design has an important function, and that is to ensure that the way in which the problem is approached will provide the best possible answers. Mouton (1996) emphasises this point by stating that, “the main function of a research design is to enable the researcher to anticipate what the appropriate research decisions should be so as to maximise the validity of the eventual results” (p. 107).

Research design types should be distinguished from methods. As part of a design type, certain methods are more appropriate than others, although more than one could be applied as part of a particular design type.

Babbie and Mouton (2006) distinguish between three main qualitative design types, namely ethnographic studies, case studies, and life histories. A brief description of each design type is given below.

1. *Ethnography* is most often used to provide a view of the social world from the participant’s perspective. “Ethnography is concerned with experience as it is lived, felt and undergone, and thus involves a concern with phenomenological consciousness” (Taylor, 1994, p. 34). It is also used to reconstruct the social context. The “lived experience” in ethnography is linked to the cultural context. Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, and Vetter (2000) propose that behaviour is interpreted against the backdrop of a culture or that the experience can be used to aid the reconstruction of, or attempt to understand, a culture. A feature of ethnographic design that is emphasized by Wilkinson (2004) is that it is “rarely systematic or comprehensive, in the sense of ranging across the full data set; rather, it is much more selective and limited in scope” (p. 183). The strength of the ethnographic design is the emphasis it places on context,

specifically the cultural context.

2. *Case study*, as the second design type, can be described as “an intensive and detailed study of one individual or of a group as an entity, through observation, self-reports, and any other means” (Tesch, 1990, p.39). Case study, as a design type, raises the question of what constitutes a case. Ragin and Becker, (1992) point out that there is little consensus on what may constitute a “case” and that the term is used broadly. There seems to be agreement that the essential feature of a case study is that it is an intensive study of a single unit or a limited number of units (Babbie and Mouton, 2006; Tesch, 1990; Yin, 2003). In this feature lies the strength of the case study. Owing to the intensity of the investigation in a case study, several perspectives can be given and many possible influences can be taken into account in the investigation. A case study allows for a detailed investigation of an incident, but, at the same time, it can provide “a holistic view of a process” (Patton and Appelbaum, 2003, p. 62).

Babbie and Mouton (2006) are of the opinion that case studies have the potential of building theory. Kohlbacher (2005) supports their view when he states that “we also saw that case study research has a major function in generating hypothesis and building theory” (para. 75). Despite this potential of a case study it would seem that many researchers do not utilize this potential strength of the design to its fullest (Babbie and Mouton, 2006).

The flexibility of the case study design is emphasized by researchers such as Kohlbacher (2006), Hartley (2004) and Titscher, et al. (2000) when they highlight the fact that a case study is more of a strategy than a method of conducting research, and that, as part of a case study, a variety of methods can be used. In this regard, Yin (2003) postulates that data analysis in a case study consists of “examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining both qualitative and quantitative evidence to address the initial

propositions of the study” (p. 109). A case study is more indicative of ‘what’ is to be studied than ‘how’ it is to be studied.

3. The third qualitative design type is *life histories*. Life history is defined by Babbie and Mouton (2006) as “an in-depth account of one person’s life in his or her own words. Three different modes of life history studies are found in the literature: predominantly biographical accounts, studies which emphasize personal crises or careers and psychohistories” (p. 310).

5.2.4 Purpose of qualitative research

The purpose of a research project is the key factor in the design of the research. According to Babbie (2004), social research can serve three purposes, exploration, description, and explanation. The explorative approach is most appropriate when the researcher is studying a new interest or when the study is new. One of the limitations of the explorative approach is that it is just that, explorative. It, therefore, seldom reaches final conclusions but rather makes tentative findings that can point the researcher in a direction or assist in refining the methodology (Babbie and Mouton, 2006).

Descriptive research is applicable when the researcher is describing an observation made in a natural context. It essentially addresses the questions of what, where, when, and how.

In contrast, explanatory research addresses the ‘why’ question. To the above mentioned three purposes, Mouton (1996) adds conformational or validation research where the purpose is to confirm or validate existing theory or previous studies. Neuman (2006) points out that in practice it is sometimes difficult to make a clear distinction between descriptive and explorative research because they share common features.

5.2.5 Research method

A decision of a method is largely dependent on the objective of the research (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000; and Silverman, 2000). A secondary factor influencing the choice of method is the personality of the researcher, including his personal preference and, more specifically, his theoretical background. In this regard Bauer and Gaskell (2000) state that “to some extent the choice of method is a function of the researcher’s theoretical orientation” (p. 337).

Neuman (2006) defines a method as “sets of specific techniques for selecting cases, measuring and observing aspects of social life, gathering and refining data, analyzing the data, and reporting on results” (p.2). He also points to the fact that different stages in the research process all have their own method, for example the method of data gathering, data analysis, and reporting.

One of the central aspects of a method that is highlighted in the definition is that it is a set or collection of techniques. Although Titscher et al. (2000) provide a similar description of a method, they emphasise the relatedness of the procedures or techniques. The relationships between techniques are determined by factors such as a shared theoretical base, their relationship to the object of the study, and their efficiencies and limitations.

Methods that were considered to be possible options for the study included ethnography, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, grounded theory, and content analysis. These methods are typically used in qualitative research with the exception of content analysis which can be either quantitative or qualitative, or both. The second reason for considering the above-mentioned methods is that they all work with text as the source of data. A brief description of each one of these methods is given. Comments are also made as to their appropriateness for the study.

1. *Ethnography* as a research design was discussed earlier in the chapter. Ethnographic methods would be part of an ethnographic design that uses text as data (Titscher, et al. 2000). Neither an ethnographic design nor ethnographic methods would be suitable for the following reasons: (a) the main concern of the study is not with culture as would the case be in ethnographic research; (b) ethnographic methods seldom range across a set of data (Wilkinson, 2004), and the method to be used for this study should be able to do that; (c) ethnographic methods are more suitable for studies in anthropology and sociology (Babbie and Mouton, 2006).
2. *Discourse analysis* is largely concerned with what goes on between people in communication. According to Tesch (1990), it would address questions such as, "How do people use language to present themselves in a certain (favourable) way to others? For example: How is discourse constrained by the presence of a person in power?" (p. 61.) Others, such as Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999), have a slightly broader view of discourse analysis. They argue that, in discourse analysis, language is used to understand social action which then can be applied elsewhere as well.

Bauer and Gaskell (2000) postulate that the terms "discourse" and "discourse analysis" are problematic. There are, according to them, at least 57 varieties of discourse analysis which signifies that there cannot be a generally accepted meaning of the terms. They, nevertheless, propose that discourse analysis has four main themes, namely: "a concern with discourse itself; a view of language as constructive and constructed; an emphasis upon discourse as a form of action; and a conviction in the rhetorical organization of discourse" (p.175).

Given the above views on discourse analysis, it is clear that it would be suitable as a method for the study. This is more specifically so when the third theme of discourse analysis, "discourse as action", is considered. The implication is that discourse is intentional and that people use discourse to

“do” something. When this theme of discourse analysis is applied to the study, one could argue that discourse is used to establish, moderate, and change boundaries.

Despite the argument made for the suitability of discourse analysis as a possible method for the study, however, the practical application of the method proved to be problematic. In discourse analysis, a relatively short text is analysed in depth. One requirement for a method was that the method should be able to analyse the whole set of data or text. Given the volume of the current text, this would have been possible but quite impractical. Another reason why discourse analysis would not be completely suitable as a method of analysing the text is that in discourse analysis the focus is too much on language and the participants. In this regard, Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) state that “the premise on which you base your research is that there are multiple meanings and that the clues to those meanings need to be found in the discourse, the rule-governed language behaviour of the participants and the way in which they make sense of their reality” (p. 116). The emphasis of this study is on boundaries and not on the group participants.

3. *Conversation analysis* is another method that can be investigated for its possible applicability to the study. According to Titcher et al. (2000), conversation analysis focuses its research on “the mechanisms that are employed by participants to overcome communicative disturbances and to achieve inter-subjective understanding” (p. 105). The underlying mechanisms of conversation are, therefore, the area of interest of conversation analysis. Although this method will be applicable in the case of studying a training group encounter, which is the research context of this study, it is not actually applicable to the objective of the study. The second reason why it would not be suitable as a method for the study is that conversation analysis requires a very detailed transcript, and it is, therefore, more applicable for the intensive study of short, very detailed transcripts. It would, therefore, not be practically feasible to analysis about 20 hours of transcribed conversation using the

techniques of conversation analysis.

4. The fourth method that was considered for the study is *Grounded theory*. According to Priest, Roberts, and Woods (2002a) “the aim of grounded theory is to generate theory that is ‘grounded’ in the natural context” (p. 34). Grounded theory is, thus, a method that derives from and builds theory from the data. It makes extensive use of the coding of text, which makes the analytical procedure similar to ethnography and content analysis. Grounded theory has become a popular method of data analysis. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) comment in this regard that, “for many new generation researchers, grounded theory has come to equate QR (Qualitative research) per se” (p.114). In grounded theory, is it important that the text should not be approached from a specific theoretical basis but that the data should “speak for itself.”

Grounded theory primarily makes use of two coding procedures, open coding and axial coding (Priest et al., 2002a). Open coding is an inductive process where codes are derived from the text, and axial coding is where categories of codes are related to one another.

Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) pass an interesting comment on grounded theory and content analysis stating that, “We have found that qualitative content analysis, in its simplest, most realistic and objective form, is regarded by many as ‘grounded theory’” (p. 114). Although content analysis will be discussed later, the comment is included here to use the comparison as a basis for constructing an argument for why grounded theory would not be suitable as a method for this study. The similarity between grounded theory and content analysis is that both make use of inductive coding procedures. The difference is that grounded theory exclusively uses an inductive procedure while content analysis can make use of both inductive and deductive procedures (Mayring, 2000, 2003; Titscher, et al., 2000).

The above-mentioned distinction is precisely what makes grounded theory unsuitable for the study. The essence of the study is to explore a concept, namely boundaries. “The boundary” as a concept is a deduction from theory. A requirement for an analytical procedure is that it should allow for the application of the concept to a group situation. This would then require a deductive analytical procedure. Grounded theory as a method of analysing text does not make provision for a deductive process, and this alone would make the method unsuitable for the study.

5. *Content analysis* is another research method that works with text as the primary source of data. The word content analysis was coined during a conference on mass media communication research in 1941 (Titscher et al., 2000). Content analysis is essentially a sense-making effort where meaning is derived for the text through the identification of themes and patterns in the text (Patton, 2002). Wilkinson (2004) provides a definition of content analysis:

At its most basic, content analysis simply entails inspection of the data for recurrent instances of some kind, irrespective of the type of instance (e.g. word, phrase, some larger unit of ‘meaning’); the preferred label for such instances (e.g. ‘items’, ‘themes’, ‘discourses’); whether the instances are subsequently grouped into larger units, also variously labelled (e.g. ‘categories’, ‘organizing themes’, interpretive repertoires’); and whether the instances – or larger units – are counted or not” (p.184).

Content analysis cannot be regarded as a single method of conducting research, and it cannot be assumed that there is a common understanding of content analysis. (Titscher, et al., 2000) Despite the lack of an homogeneous understanding of content analysis, Wilkinson (2004) argues that the various types of content analysis share a similar underlying epistemology being “one in which research participants’ talk’ is taken as providing a ‘means of access to something that lies behind or beyond it” (p. 187).

Initially content analysis was regarded as a quantitative method which was applied purely to text. Gradually it became a method of analysing communication by using text. When the application of content analysis shifted to the analysis of communication through text, it opened up new possibilities. Through the new applications, concerns were raised about the limitations of the method as it had been applied up to that stage, namely to quantify aspects of the text. The main concern was that through pure quantification the latent meaning of the content did not receive adequate recognition. Mayring (2000) supports this view when he states that “since the middle of the 20th century objections were raised against a superficial analysis without respecting the latent contents and contexts, working with simplifying and distorting quantification” (para. 6). What Mayring was referring to is the danger in the assumption that there is necessarily a relationship between frequency, meaning, and importance. Titscher, et al. (2000) make reference to Kracauer, who, as far back as 1952, reacted critically to purely quantitative content analysis. “He, (Kracauer, 1952), preferred, however, to construct these categories with reference to latent contents and the reconstruction of context, and to take account of the meaning of particular instances” (p. 62).

These objections and new applications led to a debate that started during the 1950s and which centred on the value of quantitative versus qualitative content analysis. Although the debate is on-going about quantitative versus qualitative content analysis, the distinction is not always that clear. When counting is part of the procedures of a method, it raises the question of whether the method is quantitative or qualitative. The researcher can start off by working the text in a qualitative way by attempting to discern meaning, but eventually he/she ends up counting the frequency of occurrences.

Morgan (1993) addresses the issue between qualitative versus quantitative content analysis directly. According to him, they are different in at least two ways: the way in which the text is codified (categorized); and the way in which

the quantitative results are used. In qualitative content analysis, the data itself is more likely to be used as the course for the codes as in quantitative analysis. With regard to uses of the quantitative results, he (1993) comments that:

In quantitative content analysis, counts and tabulations of the codes summarize what is known about the data, and the analytic effort typically stops with the presentation of these numerical results. In qualitative content analysis, however, such counting leads to the crucial further step of interpreting the pattern that is found in the codes (p. 115).

The above two differences are of particular importance for this study. Purely quantitative results of an analytical process would be unlikely to serve the purpose of the study. Furthermore, the procedure should make provision for relating the results back to theory.

Tesch (1990) refers to these two processes of analysing the data and relating the results back to the theory as de-contextualizing and re-contextualizing. Quantitative content analysis typically would often stop after relevant parts of the data have been extracted from the context and quantified (de-contextualized). Qualitative content analysis, on the other hand, attempts to understand what the results mean by “re-reading” the results in the context and also interpreting the results. In this regard Morgan (1993) states that, “for qualitative content analysis, counts can be seen as both the end of a descriptive process and the beginning of an interpretive process” (p. 116). The interpretative process of elucidating the findings of the first part of the analysis is, therefore, an integral and important part of qualitative content analysis. Creswell (2003) regards a method that uses both qualitative and quantitative strategies to analyse data as a mixed method approach. The specific strategy “in which the researcher converges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem” is referred to as concurrent procedures (Creswell, 2003, p. 16)

The above characteristic of qualitative content analysis made the method particularly appealing for this study. The process of boundary creation and change could first be extracted from the group and then further interpreted through a theoretical exploration and re-contextualising of the results of the analysis in the context of the group.

Researchers such as Morgan (1993) and Mayring (2000, 2003) have striven to avoid the described inherent deficiency in quantitative content analysis by applying the method qualitatively rather than simply quantitatively. Kohlbacher (2005) makes reference to Mayring's (2000, 2003) qualitative content analysis methodology stating that it attempts to overcome the shortcomings of quantitative content analysis by applying a "qualitative systematic, theory-guided approach to text analysis using a category system" (para. 40).

The way in which the categories are developed is essentially the difference between qualitative and quantitative content analysis methods. In classical quantitative content analysis categories are developed based on the "face value" of the text, for example how many times reference is made to "democracy" in a political speech. In qualitative content analysis the latent meaning of the text, as well as the context, is taken into account.

In content analysis the identification of themes, also referred to as *thematic analysis*, is usually part of the research process. Themes could be identified by using: (a) existing theory; (b) prior data or research; or (c) an inductive process from the data (Boyatzis, 1998). The first two ways can be seen as forms of deductive analysis, and the third as inductive analysis.

Themes, furthermore, could be identified on a manifest or latent level. On the latent level, the human factor in the process of identifying themes is emphasised by researchers such as Patton (2002) and Neuman (2006) when

they suggest that it is a subjective process which requires the researcher to be intensely involved with the data. Latent thematic analysis would include at least an element of interpretation where the underlying meaning is used to identify the theme.

Boyatzis (1998) identifies a number of uses for thematic analysis:

(1) A way of seeing, (2) a way of making sense of seemingly unrelated material, (3) a way of analyzing qualitative information, (4) a way of systematically observing a person, an interaction, a group, a situation, an organization, or a culture, and (5) a way of converting qualitative information into quantitative data (p. 5).

Normally thematic codes are developed from a sample of the data and then applied across the entire set of data (Mayring 2003). This is applicable when the set of data includes similar subsets of data, for example the text of the same structured interview that had been conducted with different people.

In the process of identifying themes, computer software could be used. In this regard, Flick (2006) mentions that one way it could be used is to “search and retrieval-locating relevant segments of text and making them available for inspection” (p. 344).

Although clearly identifiable steps in the identification of themes or topics are not easy to describe, researchers, such as Patton (2002) and Krippendorff (1980), have given some guidelines: (a) to submerge yourself in the data; (b) to have an open mind to the data; and (c) to allow the themes to emerge from the data.

5.2.6 Research questions in qualitative research

Research usually starts with a research topic of interest. A topic is, however, not specific enough to direct the research design. Neuman (2006) comments in this regard that “all research begins with a topic but a topic is only a starting point that researchers must narrow into a focused research question” (p. 153). He does, however, point out that the focussed question may emerge only at a later stage in the research process, for example when data is being gathered, as opposed to quantitative research where the question would be finalised before the research design. The process of moving from a topic or interest to research questions is described by Mouton (1996) as moving from one world, the world of social phenomena, to another world, the world of scientific inquiry.

Flick (2006) makes a strong case arguing that, although the formulation of the research question is directly related to success, it is often neglected and even ignored in the presentation of research methods. He, furthermore, states that:

The less clearly you formulate your research question, the greater the danger that you will find yourself in the end confronted with mountains of data helplessly trying to analyze them... and although the quoted “principle of openness” questions the a priori formulation of hypotheses, it by no means implies you should abandon attempts to define and formulate research questions (p. 106).

In exploratory research, as a research design, the formulation of research questions can appear to be problematic. Formulating (a) specific research question(s) may at face value be seen to be contradictory to the idea of exploring, in which the essential stance of the researcher is openness. This is, however, not the case. The question is not whether a specific question should be formulated or not, but rather what type of question should be formulated. The nature or type of question should match the purpose of research. For example, exploratory and descriptive research would utilize what and how questions in order to increase understanding and insight as opposed to explanatory research,

which would attempt to answer causal questions. (Babbie and Mouton, 2006) In formulating research questions, care should be taken not only to match the question with the purpose but also not to be too specific or too general – a danger which Flick (2006) highlights.

Flick (2006), furthermore, emphasises that the research questions (overall and specific) play a critical role in various stages of the research process. Initially an overall question would be formulated to guide the conceptualization of the research. At a later stage, specific research questions would be formulated on which the design and methods of the research would be based.

5.2.7 The role of the researcher

Subjectivity as a characteristic of qualitative research has previously been highlighted. Based on this notion, the question, according to Flick (2006), is not about the neutrality of the researcher when entering the field but what role the researcher is being allocated in the research process. The centrality of the researcher in the process has been emphasised by Parker (1994) and also Babbie and Mouton (2006) when they referred to the researcher as the “main instrument” (p. 271).

The role of the researcher can vary from being, on the one hand, a passive observer to being, on the other hand, an active member of the group or community that is being studied, in which case he or she would be a participant observer. In the research design and process it is, therefore, important that an account is given of the role or roles the researcher has adopted.

5.2.8 Sampling in qualitative research

The issue of sampling is encountered at different stages in the research process: while collecting data; while interpreting data; and while presenting the findings.

(Flick, 2006) Flick also emphasised that there is no sampling strategy that is right *per se* but that the sampling strategy “can only be assessed with respect to the research question of the study: which and how many cases are necessary to answer the questions of the study?” (p. 133).

The choice of sampling is based more on appropriateness than on representativeness, and the purpose of sampling in qualitative research is to deepen understanding and not necessarily to generalise beyond the context of the research. Neuman (2006) points out that “qualitative researchers focus less on a sample’s representativeness than on how the sample or small collection of cases, units, or activities illuminates social life” (p. 219).

5.2.9 Unit of analysis

Defining the unit of analysis is an important part of the design of the research process. The unit of analysis is essentially the “what is to be studied” (Babbie and Mouton, 2006). Logically a decision on what is to be studied would precede a decision on how (technique or method) that unit is to be studied. It is, therefore, essential to decide and describe early on in the research process exactly what it is that is to be studied.

5.2.10 Methods of gathering and preparing of data

The form or type of data will obviously have a determining influence on the method of data gathering. Data in qualitative research can take on many forms, as was pointed out by Tesch (1990), who stated that “drawings, painting, photographs, films, and videotapes are qualitative data if used for research purpose, and even music and sound tracks can be considered” (p 55). According to her, text is, however, one of the most commonly-used types of data in qualitative research. Text can take two forms: existing texts such as poems, newspaper articles, speeches etc.; or transcriptions of conversations.

Babbie and Mouton (2006) discuss three methods of gathering data in qualitative research: interviewing; observation; and using personal documents. Each one of these methods can be divided into various subcategories. Flick (2006) made the interesting observation that different methods have been emphasized in different parts of the world over time. He noticed that in the United States the debate revolved around observation as method, as opposed to the German-speaking areas where open interviews have dominated as method. Open and semi-structured interviews have also attracted more attention in the Anglo-Saxon world. The context of the current research is a small training group. Owing to the relatively passive nature of such a group, observable data will be limited as opposed to research using words as data. In the discussion that follows more emphasis is placed on methods that use words as data.

Henning (2004) and Sacks (1984) highlighted the advantages of using words and, more specifically, transcripts as data over other forms of data. In this regard Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004) stated that:

Tapes and transcripts also offer more than just ‘something to begin with’. They have three clear advantages compared with other kinds of qualitative data: they are open for public scrutiny; they can be replayed and reworked for example the transcript of the audio and visual material can be improved and the sequence of talk is preserved (p. 162).

One of the main issues when transcribing audio and visual material into text is deciding on the level of detail to include in the transcript. Titscher, et al. (2000) postulated that the amount of detail in the transcription is dependent on the methodology used for analysing the data. They (2000) state that, “as with critical discourse analysis and functional pragmatics, a very precise transcription – taking account of overlaps, para-verbal and non-verbal phenomena – is an absolute prerequisite for the analysis” (117). A further clarification is provided by

Tesch (1990) who makes a distinction between different types of research that use words as data. The typology proposed by Tech can provide some guidelines as to the quantity of detail in transcriptions. According to her, the four types of research that use words as data are:

- (1) Research that studies the characteristics of language;
- (2) Research that aims at the discovery of regularities;
- (3) Research that seeks to discern meaning; and
- (4) Research that is based on reflection by the researcher (p. 77-78).

The four types are organized from the most structured to the less structured, more holistic type of research. In the case of reflection, the researcher follows no formal data analysis procedure and, therefore, not a great amount of detail is required as opposed to research that studies the characteristics of language which would require a great amount of detail in the text.

Another important consideration to take into account when choosing a method of data collection is the extent that data gathering will influence the research situation. Unobtrusive methods would, for example, place a high priority on the natural setting as a key characteristic of qualitative research. Babbie and Mouton (2006) make mention of overt and covert research (p. 293). The method of data gathering in covert research would typically be unobtrusive, not wanting the identity of the researcher to be known to those who are being researched. They (2006) quite rightly comment that covert research and unobtrusive data gathering creates serious ethical dilemmas.

The importance of having a repertoire of possible methods so that the appropriate method can be used rather than forcing a known method in a situation where another method would have been more applicable is emphasized by various researchers such as Bauer and Gaskell (2000) and Babbie and Mouton (2006). A final decision about data gathering can be made only after a

research question has been formulated and in conjunction with methods of data analysis.

5.2.11 Quality of qualitative research

The debate around what constitutes good practice in qualitative research has moved to a large extent beyond the application of criteria such as representativeness, validity, and reliability. Bauer and Gaskell (2000) have identified three positions in the debate. The first position is that the criteria of sampling, reliability, and validity, applied in quantitative research should also be applied to qualitative research. The argument for this position is that the criteria are applicable to all research. The argument against this view, as advocated by Kirk and Miller (1986) and Flick (2006), is that it does not reflect and acknowledge the uniqueness of qualitative research. There is, for example, a difference in reliability in qualitative and reliability in quantitative research. Reliability in qualitative research is “reformulated in the direction of checking the dependability of data and procedures, which can be grounded in the specificity of the various qualitative methods” (Flick, 2006, p. 371).

The second position is a rejection of criteria. This position is based on the argument that the suggestion of having criteria is grounded in positivism, and qualitative research does not fit in to a positivistic paradigm. The dilemma with this position is that the question still remains, what constitutes good qualitative research? Bauer and Gaskell (2000) cite researchers such as Altheide and Johnson (1994), Flick (1998), and Seale (1999) as calling for explicit criteria on what constitutes good practice in qualitative research.

The third position argues for criteria different from the quantitative criteria and relevant to the uniqueness of qualitative research. There is, however, no consensus on what the criteria should be, and, therefore, researchers such as Bauer and Gaskell (2000) and Lincoln (1995) refer to emerging criteria, thereby

giving recognition to the fact that qualitative research, including quality criteria, is still evolving. Lincoln (1995) argues for what she calls “relational criteria, which effectively collapses the distinction between quality (rigor) and research ethics” (p. 275). Relational criteria includes the researcher, such as making his/her position known, the research process, such as rigour of procedure, and the community in which the research is taking place. The criteria, therefore, address not only the quality of the research but also ethical issues and accountability to the community in which the research is conducted.

Bauer and Gaskell (2000) propose four “confidence” criteria and four “relevance” criteria of which two in each category overlap (p. 344). Confidence criteria are indicators of how confident the researcher and the receiver can be that the research represents ‘reality’, that the outcome is a result of a transparent and empirical encounter. Relevance criteria hinge on utility and importance indicators. According to them confidence is indicated by:

(1) triangulation and reflexive understanding of inconsistencies; (2) transparency and procedural clarity; (3) corpus construction; and (4) thick description. Relevance is indicated by (1) corpus construction; (2) thick description; (3) local surprise; and (4) communicative validation (p. 344-345).

The term *triangulation and reflexivity* implies that the researcher should approach the problem from more than one perspective and with more than one method. Babbie and Mouton (2006) comment that “Triangulation is generally considered to be one of the best ways to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research” (p. 275).

With regards to *transparency and procedural clarity*, Bauer and Gaskell (2000) are adamant that “clarity in the description of procedures is necessary in all forms

of social scientific inquiry” (p. 347), an aspect of research which is often neglected in scientific books and articles.

Corpus construction is functionally equivalent to representative sampling and sample size in quantitative research. Sampling has been discussed previously. A very general guideline with regards to the quality of sampling or corpus construction is that it should be as wide and deep as possible, given the context (Flick, 2006).

Thick description is another general quality guideline. A thick description usually makes extensive use of verbatim reporting of sources. It is also an attempt to capture the context of social setting in detail (Neuman, 2006).

Surprise as a criterion is indicative of the “open-mindedness” that the researcher should maintain throughout the process including his/her attitude towards the outcome of the research. The researcher should be open to the possibility of being “surprised” by the outcome of the research in the sense that it does not necessarily have to match with his/her expectations. This stance will counter the possibility of presenting selective evidence that decreases the credibility of the outcome.

Communicative validation implies “validating the analysis of interview or text materials by confronting the sources and obtaining their agreement and consent” (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000, p. 348). In this way, either the source or subjects in the research validate that the analysis or interpretations of their words are reflective of their intent.

The above mentioned criteria of quality in qualitative research should be regarded as being general guidelines. Each methodology should, and many have, developed its own criteria based on the methodology and methods. Bauer (2000), for example, makes mention of criteria for content analysis when he

states that in content analysis “the third dilemma is between reliability and validity. In psychometrics, validity can axiomatically never exceed reliability. In content analysis, however, we have a trade-off between the two” (p.144).

The preceding overview of qualitative research informed the decisions made for the research design and methods used in this study.

5.3 Operationalization of the research design and methodology

5.3.1 Personal orientation

In this section a brief personal account of the journey the researcher had with the group that led to this study is given. The reason for providing a brief account of experience with the group is that experience seems to be one of the main factors that determine the research objective (Mouton, 1996).

The journey of study started with observations made while working with groups. These observations were made against the background of some theoretical knowledge about, and experience of, groups the researcher had had, having studied and worked with groups for more than fifteen years. Firstly, when training groups were presented, it was noted that the trainees often found it difficult to create a frame of reference or conceptual framework through which they could explore the dynamics in groups. This was especially the case when the trainees were not exposed to a theory of groups beforehand. Secondly, when it came to making interventions as a group leader, trainees equally found it difficult to determine a focus and purpose of an intervention. These observations lead to the idea that boundaries could be a useful concept to understand and to describe certain dynamics in a group as well as providing a frame of reference for interventions when working with groups.

5.3.2 Objective of the empirical research and research questions

One of the objectives of the study was to explore the concept of boundaries in theory and this was done in the preceding three chapters where the concept was investigated in three different theoretical frameworks. In this part of the study, the focus shifts from a theoretical exploration to an empirical exploration. Empirical is used here in the sense that the assertions made “must not contradict actual observation” (Babbie, 2008, p.6). This implies that the research should be conducted on an actual group and that findings must be supported by observations made of the group which are accountable and credible.

In the theoretical exploration, the focus was on boundary as an abstract concept, or, what MacKenzie (1990), refers to as “psychological dimensions within the group space” (p. 36) as opposed to boundary as a structural concept related to time, membership, role, and task (Singer, Astrachan, Gould & Klein, 1979). The focus on “psychological boundaries” or abstract boundaries will be maintained here.

In the empirical research, which will be described in the following sections, the critical issue was not so much the purpose of the research (which remained the same as for the theoretical research), but the formulation of a research question or questions. Babbie and Mouton (2006) pointed out that if the purpose is to explore then the research questions, related to the purpose, should not, as a priority, attempt to find causes or explanations but rather endeavour to increase understanding and gain insights. Furthermore, the formulation of research questions should not be seen as a once-off activity but something that could and often should be done during different stages of the research (Flick, 2006).

In formulating a question, the fact that there is no existing method to study boundaries in groups should also be taken into account. The question that was formulated for the empirical research process was, therefore, an analytical as

well as a methodological question, asking, “How can boundaries be identified and revealed in a group in such a way that this can lead to further investigation?”

The result of the question would produce a set of data which could be analysed further and for which new research questions could be formulated.

A method was required that would identify and illuminate the role, function, and development of boundaries in a group to lead the researcher to a better understanding of the group dynamics. As a new method it will be subject to scrutiny after the research has been conducted in order to determine its applicability in answering the research problem and also the usefulness for further application.

Whether the objective of the study had been reached will be measured against the reasons for undertaking an explorative study. Babbie and Mouton (2006) list six specific reasons for undertaking an exploratory study:

- (1) To satisfy the researcher’s curiosity and desire for better understanding, (2) to test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study, (3) to develop the methods to be employed in any subsequent study, (4) to explicate the central concepts and constructs of a study, (5) to determine priorities for future research, and
- (6) to develop new hypotheses about an existing phenomenon (p. 80).

5.3.3 Research design: a case study of a training group

In section 5.2.3, the three most common types of qualitative research designs, namely ethnographic studies, case studies, and life histories, have been described. Of these three designs, a case study is the more appropriate design for a number of reasons:

1. It fits in well with the purpose of case studies which, according to Patton and Appelbaum (2003), are to “uncover patterns, determine meaning, construct conclusions and build theory” (p.67).

2. The central aspect of a case study is that it is an intensive study of a single unit or a limited number of units (Babbie and Mouton, 2006; Tesch, 1990; Yin, 2003). The unit used for the research is a training group conducted over a period of five days.
3. A case study design lends itself to combining theory with empirical research. Although Babbie and Mouton (2006) and Yin (2003) differ on the point of whether the research should be related to theory, the position of Yin (2003) is chosen where he regards theoretical exploration as an essential part of the research process. The role that theory played specifically in the application of the research method is described in the sections that follow.

5.3.3.1 Sample and sampling method

In this study, purposive sampling, in particular, criterion sampling, was used. In purposive sampling, the objectives of the research guide a series of strategic choices to select the sample (Given, 2008, pp. 697-698).

Based on the purpose and objective of the research, the following criteria were applied in order to choose a group for the research:

1. The group had to be a small group (6-10 members).
2. The duration of the group had to be sufficiently long in order for data to be gathered over a period of time.
3. All participants had to formally agree that the data from the group could be used for research purposes.

5.3.3.2 Description of the training group

This section describes different aspects of the training group case study.

Rationale for the format of the group

The chosen format for the training group was a process group. A process group is a group that studies its own behaviour. It is a powerful training format because it offers an opportunity for both intellectual and experiential learning (Swiller, 2011, pp. 263-264).

Aim of the group

The primary aim of the training group was for the participants to gain knowledge about the dynamics and leadership of small groups. A secondary aim was for participants to learn more about themselves in the context of participation in a small group. These two objectives were clearly conveyed to the participants. The aim of the group was, therefore, aligned with Yalom's (1995) statement about training groups. He stated that "a training group, though it is not a therapy group, is therapeutic in that it offers the opportunity to do therapeutic work" (p. 522).

Duration

The duration of the training group was 5 days. During the first three days, participants were provided with an opportunity to experience being a member of a small group. On days four and five theory on small group behaviour was presented to the group, and participants were able to apply techniques and skills of leading groups practically.

Description of actual group

Selection: The number of participants was restricted to 10. Registration for the training group was open to people working with groups or those wanting to know more about the functioning and utilization of groups.

Participants: The group consisted of ten members and two group leaders. Four of the members were male and six female. Of the four male members, one was black and three white, and of the six females one was black, one Asian and four white. Ages varied between 23 and 34 years. All the members had some experience with groups and an interest in working with groups in an educational, community development, and/or an organizational setting.

Presenters: Both the group leaders were registered as clinical psychologists with the Health Professions Council of South Africa. They had both been working with small groups in different contexts over a period of more than fifteen years. They had also presented courses and workshops similar to the workshop described above on a number of occasions. One of the leaders was in the dual role of leader and researcher. The participants were informed about the research and they all signed a consent form (See Appendix F Consent Form). The impact of the dual role on the group dynamics is discussed in Section 7.1.2.2.

Preparation of participants: The participants were prepared for the first three days of the workshop by giving them the following description of how the group would be conducted, what they could expect, and what would be expected of them.

You have all received the previous e-mail with the practical arrangements. Here is some additional information on how the group will be conducted.

The first three days will provide an experience of being a participant in a group. This will, and should be, a unique experience that makes this course or workshop different from most other courses in group facilitation. The facilitators, G and D, will not introduce a topic or content but instead this will unfold as the group progresses. After the group has progressed for a while (a few hours) we will take a break from the group and reflect on what has happened in the group, and from then on we will do this at

regular intervals. The main purpose of these reflections is to capture and make sense of the experience and of what has been happening in the group. To “make sense of” what is happening in a group is one of the most essential aspects of being a good facilitator, but, at the same time, something that is not easily taught. The first three days usually take a fair amount of energy so expect to be a little tired at the end of each day.

The fourth and fifth days will be practical and partly theoretical. I will be presenting and facilitating the last two days without D, who will co-facilitate the first three days.

You do not have to prepare anything. Please bring a book in which you can make personal notes (see Appendix E: Communication to the participants, for letters to the participants prior to the training group).

Procedure: As indicated in the preparatory note to the participants, sessions were alternated by in-group and out-of-group experiences. The group consisted of 11 in-group and 2 out-group sessions. The out-group sessions took place after sessions 8 and 11. During the out-group sessions, participants reflected on their experiences and events in the group. These sessions predominantly followed an inductive approach where the dynamics were interpreted and analysed on an intuitive basis rather than from a theoretical perspective. The purpose of these short out-group sessions was for the participants to learn to identify, describe, and make sense of the evolving events that impacted on the group. They also served the purpose of identifying experiences and incidents that could be linked to theory during days four and five.

The group was presented in a training facility of one of the major universities in South Africa. The first day started at 09h00 and the rest at 08h30. Every day finished at about 16h30. A total of eleven in-group sessions took place over three

days, with four on the first day, four on the second day, and three the third day. A session lasted approximately ninety minutes.

Frame of reference: The frame of reference applied in the facilitation of the group was a combination of frameworks rather than an attempt to adhere to one specific framework. Neither of the two group leaders took a definite stance adhering exclusively to one framework. One leader had received more emphasis on the living-system theoretical framework in his training as a psychologist, and the other more emphasis on an analytical theoretical perspective. In concurrence with group analysis, the group started with a “free floating discussion”. The leaders regarded themselves to be both leaders and members of the group and interventions alternated between individuals and the group-as-a-whole, sometimes focusing on the group and sometimes focusing on the individual. In the group, care was taken by the leaders to make a clear distinction between the in-group and out-group sessions. The out-group sessions provided an opportunity to reflect on what had ensued prior to the out-group and not to continue work in the group.

5.3.4 Collection of data

The research question, as stated previously, viz. “How can boundaries be identified and revealed in a group in such a way that they can lead to further investigation?” required data of the group for the duration of the group. A video recording, which could be transcribed and analysed at a later stage, was, therefore, made of all the in-group sessions. Some of the distinct advantages, which contribute to the accountability, of using text and more specifically video recording as data are that it can be replayed and reworked, for example the transcript of the audio and visual material can be improved and the sequence of talk is preserved (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004, p. 162).

5.3.5 Deciding on a method of data analysis

In this section, a description of the method used for the data analysis is given. An account of how the method was applied is provided after this. Given the objective, research question, context, and data of the research, as described previously, the essential requirements for a research method were that it should be able to (a) work with narrative as the main source of data; (b) explore and allow for theory building rather than hypothesis testing; (c) work with data that was collected over time; (d) work with the whole set of data; and (e) make provision for the analysis of parts of the data in detail.

Based on the above criteria and reasoning, qualitative content analysis was chosen as the primary method of analysing the data. Apart from meeting the mentioned criteria for data analysis, content analysis is a flexible method that could be adapted to the specific needs of this study. The following reasons serve as further motivation for choosing content analysis as the basic method to explore boundaries in a group:

1. It is well suited and particularly designed to analyse text of large quantities (Mayring, 2003). The transcribed text totalled 172 A4 pages which can be regarded a relatively large quantity of text.
2. Content analysis can be applied over the full extent of the text gathered over a period of time (Wilkinson, 2004). This statement is also supported by Bauer (2000) who describes six content analysis research designs of which the third is, “a longitudinal analysis of text from the same context over a period of time. This allows us to detect fluctuations, regular and irregular, in content, and to infer concomitant changes in the context” (p. 135).
3. It can be combined with case study as an approach to research (Kohlbacher, 2005).
4. It allows for further analysis, interpretation, and explication of small parts of the text in detail (Mayring, 2003).

5. The method allows for both an inductive and deductive processes (Kohlbacher, 2005; Mayring, 2000; and Patton, 2002).

Despite the suitability of content analysis as a research method for this study, a specific application of the method had to be designed. The method used had both an inductive process and a deductive process. The inductive process was a thematic analysis where themes were identified on a latent level. On a latent level, the human factor is important which requires the researcher to be intensely involved with the data (Patton, 2002, Neuman 2006).

The specific procedure of deductive analysis was derived from Mayring's (2000, 2003) procedure of qualitative content analysis. Mayring (2000) describes the main idea of the method as, "to preserve the advantages of quantitative content analysis as developed within communication science and to transfer and further develop them to qualitative –interpretative steps of analysis" (para. 2). In Figure 5.1 the steps of the Mayring's (2000) deductive approach are shown.

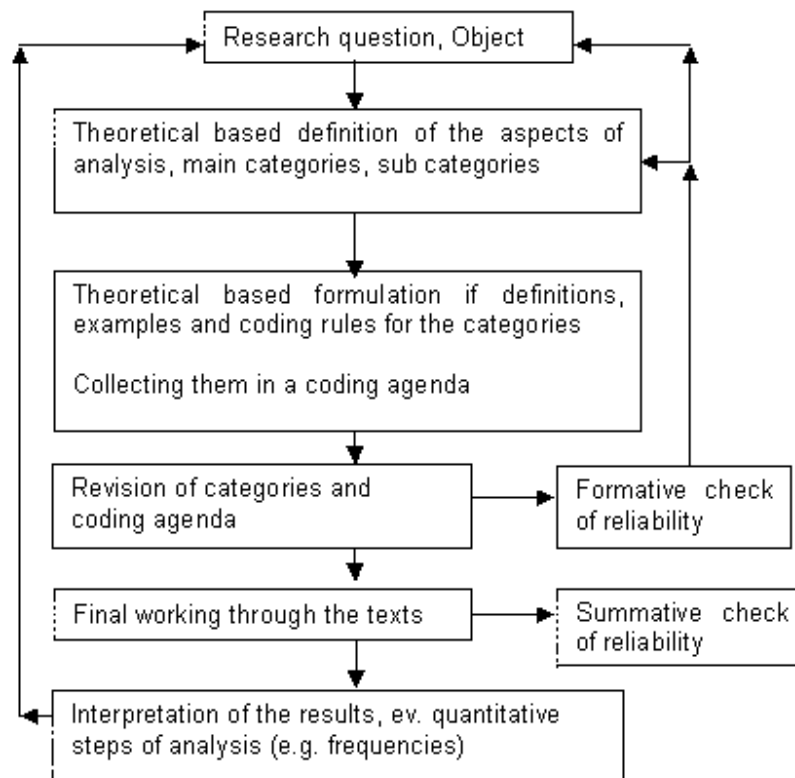


Figure 5.1. Reproduction of Step model of deductive category application; Mayring, 2000, para. 14.

A central concept, and also a big advantage, of the model is that it is an iterative process, making provision for multiple opportunities to revise each step.

In the model, a pivotal procedure is to develop categories that can be applied in the analysis of the content. According to Mayring (2000), the deductive category application “works with prior formulated, theoretical derived aspects of analysis, bringing them in connection with the text” (para. 13, 17). For each category there has to be a definition, prototypical text passages, and rules for distinguishing different categories from one another. These categories then have to be applied consistently for the whole text.

The theoretical derived aspects (second step in Mayring’s approach as displayed in Figure 5.1) used in the research are the components of a group based on the

formulation and conceptualization of a group system by MacKenzie (1990), which is presented in Figure 5.2.

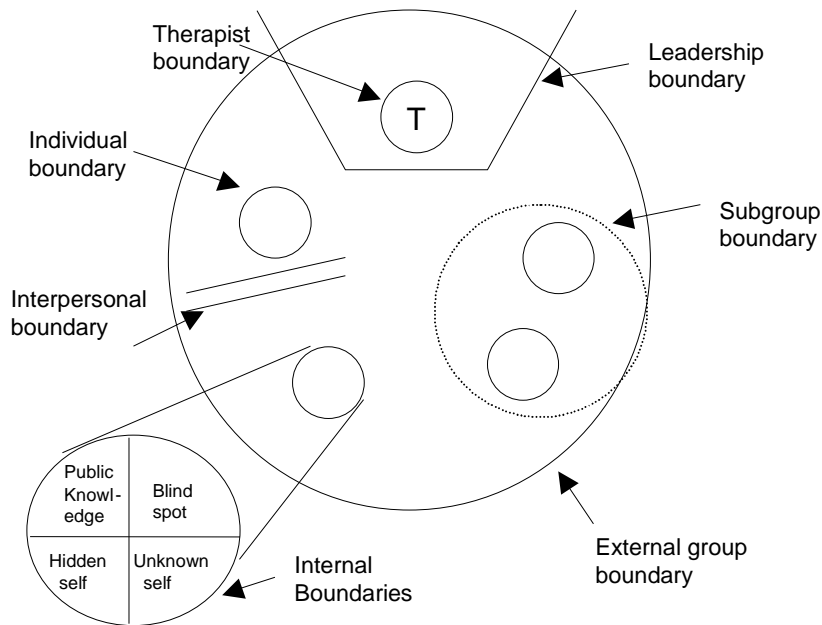


Figure 5.2. General systems model, Mackenzie, 1990, p.36.

The figure displays a series of components and boundaries. The reason why MacKenzie's (1990) conceptualisation of a group is particularly relevant for this part of the study is that it combines the components of a group with boundaries. This led to the idea that, if the most important component at stake during a particular point in time in the conversation can be identified, the accompanying boundary can also be identified.

In the representation there are five components of a group system, namely the individual or self, member, the group, subgroup, and group leader. These components, with the accompanying boundaries, were used as a basis, but then adapted to form the categories for deductive content analysis. The adaptation and application will be described in the section on the applied process of content analysis.

After a brief description of the choice of a computer software programme which was used in the analysis of the data, the procedures of how content analysis was applied in the analysis of the data are described.

5.3.6 Computer assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS)

Rapid developments in both technology and software have made the use of computer-assisted data analysis common practice.

In the beginning of the 1980s, few researchers made use of computers and specialised software to analyse data qualitatively. The mid-1980s saw the emergence of a variety of computer programmes to support qualitative data analysis, summarised in Tesch's ground-breaking book on the subject, published in 1990. A few years later, in 1995, Weitzman and Miles reviewed 24 programmes, specifically focussing on choosing a programme to assist research. At the time, they divided the programmes into five clusters according to the capabilities or strengths of the programmes. The content of both of these books is largely outdated owing to the rapid development of hardware and software. Packages such as Atlas.ti and NVivo are respectively in their 6th and 7th versions, and the need to categorise programmes based on strengths or capabilities is also largely redundant as these programmes combine all the previous clusters of capabilities in one package.

The current reason for choosing a specific programme seems to be based less on its capabilities than on the availability and familiarity of a programme in a specific institution. In this regard Gibbs (2007) commented that, "at the time of writing (in 2007) three programs seem to be the most frequently used by researchers" (p. 107). The three programmes that he discusses are Atlas.ti, v.5; MAXqda v.2 and NVivo, v.7. He concludes that all three share very similar features:

- Import and display of rich texts;

- The construction of code lists, in most cases as a hierarchy;
- Retrieval of text that has been coded;
- The examination of coded text in the context of the original document; and
- The writing of memos that can be linked to codes and documents. (p. 107)

The software programme that was chosen for this study was Atlas.ti v.6, which is the newest version created and distributed in December 2009. In addition to the above mentioned features, it also provides tools for mixed method analysis with direct links to create output for Microsoft Excel which was particularly helpful for this study.

There are many advantages to using computer assisted analysis, such as higher accuracy, accountability, and transparency (Gibbs, 2007), which contribute to the quality of the research. In mentioning the advantages, he also cautions that the interpretation of the data is still the responsibility of the researcher and also that the computer has the possibility of creating distance from the data. In the next section, the specific method of analysis is discussed and how it assisted the researcher in submerging himself in the data rather than creating a distance.

5.3.7 Applied process of content analysis

A tailored content analysis method for exploring boundaries in a group was developed. In the sections that follow, the process and details of how the specific method was applied are described. An overview of the process of data analysis is provided Figure 5.3.

Applied process of content analysis

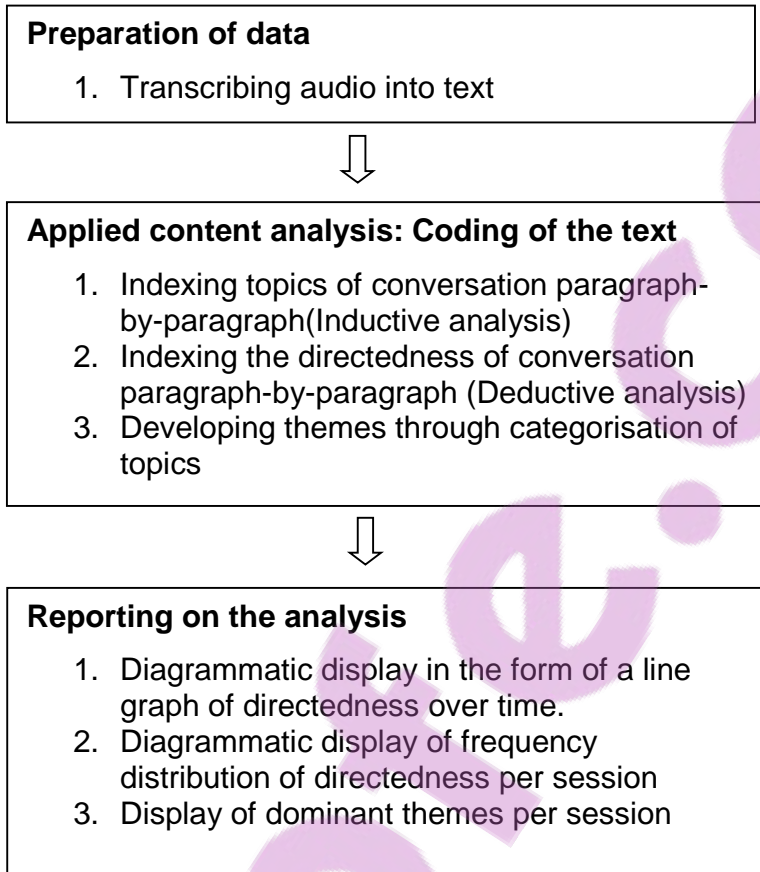


Figure 5.3. Applied process of content analysis

5.3.7.1 *Preparation of the data*

In the preparation of the data for analysis, the audio/visual material had to be transcribed into text. The eleven in-group sessions, as described earlier, were treated as separate units, and the conversation of each session was transcribed word for word. Whenever a new person started speaking a paragraph was indicated. The paragraphs were introduced with the initial of the person who was speaking. The

sessions, as well as the paragraphs, were numbered for referencing purposes (see

Appendix G: Transcriptions of session 1, 5, 7, 8).

The decision on how much detail should be included in the transcript was informed by two guidelines: (a) Titscher, et al. (2000) suggested that the method of data analysis should inform the decision. The main method used for data analysis is qualitative content analysis which requires a full transcript but not in as great detail as, for example, would be a requirement for critical conversation analysis; (b) the second guideline used was to apply Tesch's (1990) typology as discussed in 5.2.10. The current research falls into the category of research that seeks to discern meaning, which does not require a great amount of detail in the text.

As a result of applying these two criteria, all words (content) were transcribed but without detail such as timing of pauses, para-verbal and non-verbal phenomena, etc. The sessions were numbered from 1 to 11 and all paragraphs were numbered in sequence with a sub-number under the session number.

5.3.7.2 Coding of the text

1. In the first step of the process of analysing the content, the text was treated on a level of current reality where every paragraph was indexed with a topic. A topic-index captured the essence of the content the speaker was speaking about. Each session was first read through to get an impression of the whole, after which each paragraph was indexed starting from the beginning of the session. A paragraph often had to be read and reread in order to ensure that the essence was captured in the index.

This method is a form of line by line open coding where the index is derived from the text. Gibbs (2007) describes the advantage of this form of open

coding as, “that it forces you to pay close attention to what the respondent is actually saying and to construct codes that reflect their experience of the world, not yours or that of any presupposition you might have” (p. 52).

2. In the second step, a unique procedure was designed and applied specifically to identify boundary movement. This step involved indexing the text with a second index through a deductive category application process. The process is based on Mayring’s (2000) deductive categorisation process, and the categories are based on MacKenzie’s (1990) conceptualisation of a group (see description under 5.3.5).

In the development of categories the concept of directedness was employed in conjunction with the components of a group (MacKenzie, 1990) to identify which boundary was at stake during any given point in the conversation. Directedness refers to whom or what the topic that is under discussion is aimed or directed at. The underlying assumption is that for every different directedness, a different boundary is at stake, implying that when the directedness changes, the boundary at stake changes.

Using MacKenzie’s (1990) components of a group, the conversation could be directed at:

1. Self (The person who is speaking refers to him- or herself.);
2. Member (The conversation is about or directed at another member.);
3. Leader (The conversation is about or directed to the leader.);
4. Subgroup (The conversation is about or directed to two or more people clustered together.);
5. Group (The person who is speaking refers to the group-as-a-whole.); and
6. Other (Reference is made of people outside the group.) In one instance the directedness fell outside the above mentioned 6 categories. This was when the topic was used in relation to itself. An additional category was created for these cases, viz.
7. Abstract (The conversation refers to the topic itself.) This then covers the

case where no group component with an accompanying boundary could be identified.

The categories, definition of application, examples, and coding rules are provided in Table 5-1.

Table 5-1 Categories for deductive content analysis process

Category of directedness	Operational Definition	Prototypical text passage	Coding rule
Self	In discussing the topic (already indexed at this stage) reference is made to the self.	"My name means ..."	Dialogue is in 1 st person. Person is saying something about him- or herself. Verbalising thoughts about self.
Member	The topic is used in relation to another group member or members. The person whom it is directed at must be in the group.	"Does your name have a special meaning, Heinrich?"	Person or people addressed are in the group but they are not grouped together. Question is being asked or feedback given to a member.
Group	The topic is used in relation to the group as an entity. Reference is being made to mutuality.	"We are struggling to give ourselves a name,"	It must be clear that whole group is referred to.
Subgroup	The topic is used in relation to two or more	"You seem to share something that I	Two or more members in the

	group members who are grouped together.	don't understand."	group are grouped together.
Other	Dialogue refers to a person or people outside the group.	People of "that" culture are like	Person or people referred to are outside the group. More than merely using people as an example to make a point.
Leader	Dialogue is directed at the leader in the group.	"I need to see someone during the break. Can I leave early?"	The leader is addressed in his role as leader.
Abstract	Theoretical discussion of the theme without reference to a specific person or people.	"Relationships are like a flow of energy between people."	Providing an opinion that is not self-revealing. Use abstract even when reference is made to people in using them as an example. Not addressing someone.

The above described procedure was applied to the whole text where a directedness-index was attached to each paragraph. At the end of this step in the analytical process, each paragraph had an index indicating the topic (topic index) and an index indicating the directedness or main boundary (directedness-index) at stake for that paragraph.

3. In the third step of the coding process of the text, the indices arrived at in the first step were organised or categorised into themes through an inductive analytical process. A theme consisted of a number of topic indices which

were interrelated. This can also be seen as a coding hierarchy where a number of topics are categorised under a theme. A coding hierarchy is depicted by Gibbs (2007) as “codes that are similar kinds of things or that are about the same things are gathered together under the same branch of the hierarchy, as siblings of the same parent” (p. 73).

The purpose, and also the advantage, of thematising the topics indices is that it created workable units. It is a method of summarisation in order to reduce the data to a workable volume for further analysis. Summarisation should not be seen as merely reducing the text but rather as a way of extracting the essence of the text (Tesch, 1990). The results generated, which in this case would be the identified themes, could be used for further analysis during the next stage of the research process.

An example of one theme and its definition with the associated topics for the theme is provided below.

Theme: Self disclosure and emotional security. *Description:* Risk and benefits of self-disclosure in relation to the group context; more specifically the emotional security provided by and experienced in the group. *Associated topics:* (a) apprehension of self-disclosure; (b) authenticity and transparency; (c) honesty and emotional security; (d) self-disclosure/investment and emotional security; and (e) self-confidence and emotional security.

Below is an extract from a part of session 4 after the transcript of the conversations was coded (for the full example see Appendix A: Coded transcription of session 4).

4.1	G: Should we go for another little while?]	a&fp_Administrating participation~
	[Silence]		dir_Group~
4.2	J: I almost sighed]	a&fp_Administrating participation~
	[Laughter]		dir_Self~
4.3	J: I wish		
4.4	G: Ja		
4.5	D: Then you did		
	[Laughter]		
4.6	N: I'm thinking that the introverts are very tired now.]	a&fp_Administrating participation~
	[Laughter]		dir_Abstract~
4.8	K: Even the extroverts]	a&fp_Administrating participation~
	[Laughter]		dir_Abstract~
4.9	N: I mean, people, the whole day		a&fp_Administrating participation~
4.10	H: Don't lie		a&fp_Administrating participation~
4.11	N: sorry?		a&fp_Administrating participation~
4.12	H: Don't place labels on people now		dir_Member~ pid&d_Label/lab
4.13	P: I think that - I was thinking about this earlier. Is, this would actually be an excellent teambuilding strategy. As opposed to making people play games - and I don't have anything against that, please don't take this the wrong way - but I think that a lot of insight comes into a session like this. If you throw 10 people together who are in the same department and you leave them to start making conversation on their own. I think that it's a good way to bond. I actually feel that I know all of you to a certain extent, maybe not personally, but, in a way, how you work, what you think. So I think that if you were to go into a teambuilding to use this on a first day it would probably work quite well as opposed to making people walk 10 feet up in the air		dir_Abstract~
			group_Group/team building activity
4.14	S: It would be interesting, though, if you do that in a context of a team that works together, if it comes to them easily or if they just talk about work, if you don't give them a subject.		dir_Abstract~
			group_Group/team building activity

Figure 5.4. Extract of coded transcript of conversation during session 4

5.3.7.3 *Quality of the data and research process*

The quality of the data and research process were ensured by transparency and procedural clarity (Bauer and Gaskell, 2000). Every step is fully described and is open to verification. Examples of the quality of the transcriptions of the text of five of the 11 sessions can be found in Appendix G: Transcriptions of session 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9.

The Atlas.ti software that was chosen for the study makes it possible to verify and scrutinise every step in the process. The full version of the coded text, the definitions of the codes and how they were clustered are “saved” and can therefore be scrutinised independently of the researcher.

5.3.7.4 *Ethical considerations*

Each participant received a letter beforehand in which the following aspects were addressed: that the training group would be used for research purposes for a PhD, that the identity of the participants would be protected at all times and that consent could be withdrawn at any time (See Appendix F Consent Form). All participants gave written consent that the group could be used for research purposes.

A formal research proposal was approved by the Post Graduate and Ethical Committee of the University of Pretoria before the research commenced. The Ethical Committee provided clear ethical guidelines regarding issues such as the preservation of data, which were adhered to in the study.

5.3.7.5 *Reporting on content analysis of the text*

Based on the analysis of the text as described above, three outputs were created. The outputs and presentations of the results were extracted through using the Atlas.ti 6 software and exported to Microsoft excel for graphing. In each case a general example is provided.

1. The first output is a figure which indicates how directedness, and boundaries at stake, changed over time. The numerical basis of this output is the percentage of paragraphs falling into each directedness category for each session. It provides an analytical view that quantifies the status of the group from the perspective of the overall directedness of the conversation. Changes in directedness would indicate changes in the boundaries at stake. The

graphical display consists of line-graphs indicating how the directedness categories changed for every session. The trend of a specific directedness could be followed for the duration of the group. The graph can also be analysed as a whole where the directedness categories can be compared with one another for the duration of the group. An example is provided Figure 5.5.

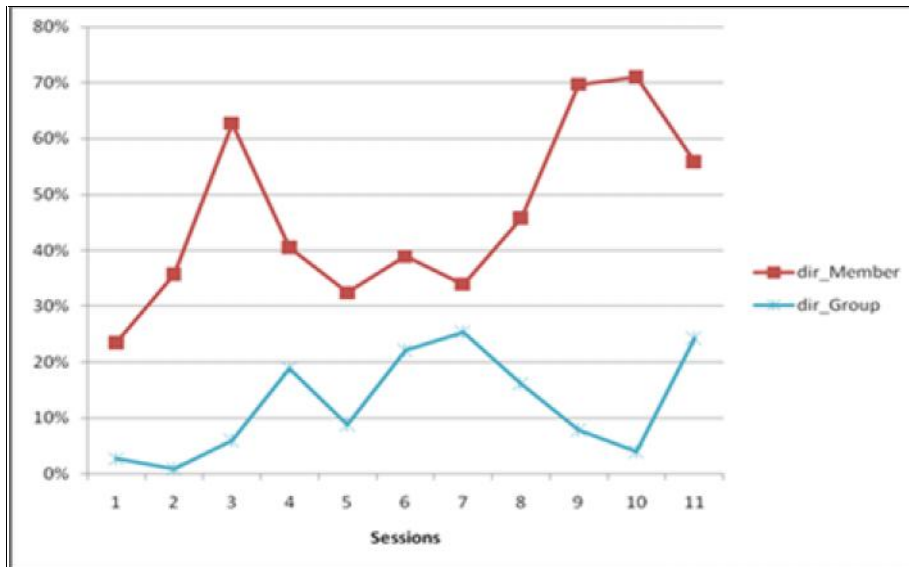


Figure 5.5. Example: Line graph indicating two directedness categories.

In the example, only the distribution of the member directedness and group directedness categories are provided. In the display of the actual results all the directedness categories will be displayed on a one line graph. The results of the directedness categories can also be expressed as stacked columns which could make the comparison between sessions easier.

2. In the second output, the frequency distribution of the directness of the conversation for each session is displayed as a pie diagram. The numerical basis of this output is the same as for output 1, but the display focuses on a single session. The advantage of using a pie diagram is that it highlights, in a graphical way, the relative prevalence of the different directedness categories. The diagrams can be studied individually or in comparison with one another.

3. The third output is a display of the dominant themes per session. The numerical basis of this output is the percentage of paragraphs falling into each theme for each session. The themes will be displayed in a stacked column where a column represents the total conversation for a session. Based on the percentages, the dominant themes for each session can be identified and displayed.

In Figure 5.6 an example of the frequency distribution of the directedness categories for a session is given, and in Figure 5.7 the dominant themes for the same session is provided. In the display of the actual results all the sessions will be displayed in a similar format (see Appendix C: Pie charts of directedness of the conversation for all sessions).

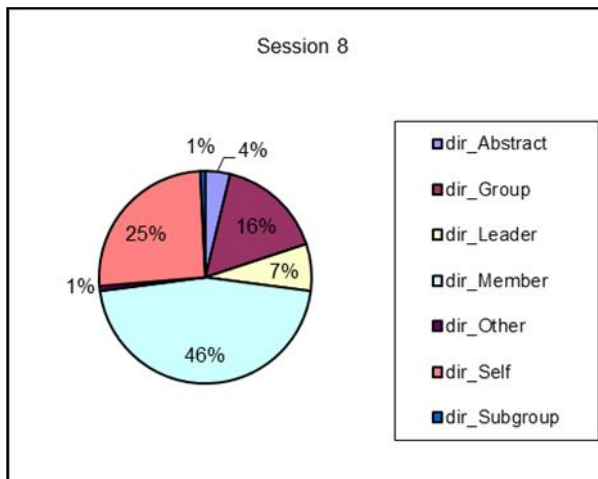


Figure 5.6. Frequency distribution for directedness categories: Session 8.

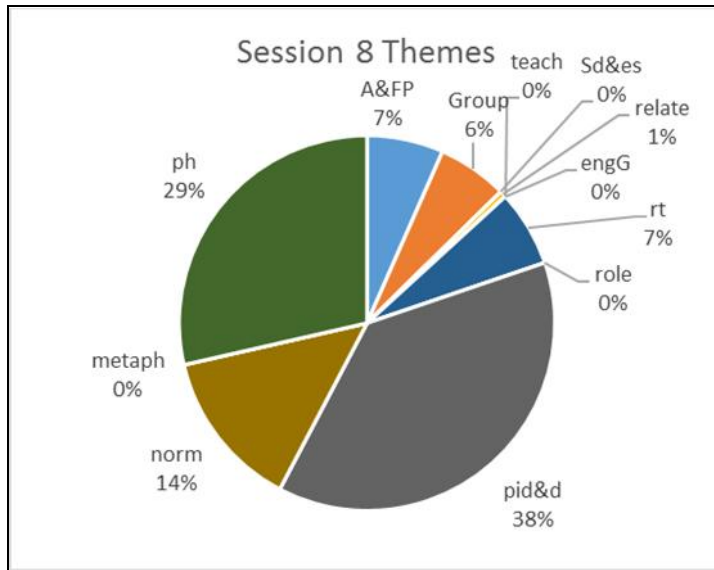


Figure 5.7. Dominant themes: Session 8.

The process of how the three sets of outputs, as described above, were interpreted and explicated is described in the next section.

5.3.8 Interpretation and explication of results of the content analysis

The interpretation and explication of the textual analysis should be viewed as a further analysis of the first phase of the analytical process. This phase is a layered or staggered process where the second and third steps build on the previous steps where each step analyses and explicates in more depth.

Process of interpretation of results

Interpretation and explication of results of content analysis

1. Interpreting distribution of directedness to determine boundary focus and changes;
2. Explicating boundary movement through thematic analysis; and
3. Further explication through application of theory.

Figure 5.8. Steps in the process of the interpretation of the results.

1. The first task undertaken in the interpretative process was to study and analyse the distribution of the directedness over the 11 sessions in order to determine boundary movement. This was done without taking the themes or content into account. The questions that were answered were, which boundaries were at stake, and what changes of boundary-focus took place? The 11 sessions, displayed in stacked columns and a line graph, were analysed and compared. Special note was taken of trends, gradual shifts, sudden changes, and the dominance of specific directedness during sessions.
2. The second step involved viewing the results of the thematic analysis in conjunction with the boundary movement.
3. The third step in the interpretative process was to elucidate the outcomes of the first two steps from a theoretical perspective. It basically entailed a merger of the results and the interpretation of the results with the theory. Up to this point the empirical research and the theory had been dealt with separately. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) emphasized the importance of doing the empirical and theoretical research separately and thoroughly before they are put together, "To merge the text of data with other text(s) in the literature and

to forge your own argument and take your own position cannot happen without a broad and thorough knowledge of both the texts – the empirical and the theoretical” (p. 108).

In the next chapter the results of the empirical research process will be displayed, analysed, and interpreted.

Chapter 6

Interpretation and explication of results

6.1 Introduction

In the section that follows, the results of the content analysis are displayed and then interpreted and explicated. This phase is a staggered process where the second and third steps build on the previous steps where each step analyses and explicates the previous step.

The first step comprises a display and discussion of the frequency distribution of the directedness of the conversation. The frequency of directedness indicates the frequency of conversation across a certain boundary. Changes in frequency would, therefore, indicate changes in boundaries affected by the conversation. The process of identifying directedness and boundaries affected by the directedness was described in section 5.3.7.2. In the second step, the thematic distribution is used to explicate the outcome of the first step. In the third and final step, the outcomes of the first and second steps are elucidated from a theoretical perspective. Theoretical links are not yet being made; that is the task for the next and final chapter.

6.2 Interpretation of the distribution of directedness and effect thereof on boundaries

In the first chart the frequency distribution of the directedness is displayed as 100% stacked columns. The percentages indicate the portion of the total quantity of the directedness of the conversation. A stacked column is appropriate for highlighting the distribution of directedness in a single session and is, therefore, more suitable for intra-session analyses.

The second chart displays the same data used in the stacked column chart as a line-graph. A line-graph provides a longitudinal overview, and it is more conducive for inter-session comparison of the distribution of the directedness. Both charts also indicate the grouping of the 11 sessions into 6 periods. The basis for grouping the sessions into periods is provided in the description of the periods. A description and analysis of the charts follows after the display Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2.

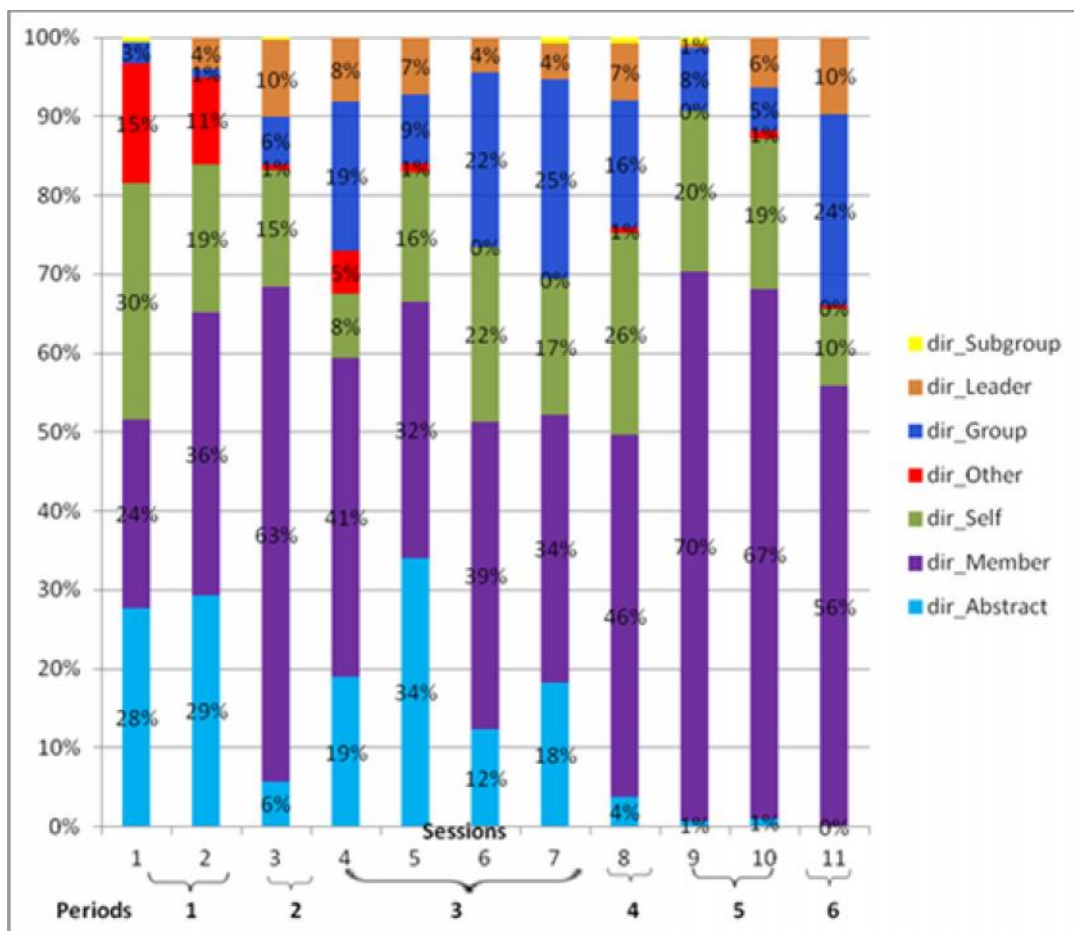


Figure 6.1. Stacked columns: Frequency distribution of directedness per session.

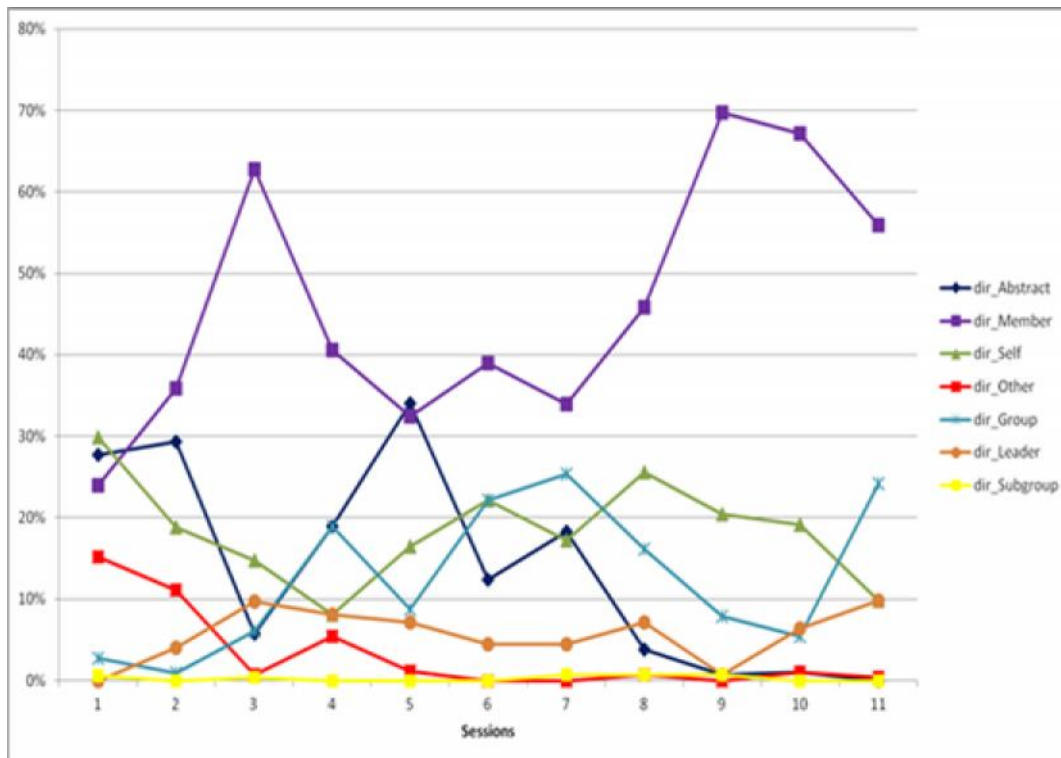


Figure 6.2. Line graph: Frequency distribution of directedness per session.

In the analysis of the data a heuristic approach is followed, anticipating that meaning and significance would be revealed through an inquisitive description of the data. The description is divided into six periods:

- period 1: sessions 1-2;
- period 2: session 3;
- period 3: sessions 4-7;
- period 4: session 7;
- period 5: sessions 9-10; and
- period 6: session 11.

A period is indicative of a segment of the total, identified by what occurred during that period. The periods do not at this stage suggest a sequence or phase development of the group, although the possibility that the analysis could reveal phases of group development is acknowledged.

At the end of the analysis of each period, a summary is provided that captures the essence of the specific period.

6.2.1 Period 1: sessions 1- 2

Sessions 1 and 2 are grouped together based on the observation that in both sessions the frequency distributions of four directedness categories are significantly higher than the rest. Self-directedness, indicating the self boundary, constitutes 25% of the total quantity of the directedness; abstract directedness, indicating the abstract boundary, constitutes 29%; inter-member directedness, indicating the inter-member boundary, constitutes 30%; and other directedness, indicating boundaries external to the group, constitutes 13% of the total directedness of the conversation for the period.

A significant feature of the first period is that other-directedness and abstract-directedness together constitute 42% of the total directedness for the first period. Other-directedness and abstract-directedness are indicative of there-and-then conversations and boundaries in focus mainly external to the group.

Summary of period 1: Boundaries external to the group, as indicated by abstract and other directedness, feature dominantly at 42% of the total quantity of the directedness of the conversation. The inter-member boundary, as indicated by the inter-member directedness, constitutes 30% and the self-boundary, as indicated by self-directedness, constitutes 25% of the total directedness of the conversation.

6.2.2 Period 2: session 3

There is a dramatic shift in directedness between period 1 and period 2. Period 2 consists of only 1 session, namely session 3. Three features distinguish the

second period from the first period. Firstly, there is a dramatic shift in member-directedness from an average of 25% in period one to 63% in period two. This implies that members are addressing one another, and the interpersonal boundaries between members in the group are in focus for almost two thirds of the conversation during this period. The only other period, during which the interpersonal boundary features so prominently at above 60%, is much later during period 5. Other features that distinguish period 2 from period 1 are a dramatic decrease in abstract-directedness from 29% to 6%, as well as other-directedness from 13% to 0% of the total directedness during the mentioned periods. Another feature that distinguishes period 2 from the other periods is that leader-directedness is high compared to the other periods, constituting 10% of the total directedness during this period.

Summary of period 2: Member-directedness increased dramatically from an average of 30% in period 1 to 63% in period 2. This rise indicates a shift from boundaries in focus external to the group to boundaries in focus internal to the group, specifically inter-member boundaries. At the same time, there is a dramatic decrease in other- and abstract-directedness, respectively from 29% to 6% and 13% to 0% of the total directedness of the conversation. These decreases support the shift from a focus on boundaries external to boundaries internal to the group.

6.2.3 Period 3: sessions 4 - 7

Period 3 is characterized by a high member-directedness constituting 37% of the total directedness for this period. A second feature of the period is a sudden rise in group-directedness from 6% in period 3 to 19% in session 4. The four directedness categories that feature prominently and consistently in period 3 are group-directedness, self-directedness, member-directedness, and abstract-directedness. Group-directedness, indicating the group boundary, constitutes 19% of the total directedness; self-directedness, indicating intrapersonal-

boundary, constitutes 19% of the total directedness; member-directedness, indicating the inter-member boundary, constitutes 37% of the total directedness; and abstract-directedness, indicating boundaries external to the group in the there-and-then, constitute 21% of the total directedness of the conversation for this period. Although they do not feature as prominently as the others, leader-directedness, indicating the leader-member boundary in focus, also features fairly highly at 6% of the total directedness for this period.

Period 3 resembles period 1, but there is a significant contrasting feature, and that is that other-directedness is replaced with group-directedness as the fourth dominant featuring category of directedness. This indicates a shift from a focus on boundaries external to the group in the there-and-then to the group-boundary which separates the external from the internal.

Another outstanding feature of the third period is that, in session 5, abstract-directedness is higher in comparison to all the other directedness categories and also at its highest compared to all the other sessions. Boundaries in the there-and-then are, as a consequence, very prominent during this session but not in the whole period.

Summary of period 3: There is a dramatic change in boundary focus from period 2, where inter-member boundaries dominated, to period 3, where many boundaries feature consistently. The group-boundary features prominently through a high frequency of group-directedness in the conversation. There is also a high abstract-directedness, signifying boundaries in focus external to the group. This is most prominent during session 5 of the third period. Leader-directedness, signifying the group-leader boundary in focus, features consistently in all the sessions of this period.

6.2.4 Period 4: session 8

The distinguishing features from period 3 to period 4 are the sudden and significant drop in abstract-directedness from an average of 21% to 4% and an accompanying rise in member-directedness from an average of 37% to 46%. Self-directedness is also up from an average of 19% to 26%. The decrease in abstract-directedness has been gained by member- and self-directedness. This shift is indicative of the group moving away from conversations in the abstract there-and-then and the accompanying external boundaries, to a conversation in the here-and-now and the accompanying focus on intrapersonal and interpersonal boundaries.

Summary of period 4: Period 4 is characterised by a marked shift in directedness, indicating boundaries external to the group, in period 3 to directedness, indicating boundaries internal to the group. Boundaries internal to the group that feature dominantly are the intra- and inter-personal boundaries. The two boundary categories are indicated by the self-directedness and member-directedness which respectively constitute 46% and 26% of the total quantity of the directedness of the conversation for period 4. Abstract directedness, indicating boundaries external to the group, is at a low of 4% of the total directedness of the conversation during the period.

6.2.5 Period 5: sessions 9 -10

Period 5 consists of sessions 9 and 10. These two sessions display very similar averages of directedness. Member-directedness, which is indicative of inter-member boundaries, is very dominant in this period, averaging 69% of the total directedness of the conversation. The second highest directedness for the period is self-directedness indicating intra-personal boundary at an average of 20% which, although significantly less than member-directedness, is still more than double any other directedness. The member-directedness and self-directedness

together constitute 89% of the total directedness for the period. Based on the directedness, self- and inter-member boundaries feature dominantly in this period.

Another differentiating factor between period 5 and the other periods is that, for the first time, abstract-directedness and other-directedness are down to a non-significant 1% of the total directedness for this period.

Summary of period 5: During period 5, member-directedness together with self-directedness, respectively indicating inter-member and self-boundaries, constitute 89% of the total directedness of the conversation for the period. At the same time, directedness categories which are indicative of boundaries external to the group are less than 1% of the total directedness of the conversation for this period.

6.2.6 Period 6: session 11

The most distinctive features of period 6 are a 50% decline in self-directedness, and a sharp increase in group-directedness. Group-directedness has increased from an average of 7% for period 5 to 24% in period 6. The self boundary in focus during the previous period has been replaced by the group boundary in focus during this period. Member-directedness, indicating the inter-member boundary in focus, has also declined, and leader-directedness, indicating the leader-group boundary in focus, has increased to 10% which is equal to its previous highest reached during period 3.

Summary of period 6: In the last period, there is a significant increase in group-directedness, signifying that the group boundary has become more important and is more in focus. Simultaneously there has been a decline in self-directedness which indicates that intra-personal boundaries are less in focus, and, as a consequence, members are revealing less personally. The leader-group

boundary, as indicated by the leader-directedness, is high compared to the other periods.

6.3 Boundary movement explication through application of themes

In the next section, themes are utilised to explicate the boundaries in focus and boundary movement as identified in the analysis of the directedness of the conversation in the previous section. The purpose is not to explore the themes but to utilise the themes as a second level of analysis to explicate boundaries in focus and boundary movement. The approach is heuristic, making provision for discovery and new or different understanding.

In the first part of this section, a description of the themes is provided after which the frequency distribution of the themes is presented in chart format consisting of 100% stacked columns. In the second part of the section, the themes are applied to the results of the analysis of the directedness.

6.3.1 Description and display of themes

In the analysis of the transcribed conversation of all the group sessions, 12 themes were identified. The themes are listed alphabetically below. A theme consists of a number of topic indexes which are interrelated (see discussion of method for full description). A theme can also be seen as a coding hierarchy where a number of topics are categorised under a theme in order to create a workable unit. The topics were first identified and coded in the text, and the topic codes were then categorised to constitute a theme. In the first screen capture from Atlas.ti shown in Figure 6.3, an example is provided of coded text. Each line of conversation is coded with a *directedness category* as well as a *thematic topic*.

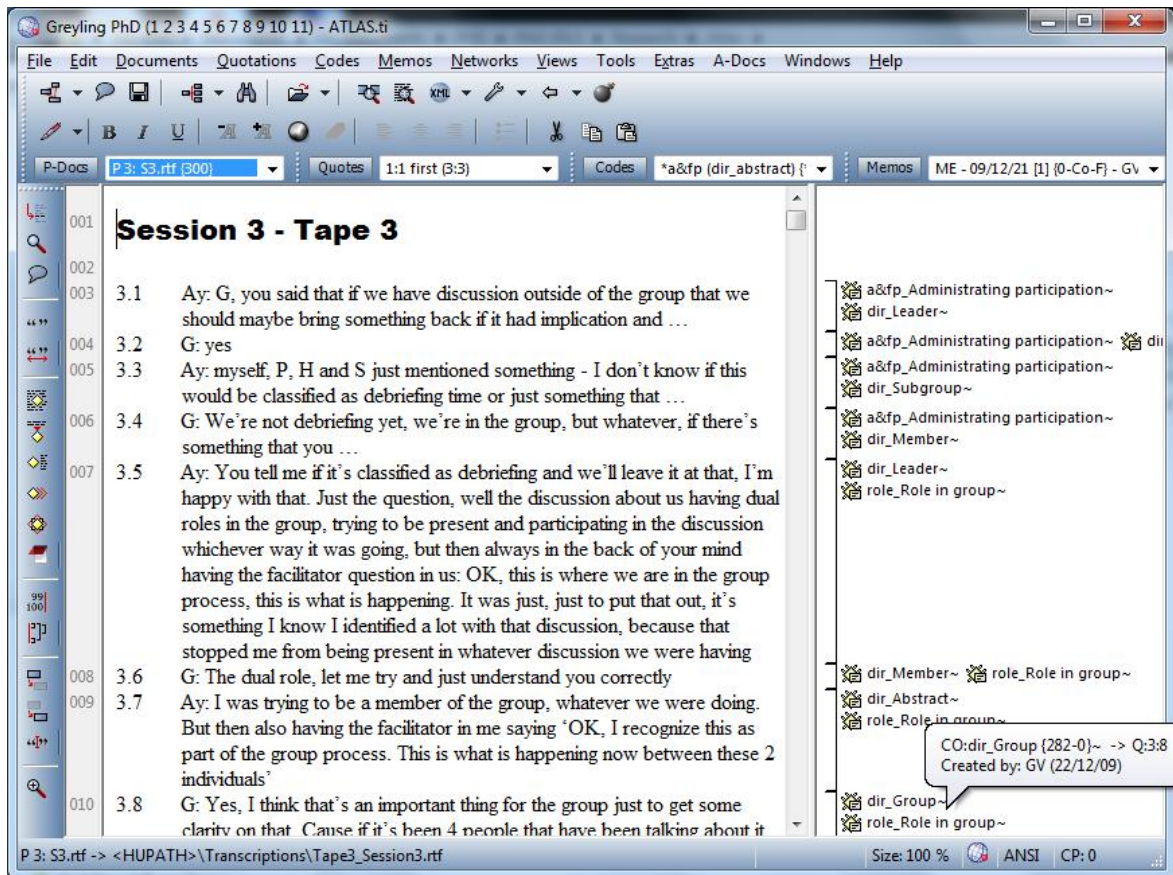


Figure 6.3. Screen capture from Atlas.ti of coded text.

The second screen capture in Figure 6.4 shows the list of themes. The topics for the highlighted theme of *administering & facilitating participation* (a&fp) are also shown. In Atlas software a theme is referred to as a family. In the screen a total of 13 families are presented, which consist of 12 thematic families and 1 directedness categories family.

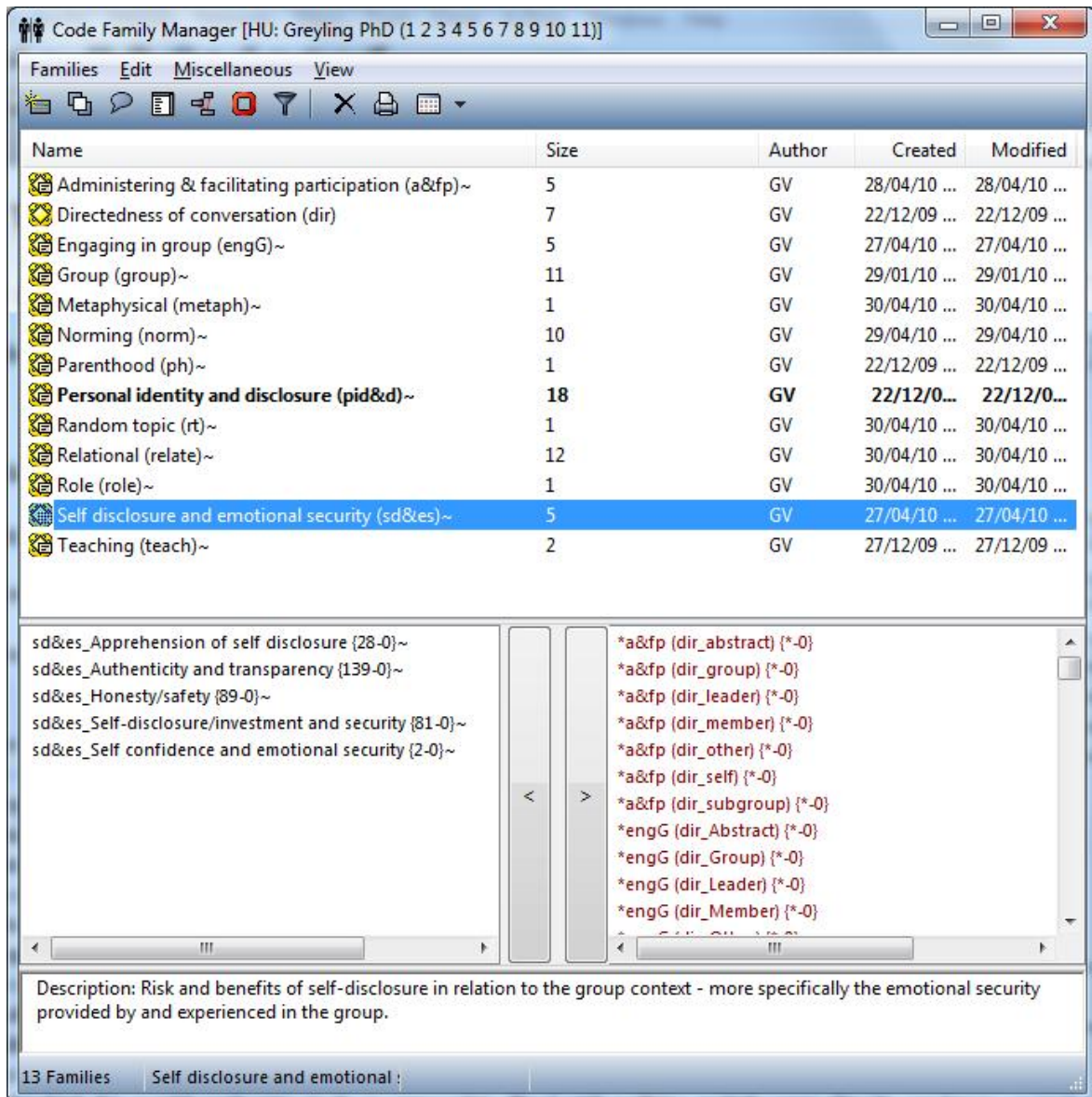


Figure 6.4. Screen capture of themes as they appear in Atlas.ti.

The list of themes, with a brief description, is provided below, together with topics under each theme. The abbreviations in the parentheses are the codes that were used in the analysis of the transcribed conversation (also see Appendix B: List of themes and topics as they appear in Atlas.ti).

Theme 1: Administering & facilitating participation (a&fp).

Description: Participation in the group is facilitated through guidance and clarification of communication as well as invitations to speak or elaborate on a comment or point made. Practical arrangements, such as time and membership, are also administered. The theme consists of the topics: administering participation; clarifying communication; clarifying interpersonal interaction and communication; inviting to speak or elaborate; and regulating temperature.

Theme 2: Engaging in group (engG).

Description: Engagement on a personal and emotional level with the group is the central theme in the group conversation. The conditions of engagement, effect of engaging and disengagement or not engaging, as well as types of engagement are discussed. Reference is also made to personal disclosure as part of engagement with the group, but it is not the central topic in the discussion. The theme consists of the topics: conditions/type of engagement; effect of non-engagement; effect of engagement; engaging/disengage with the group; and lack of disclosure.

Theme 3: Group (group).

Description: The group, as-a-whole, is the subject of discussion, and the group is referred to in the third person. The theme consists of the topics: group as experimental space; group atmosphere; group common interest; group development; group facilitation; group occupation (future); group transition; group/team building activity; incident in group; purpose and usefulness of group; and group seating arrangements.

Theme 4: Metaphysical (metaph).

Description: The conversation revolved around topics of a metaphysical nature, such as energy or forces of nature. The theme was indexed in the text with only one topic, energy flow/transpersonal.

Theme 5: Norming (norm).

Description: Rules pertaining to participation in the group, including frequency and pattern of participation, reciprocation, giving and receiving feedback, etc., are discussed. The theme consists of the topics: appropriate participation in the group; equal participation; external party; group pressure to participate; inviting or giving permission for feedback; membership negotiation; the order of participation; permission - seeking and giving; reciprocal relationship; and response choice/freedom.

Theme 6: Parenthood (ph).

Description: Different aspects of parenting and parenthood are discussed. The relationship between parents and children, raising children, and the meaning of being a parent formed part of the conversation on this theme. The value structure underlying parenthood and parenting feature prominently as part of the conversation on the theme. In the text the theme was coded with the topic-index: parenthood.

Theme 7: Personal identity and disclosure (pid&d).

Description: Personal information that may not be known or obvious to the group is communicated in the group. This includes disclosure of personal history, preferences, vulnerabilities, relationships, etc. The theme consists of the topics: dependence/Independence; family/cultural heritage; identity/self-defining; introducing self; label/labelling; learning/insight through revealing and exploring in group; life goal; marital/partner relationship; mirroring; name/naming; need to be needed; occupation/career; physical reaction/tremors; rebelling; self-confidence; self-expectations; stability versus change; and vulnerable/not being in control.

Theme 8: Random topic (rt).

Description: A topic that does not fit with the other themes and which does not have an obvious relevance to the purpose of the group is discussed here. The theme consists of one topic only, smoking.

Theme 9: Relational (relate).

Description: Topics are discussed that are associated with interpersonal relationships. In most instances direct reference is made to relationships in the group. The theme consists of the topics: being understood/misunderstood; burdening versus voluntarily helping; effect – interpersonal; effect of participation; being open/closed; gaining value/learning; getting or seeking help; intent and effect; judging in relationships; layers (distance) in relationships; personal versus member's needs; personalising communication and valuing others; and feeling worthy.

Theme 10: Role (role).

Description: The discussion in the group revolves around the participants' function and functioning in the group. Through the conversation, clarity is gained on role boundaries and which are viewed as being appropriate roles in the group. The theme is indexed in the text by the topic, role in group.

Theme 11: Self disclosure and emotional security (sd&es).

Description: Risk and benefits of self-disclosure in the group are discussed. Implicit in the theme is the experience of emotional security or lack thereof in the group. The theme consists of the topics: apprehension of self-disclosure; authenticity and transparency; honesty/safety; self-disclosure/investment and security; and self-confidence and emotional security.

Theme 12: Teaching (teach).

Description: Teaching as a profession, including the relationship between teacher and pupil, is discussed in the group. The theme consists of two topics, lecture/lecturing, and teachers/teaching.

6.3.2 Frequency distribution of themes

In Figure 6.5 the frequency distribution of the themes is presented in chart format consisting of 100% stacked columns. The percentages indicate the portion of the quantity of the total conversation that a theme features during that particular session. The periods, as identified during the analysis of the directedness, are also indicated.

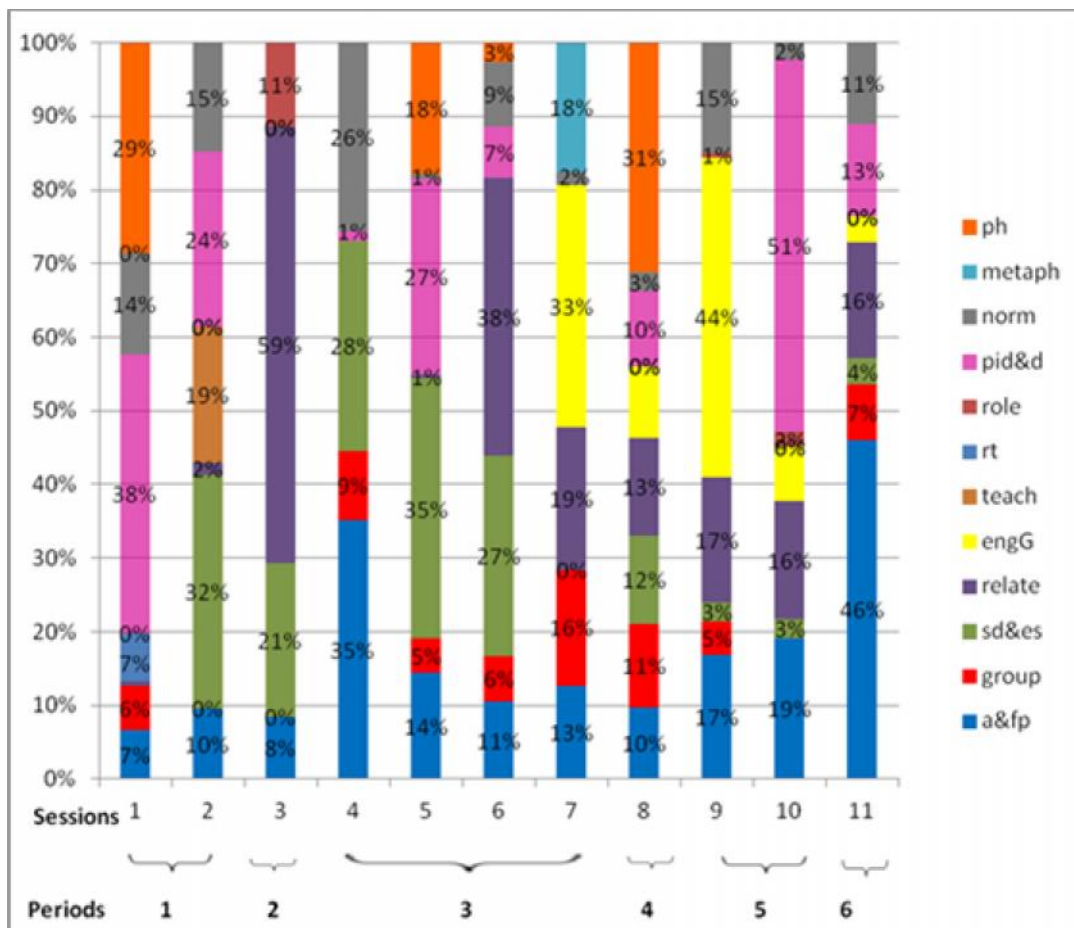


Figure 6.5. Frequency distribution of themes per session.

In the previous section, which analysed the directedness of the conversation, the most important findings for each period were summarised at the end of the discussion. In this section, the summaries are repeated at the beginning of the discussion of each period. The themes are then applied to, and discussed in conjunction with, the summary of the directedness and boundaries indicated by the directedness. The endeavour is to provide possible explanations for boundary dynamics identified in the previous section.

6.3.3 Period 1: sessions 1- 2

Abbreviated summary of period 1: Boundaries external to the group are in focus for almost half of the total conversation. The inter-member boundaries and self-boundaries together constitute the other half of the conversation.

Discussion and explication through thematic analysis:

The dominant theme during period 1, comprising sessions 1 – 2, was personal identity and disclosure, averaging 35% of the total conversation for the period. The conversation centred on aspects that constitute personal identity, such as vocation, qualifications, parenting, etc., but the participants did not actually reveal much about their own personal identities, and the topics were not expanded on personally .

In session 1 the dominant two themes were parenthood, comprising 29%, and personal identity and self-disclosure, comprising 38% of the conversation. Parenthood is discussed mostly in an intellectual and abstract sense where it is not personally applied or related to members in the group. The value structure underlying parenting and parenthood is discussed as part of the theme. The theme of parenthood reappears as a dominant theme during period 4. The significance and difference of the reappearance will be discussed in the analysis of period 4.

In the second session of period 1, the theme self-disclosure and emotional security emerges as the most dominant theme, comprising 32% of the quantity of the total conversation. The second most prominent theme is personal identity and disclosure, comprising 24% of the total conversation. The difference between the two themes is that, in personal identity and disclosure, the self is the subject of the discussion, whereas, in self-disclosure and emotional security, the self within a context is the essence of the conversation. The main issue addressed in the second session, as part of self-disclosure and emotional security, is authenticity and personal transparency. The theme is addressed primarily in an abstract and impersonal manner.

In the second session, teaching also features prominently as a theme, comprising 19% of the conversation. A question that was raised as part of the theme related to whether teaching is a calling or not. Calling was related to caring, implying that, if teachers are not committed to the calling, they do not care as much as they should. There was agreement that teaching is not about the content alone, but also the relationship between the teacher and the pupil and the personal development of the pupil.

When the results of the thematic analysis are combined with the boundary analysis, it would seem that a lack of emotional security is the reason for a high focus on boundaries external to the group as opposed to internal boundaries. The thematic analysis revealed, furthermore, that the group experiences a risk in relaxing personal boundaries when the context or conditions are not “safe” enough. At the same time, while for large parts of the conversation the boundaries in focus are the self- and inter-personal boundaries, the accompanying themes are dealt with in an impersonal and intellectual manner. The group is addressing the issue of security in an indirect way and, most likely, unknowingly.

For the group it may be too early to work in the here-and-now, but the preparation is being done to work in the here and now.

6.3.4 Period 2: session 3

Abbreviated summary of period 2: The inter-member boundaries are in focus for almost two-thirds of the total conversation of the period. Boundaries in focus external to the group have decreased significantly compared to period 1.

Discussion and explication through thematic analysis:

The dominant themes during the second period are relational, constituting 59% of the total conversation, and self-disclosure and emotional security, constituting 21% of the total conversation for the period. Topics that were discussed in the group as part of the themes were personal revealing and the effect thereof on the recipient or listener as well as the risks involved in being honest and transparent.

The group contemplated the relationship between revealing personal information and experiencing a sense of security and trust in the group. They speculated about the effect that personal disclosure may have on the relater as well as on the receiver, arguing that, when the information is not sensitively received, it created an emotion risk for the relater, and, at the same time, the receiver could be burdened by the information. Two topics that were discussed as part of the themes were reciprocity in revealing and emotional supportive responses.

In the conversation, members were addressing one another indicating interpersonal boundaries in focus, and themes were addressed in the context of the group. Examples from the lived world external to the group were related to the here-and-now in the group. From a boundary perspective, the group were, based on the analysis of the content of the conversation, deliberating and negotiating the permeability of personal and interpersonal boundaries, by addressing topics such as emotional risk and emotional supportive responses.

During period 2 the inter-member directedness, indicating the interpersonal boundary, constituted 63% of the total quantity of the directedness, was combined with the theme relating, which constituted 59% of total quantity of the conversation, thereby making the interpersonal relations on both a boundary and content level the main focus of the group.

The reason why the leader directedness is at its peak during this period is that the leaders were fairly active in assisting the group to explore the issue of boundary permeability.

6.3.5 Period 3: sessions 4 - 7

Abbreviated summary of period 3: During period 3, many boundaries are in focus as opposed to the inter-member boundaries which were dominant in period 2. The group-leader boundary did, for the first time, come into focus during period 3 through an increase in transactions across the boundary.

Discussion and explication through thematic analysis:

The first significant feature of thematic analysis of the third period is the dramatic thematic shift. In period 2 the dominant theme was relating, which constituted 59% of the total quantity of the conversation. The theme of relating was, however, not sustained into the third period. During the third period, the theme of relating decreased dramatically from 59% in period 2 to 0% in the first session of period 3. The member directedness, signifying the inter-member boundaries, also decreased significantly from 63% in period 2 to 37% in period 3.

The most dominant theme during the third period was administering and facilitating participation which constituted 28% of the total conversation for the period. The second most dominant theme, self-disclosure and emotional security, constituted 22% of the conversation. In both of these themes, rules and conditions of engaging with one another in the group stood out as significant

topics in the conversation. This is essentially boundary setting and boundary clarification.

Towards the end of the third period, a new theme emerged, namely engaging with the group. During the seventh session, it constituted 33% of the conversation. In both, the themes of self-disclosure and emotional security and engaging with the group there is an emotional component. Whereas, in the first part of the period, the conversation centred on conditions and rules of engagement, in the last part it shifted from conditions to emotional engagement. On a topic level, the group made a distinction between intellectual engagement and emotional engagement, and the group established that both are required for members to feel secure in the group.

When the boundaries in focus, as indicated by the directedness of the conversation, are combined with the themes of the conversation, the contrast between the two becomes evident. The analysis of the directedness of the conversation indicates that many boundaries are in focus at different stages, but boundaries external to the group dominate. The thematic analysis reveals a focus on the topics of interpersonal relations and group as-a-whole. The discussion, therefore, revolves around interpersonal and group boundaries, but the conversation is in the abstract and not applied to the interpersonal relations in the group or the group boundary.

In comparing the third session with the second session, it is notable that, although the boundaries in focus as indicated by the directedness are very different between the two sessions, the thematic content of the third session creates a continuation between the two sessions. In the second session, the directedness indicates predominantly interpersonal boundaries in focus, and, in the third session, the thematic content implies interpersonal boundaries and the group boundary.

6.3.6 Period 4: session 8

Abbreviated summary of period 4: A dramatic shift occurs from period 3, where boundaries external to the group featured prominently, to period 4 where the focus is on boundaries internal to the group.

Discussion and explication through thematic analysis:

During this period, the dominant theme was parenthood, which constituted 31% of the total quantity of the conversation. This was, however, not the first time that the theme of parenthood had been prominent. It had featured prominently in the first session of first period, in the fifth session of the third period, and, then again, in the period under discussion here, the fourth period.

In both the first and third periods, abstract-directedness was particularly high, signifying an abstract and impersonal conversation with boundaries external to the group in focus. In contrast to these two periods, the inter-member directedness dominated in period 4, constituting 46% of the total quantity of the directedness of the conversation. The inter-member directedness is indicative of inter-member boundaries. The second most dominant boundary in period 4 was the self-boundary, indicated by self-directedness, which constituted 26% of the total conversation. At the same time, abstract directedness was down from 21% in session 3 to only 4% in period 4. In period 4 the theme of parenthood was, therefore, applied in a personal and interpersonal sense. Whereas in periods 1 and 3 the value structure underlying parenting and parenthood was explored as a concept, in period 4 the value and effect of parents and parenthood was explored on a personal and interpersonal level in the group. Although the theme was repeated in the three periods, the boundaries in focus shifted from external to internal to the group.

Another noticeable distinguishing aspect between period 4 and the previous two periods is the difference in the featuring of the theme of personal identity and

emotional security. In periods 2 and 3, the theme of personal identity and emotional security featured significantly at respectively 21% and 22% of the total quantity of the conversation in the relevant periods. In period 4 it dropped notably to 12% of the total conversation. This movement supports the notion that the group had adjusted from talking about themes in the abstract to exploring the topics in the context of the group.

6.3.7 Period 5: sessions 9 - 10

Abbreviated summary of period 5: Transactions across the inter-member boundaries and self-boundaries constitute 89% of the total conversation for this period. Boundaries external to the group are less the 1% in focus.

Discussion and explication through thematic analysis:

The dominant themes in period 5 were engaging with the group, constituting 44% of the total conversation during session 9, and personal identity and disclosure, constituting 51% of the total conversation during session 10.

In the first part of period 5, in session 9, the main boundaries in focus, as indicated by the directedness of the conversation, were the inter-member boundaries in the group. The theme of engaging with the group was, therefore, applied and explored in the interpersonal context of the group. The conversation was very direct and even interpersonally confrontational between members in the group. The issue that the group grappled with on a content level was the extent to which members were emotionally engaged in the group. One of the main topics of discussion was whether intellectual engagement was sufficient or whether it should be accompanied by emotional engagement. The majority of the members agreed that engagement with the group was indicated not only by intellectually partaking in conversations but also through revealing something about one's self on a personal level, thereby connecting with the members on an

emotional level. Members in the group confronted those who said that they were engaged in the group but who maintained closed personal boundaries.

A circular and interdependent relationship between the group boundary, the personal boundary, and interpersonal boundaries came to the fore during this period. This relationship is illustrated with a brief description of what took place on a content level, mainly during session 9 of period 5. Prior to session 9, one member made a statement that he had decided before the group commenced that he would participate in the group by being an observer rather than an active participant. In session 9 the group took issue with him about this statement, particularly in the light of the distinction that was made between intellectual and emotional engagement with the group. The issue was resolved when the particular group member entered the “feeling space” as the group referred to it. He did that by revealing something personal which was accompanied by an emotional component to the group. In that moment, when he relaxed his personal boundary, the boundary between him and the group members became permeable, and, at the same time, the group felt that all members were inside the boundary of the group space.

In the second part of period 5, in session 10, the dominant theme was personal identity and disclosure which constituted 51% of the total conversation for the session. This is almost double the previous highest of 27% which had occurred in period 3. The theme coincided with a high of 67% inter-member directedness which is indicative of interpersonal boundaries. This implies that the group members were revealing something about themselves to the group whilst the group was exploring that which they revealed with them in the context of interpersonal relations in the group.

The fifth period, and in particular session 10, was the only time that the dominant theme of personal identity and disclosure coincided with equally dominant interpersonal boundaries.

6.3.8 Period 6: session 11

Summary of period 6: Transactions across the group-member boundaries increased in this period, and, at the same time, transactions across the intra-personal boundaries decreased significantly. The group-leader boundary came into focus.

Discussion and explication through thematic analysis:

In period 6 the dominant theme was administering and facilitating participation which constituted 46% of the total quantity of the conversation. Three other themes were fairly close to one another in occurrence, namely relational at 16%, personal identity and disclosure at 13%, and norming at 11% of the conversation. The increase in group-directedness and accompanying group boundary in focus signifies an increased awareness of the imminent end of the group and, therefore, the increased focus of the group as an entity. The increased leader-group boundary in focus, indicated by the directedness of the conversation, coincides on a thematic level with the high occurrence of the theme of administering and facilitating participation. The group leaders became more active in administering the end of the group and this is reflected in the directedness and identified theme of the conversation.

6.3.9 Summary of periods, combining boundaries in focus with themes

Period 1:

In period 1, the boundaries as indicated by the directedness of the conversation and the content of the dominant themes as indicated by the thematic analysis are in contrast to one another. The dominant directedness, other and abstract, indicates boundaries external to the group. In contrast, the content of the

dominant themes is of a personal and interpersonal nature but the themes are discussed in an abstract and impersonal manner.

Period 2:

In the second period, the boundaries as indicated by the directedness are predominantly internal to the group. The thematic analysis revealed that the inter-member boundaries are also addressed through the dominant theme. Relating, as a theme, constitute two thirds of the total conversation during the period. As part of the theme, the group negotiated the permeability of personal and interpersonal boundaries.

Period 3:

In period 3, there is a movement away from inter-personal boundaries in focus to a variety of boundaries as indicated by the directedness as well as in the themes of the conversation. Period 3 is in contrast to period 2 where the interpersonal boundary dominated in both the directedness as well as the content of the conversation. In period 3, the dominant themes were administration and facilitating participation, self-disclosure and emotional security, and engaging with the group. These themes were addressed mainly on an abstract level. The content is interpersonal but the directedness is impersonal. The group identifies a distinction between intellectual and emotional engagement with the group.

Period 4:

The main feature of period 4 is that emotional engagement is demonstrated or enacted in the group. With it comes a shift from external boundaries to predominantly internal boundaries as indicated by the directedness and thematic analysis. The dominant boundaries during this period are the inter-member and self-boundaries.

Period 5:

In period 5 an interdependent relationship among the group boundary, the personal boundary, and interpersonal boundaries came to the fore. The group boundary is partly established by relaxing personal boundaries and permeable interpersonal boundaries. At the same time, the group boundary influences the emotional security in the group that enables the relaxation of both personal and interpersonal boundaries.

There is, furthermore, reciprocity between the relaxation of personal boundaries through personal revelations and member boundaries being made permeable. Interpersonal revelations coincide with exploration in the context of the interpersonal relations in the group. A significant moment during the session was when a previously resistant member engaged with the group on an emotional level. The identified tension created by intellectual engagement without emotional engagement is alleviated through personal revelation, which included an emotional element.

Period 6:

Period 6 is characterised by an awareness of the imminent end of the group and accompanied increase of group-boundary activity as indicated by the directedness of the conversation. Leader activity increases with an increased facilitation and administration of the end of the group.

6.4 Concluding comments

This chapter set out to display, analyse, and interpret the results of the qualitative content analysis. The phase comprised two steps. Firstly, the results of the frequency distribution of the directedness of the conversations were displayed and discussed. The frequency distribution is indicative of boundaries in focus and how boundaries were affected by the conversation. Secondly, the thematic distribution is utilised to elucidate the findings of the first step.

In the next chapter, the findings of the first two steps are interpreted and elucidated from a theoretical perspective.

Chapter 7

Discussion of results and conclusion

7.1 Integrating theory and the results of the textual analysis

In this section the results of the textual analysis are explored from a theoretical perspective. Theory, from the theoretical frameworks that were discussed and explored in chapters 2-4, will be utilised to elucidate the results of the textual analysis. The results of the textual analysis, in turn, can possibly contribute to theory expansion or theory building.

Two issues, derived from the boundary and thematic analysis, will be addressed from a theoretical perspective.

- 1) The first relates to development in the group. A unique method, based on the directedness of the conversation and not the thematic content, was applied in the analysis of the data to identify boundaries and movement. As a first step, the distribution of boundaries in focus was identified through the directedness of the conversation during a session. Sessions were then grouped together into periods based on a similarity of boundaries, as indicated by the directedness of the conversation, within a period. Periods were differentiated from one another by sudden and significant changes of boundaries in focus. This process and outcome were described in the previous chapter.

In the section that follows, significant boundary changes that occurred in the first three periods will be explored. Period 1 was distinguished from period 2 by a shift from boundaries in focus external to the group during period 1 to boundaries internal to the group in period 2. Internal boundaries in focus are indicated by abstract and other directedness of

the conversation, and internal boundaries in focus are indicated by self and interpersonal directedness of the conversation. From period 2 to period 3 the intense focus on interpersonal boundaries was replaced by a sudden decrease in interpersonal boundaries in focus and an increase in boundaries external to the group and as indicated by abstract-directedness and a focus on a multitude of boundaries. In the analysis so far no links were made with general development or group-phase development according to existing theoretical perspectives. This is the task in the next section.

- 2) The second issue relates to emotional engagement with the group, and the theoretical exploration will focus on period 5. In the fifth period the inter-member boundary and self-boundary as indicated by the member-directedness and self-directedness were in focus for 89% of the total conversation. At the same time, boundaries external to the group as indicated by abstract- and other-directedness constituted less than 1 % of the total quantity of the conversation. When period 5 is compared to period 3, the picture looks radically different. The differences and progression from period 3 to period 5 have been described from a directedness and accompanying boundary perspective as well as a thematic perspective in the preceding sections.

The thematic exploration highlighted this development. In the third period, the group made a distinction between what they referred to as “intellectual” and “emotional” engagement in the group. In the fifth period, one group member revealed that he had decided, prior to the commencement of the group, that he would restrict himself to an observer role in the group and not participate actively in the group. This implied that he would not reveal anything personal about himself and, furthermore, that he would not engage on an emotional level in the group.

The member revealed that the reason for his decision was related to a traumatic experience in the recent past that had affected him and his family profoundly. The trauma was caused by internal events in the family involving a breach of relationship boundaries and trust which had caused extreme emotional pain. The decision not to engage on an emotional level was made with the intent of protecting and restoring relationships in his personal life.

The impact of this member's conscious non-engagement on the dynamics and boundary development of the group will be considered in what follows. How this process unfolded, how it impacted specifically on the boundary development in the different periods, and how the issue was resolved during the fifth period will be illuminated from different theoretical perspectives.

7.1.1 Group analytical perspective

7.1.1.1 Development in the group

In the group analytical framework, one of the main and innovative features is the concept of the matrix. The matrix has both structural aspects and qualitative aspects. Ahlin (1985) emphasises boundary setting as a structural aspect of the matrix, and nourishment and breathing space as qualitative aspects of the matrix. From a group analytical perspective it is possible, and even likely, that the rapid shift in boundaries in focus between periods 1 and 2, and then again between periods 2 and 3, can be attributed partly to an insufficiently established matrix to contain the intense interpersonal focus in period 2. A multitude of boundaries had to be addressed over and above the interpersonal boundary, and, therefore, there was the shift from period 2, where there was an intense focus on interpersonal boundaries, to period 3 where a multitude of boundaries were in focus.

In addition to this, certain developmental tasks were not addressed adequately, which had a negative impact on boundary establishment and development in the group. In the discussion of the theory of group development in group analysis, it was concluded that the group analytical framework proposes a cyclical and task development approach rather than a sequential phase development of the group. Viewed from this perspective one could argue that the group had to make an additional cycle since certain tasks had not been completed. An important developmental task in the first stage is to address boundary issues including confidentiality and security (Pines and Schlapobersky, 2000). In the thematic analysis of the content, one of the dominant themes in the first 3 periods was personal identity and emotional security, featuring strongly in period 1 (avg. 32%), period 2 (avg. 21%), and period 3 (avg. 22%). In period 4 it dropped to 12% of the total conversation. Although some other themes featured in between, the group kept on coming back to security. This supports the cyclical task approach to development in the group. As long as security and trust, not only between members and leaders but also among the group-as-a-whole, were not sufficiently established, the group had to keep on revisiting the area of security. Emotional security was established by addressing a multitude of boundaries over and above the interpersonal boundary.

When the constructs of structure, process, and content, as described by Pines and Schlapobersky (2000), are applied, an interesting dynamic interplay between process and content emerge. In the study, the process is partly indicated by the directedness and the accompanying boundaries in focus whilst the content is indicated by the thematic analysis. In the first period, there is a relative dominance of boundaries external to the group as indicated by the abstract- and other-directedness, compared with the boundaries internal to the group as indicated by the relatively high self- and member-directedness. On a content level, the dominant themes during period 1 were personal identity and disclosure and self-disclosure and emotional security. As a part of these two themes, topics

under discussion included vocation, personal qualifications, parenting, authenticity, and personal transparency. These topics can be regarded as personal, yet they were discussed in an impersonal and abstract manner. On a content level, the topics are of a personal nature but on a process level the group avoided making them personal. There was, therefore, little personal and interpersonal exploration of the topics in the group.

In the second period, the relationship between content and process changed dramatically. In the second period, member-directedness, indicative of the inter-member boundary, is by far the most dominant at an average of 63% of the total directedness, and the theme relational constitutes 59% of the total conversation. On both a process level and content level the interpersonal boundaries were in focus most of the time.

In the third period there seems to be a bigger circularity between specifically process and content where the determining influence of the one on the other is more identifiable. For example, rules of engagement would be discussed on a content level and then applied in the group which would then lead to the further development of the theme.

Another interesting dynamic interplay between content and process occurs when the theme of parenthood is repeated during different stages of the group. Early on in period 1, parenthood as a theme emerges and is then repeated in period 3: session 5, and period 4: session 8. The theme is initially discussed in the group in an impersonal and mainly intellectual manner, for example the group would discuss the value structure underpinning good parenting. When the same theme reoccurs in period 3 and 4 it is utilised for self-revelation by different members in the group, for example a member would reveal what impact his parents have, or had, on him. This revelation would resonate with others who would then reveal their own experiences, and the theme would progressively become more relational.

7.1.1.2 *Resistance in joining the matrix*

In the discussion of the theory, resistance to joining the matrix has been described as a defensive manoeuvre that impacts negatively on the matrix and, therefore, negatively on the development of the group. The flow of communication is affected and boundaries may develop into barriers. In this section, the impact that one member's resistance to join the matrix had on the group is explored from a group analytical perspective with specific reference to resistance to joining the matrix.

In the fifth period, the particular member revealed that he had decided, before the group commenced, to restrict himself to the role of an observer (See Appendix G: Transcriptions of session 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9, paragraphs 10.32, 10.56, 10.69 and 10.127 for relevant parts of the conversation). The dialogue that followed was fairly confrontational, and one member commented that she experienced this member as being "judgemental" and "distant" (See Appendix G: Transcriptions of session 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9, paragraph 10.69 for relevant parts of the conversation). Before making some links with theory, the process leading up to the revelation is described through boundary movement and by highlighting certain themes.

In the third period, the two dominant themes were: administering and facilitating participation; and self-disclosure and emotional security. The reasons why some these theme were dominant were that the group was in the process of establishing norms for engagement and participation, and, at that stage, there was a lack of emotional security in the group which restricted self-disclosure. These reasons will come clear in the description that follows.

As part of these two themes, rules and conditions of engagement played a significant role in the conversation. The main boundaries in focus, as indicated by the directedness of the conversation, were the group boundary and the inter-member boundaries. Towards the end of the period, the content of the

conversation shifted from rules to emotional engagement. On a content level, the group made a distinction between intellectual engagement and emotional engagement and established that both are required in order for members to feel secure in the group (See Appendix G: Transcriptions of session 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9, paragraph 7.121 and further for relevant parts of the conversation). The theme of engagement with the group persisted through period 4 and period 5.

In the fourth period, the group picked up the theme with comments such as, “it almost feels like something’s broken and I want to fix it; the level of safety dropped.” The member was also confronted by the group with statements such as, “... and I don’t know why I experience you as a judge ... so for me that’s where my energy circle is broken.” (See Appendix G: Transcriptions of session 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9, paragraph 8.76 and further for relevant parts of the conversation). Shortly after the incident where the resistant member was confronted by some members in the group, two members made personal revelations in the group which the group explored with them thereby setting an example of what it meant to be emotionally engaged with the group.

In period 5, the group once again confronted the resistant member. He then revealed the reason for his decision not to participate actively in the group. The group experienced this revelation as very different from what he had done until then. One member summarised the experience by saying that it felt as if he was “entering the feeling space” of the group (See Appendix G: Transcriptions of session 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9, paragraphs 10.275 – 10.285 for relevant parts of the conversation).

From a group analytical and boundary perspective, the resistant group member caused a blockage in communication. He became a focal point in contrast to being a nodal point. In the development of the group, it progressively became evident that the resistance to joining the matrix caused a blockage or barrier in the flow of communication. On a transference level, the blockage was caused by

a significant traumatic experience in the recent past of the particular member. In his decision to restrict himself to the role of an observer he did, however, not take into account the effect that it would have on the group. The group analytical principle of “individual restrictions affecting the group” (Foulkes, 1964; Pines, 1981) is an accurate summation of the cause of hampered development of the group. The individual problem became the problem of the group, and it, therefore, had to be dealt with by the group.

The effect that a self-imposed individual-restriction had on the group can also be elucidated from a group space perspective. Hinshelwood's (1994) interpretation of the group space as a reflective space where emotional links are made between members in the group is particularly applicable to the dynamics in the group described above. Owing to the fact that the individual member restricted himself to a predetermined role in the group, he first of all created a restricted reflective space in his own mind, and, as a consequence, reduced the possibility of linking with the group. It was only when he relaxed his own personal boundary that the group could form emotional links and locate themselves in his mental space, and he could locate himself in the group space.

Neri's (1998) view on the group space also comes to mind particularly when the group commented on the individual member's relaxation of personal boundaries that it felt as if he had entered the “feeling space” of the group. Neri (1998) emphasised the space being experienced on a sensory, emotive, and mental level. When the individual entered the “feeling space”, the group as a whole experienced the circulation and reverberation of emotions within the group-as-a-whole contained space.

In the case of the resistant member, the group played a critical role in “translating” the symptom into a formulated problem. The way in which it was done by the group was fairly confrontational, but initial efforts did not have the desired effect. It was only in the fifth period, during session 9, that the group

member was able to tolerate the confrontation, and the group was able to work through the impasse. The earlier confrontational efforts failed owing to the member's becoming defensive and thereby closing personal boundaries. After some members had engaged with the group on an emotional level by revealing personal information and relaxing personal boundaries, a subsequent confrontation of the individual member had the effect that he also was able to relax personal boundaries and reveal his motive for initial reluctance to engagement emotionally with the group. Failed earlier efforts can also be attributed to an insufficiently established group matrix and group boundary.

In the immediate aftermath of the incident where the boundary between so-called intellectual engagement and emotional engagement in the group was integrated, group members started revealing personal information more easily and this was then explored in the group.

Another issue that was addressed during the confrontation related to what Foulkes and Anthony (1965) referred to as a "relaxation of censorship" (p. 56). In the confrontation during the fifth period, the restricted member was informed by the group that they had experienced him as being judgemental and that this had had an inhibiting effect on them. A similar incident occurred earlier in the group, and the member then responded by giving a reassurance on a purely content level to the group. This did, however, not reassure the group. After the restricted member had relaxed his personal boundary and the group felt he had engaged on an emotional level, the issues of censoring and judging were resolved. It seems that, in this case, the issue could be resolved only when the content, or in this case verbal reassurance, was supported by an active demonstration on the process level.

7.1.1.3 Development of an anti-group

The high prevalence of, and preoccupation with, emotional security as a theme could be indicative of an anti-group. On an unconscious level some group members may have colluded with the one member who overtly regarded emotional engagement with the group as perilous. Consciously and unconsciously the group may have become unsafe for some group members and, therefore, there was the resistance to the forming of a group. This was particularly evident during the second period where the inter-member boundary, as indicated by the directedness, constituted 63% of the total conversation, but on a thematic level the themes of relational and self-disclosure and emotional security together constituted 80% of the total content of the conversation for the period.

In the theoretical overview it was, furthermore, pointed out the presence of an anti-group is not necessarily negative for the development of the group, but it can lead to rigid boundaries or a collapse of boundaries which will hinder the development of the group, in particular the establishment of a group boundary (Nitsun, 1996; Urli, 1999). Boundaries which are not rigid or collapsed are established and permeable. Permeable boundaries remain intact, but at the same time allow for the flow of information and energy which will enable members simultaneously to be differentiated from one another and make emotional contact with one another. Urli (1999) commented on a loss of permeability stating that, "If that permeability and motion are lost, and this loss is constant, then 'boundary' becomes 'barrier', a non-flow" (p. 536).

In the group under discussion, one member consciously decided beforehand that he would not join the group on an emotional level through the relaxation of personal boundaries. His decision was based on an experience prior to the group where relaxation his personal boundary had had traumatic consequences. Yet, at the same time, he was quite adamant about the fact that group members should

be allowed to express their own opinions, thereby participating on an intellectual level. In his mind “becoming a part of” may have been equated to losing your own individuality which would constitute a collapse of personal boundaries (See Appendix G: Transcriptions of session 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9, paragraph 10.56 and further for relevant parts of the conversation). A collapse of boundaries would, however, be contrary to the aim of group analysis. In the theoretical section it was clearly established that socialisation is one aim of a group analytical group. (Brown, 1998) Socialisation implies the normalisation of relationships, including maintaining and managing boundaries in relationship, and it does not require or encourage uniformity or a relinquishing of boundaries.

In the case of the training group, maintaining a rigid personal boundary led to overt conflict in the group. The operative dominant psychological mechanisms in the group were transference, projection, and projective identification. The individual member transferred a mistrust of people and a reluctance to develop intimate relationships to the group, making the group the object of transference. Initially the group was tolerant, and to some extent encouraging of the member, but, after a period, when the group situation was secure enough, they started challenging him because progress in the group was restricted. The conflict was resolved when the member relaxed his personal boundary and what had been a barrier became a permeable boundary. This enabled the group to progress and establish an inclusive group boundary. Foulkes and Anthony (1965) describe part of this process aptly, “In the permissive and secure atmosphere of the group, he may let down ‘the iron curtain’ of repression and expose his own vulnerability. He acquires a new flexibility of purpose and the boundaries of his personality are constantly under revision” (p. 154).

7.1.2 Group-as-a-whole framework

7.1.2.1 Introduction

When the theory of the group-as-a-whole tradition is applied, note should be taken of the fact that the group was not conducted according to the technique of the framework. In the theoretical chapter a concluding argument was made that, when the technique of the group-as-a-whole framework of group interpretations only (and sparingly) is applied, the group develops and behaves according to the framework. In the training group, interventions were made on both a group and individual level by both the group leaders and group members and, therefore, the technique of the group-as-a-whole framework was not strictly applied. Certain elements of the theory will, therefore, be applied to the results, but the results of the first phase of the analytical process cannot be interpreted or compared to a group that was conducted according to the framework.

The theoretical chapter on the group-as-a-whole framework was concluded with some working propositions. In the section that follows the applicable propositions are applied and discussed.

7.1.2.2 Application and discussion of propositions

Proposition 1: Anti-thinking is a state of entrapment where boundaries have become barriers.

Anti-thinking is characterised by the diminished capacity of members to connect with their own thoughts and emotions as well as with other group members. There is, furthermore, an attack on leadership (Billow, 2003). Period 2 is a period in the life of the group where anti-thinking was prevalent. In period 2 the main boundaries, as indicated by the directedness of the conversation, were the inter-member boundary at 63%, the self-boundary at 15% and the group-leader boundary at 10% of the total quantity of the conversation. This is the only period in the existence of the group where these three boundaries together were

dominant in the conversation, collectively constituting 88% of the total boundaries in focus as indicated by the directedness. There was a large volume of activity among members in the group, some self-revealing activity, and also some activity between the two leaders and the group. Although the activity between the two leaders and the group constituted only 10% of the total conversation, it is, nevertheless, the highest incidence when it is compared with the other periods.

When the same period is analysed from a thematic level, it becomes apparent that, although some of the topics are of an interpersonal and personal nature, the conversation is in the abstract, and the group members are not applying the content personally or interpersonally. The opportunity presented itself for members to connect emotionally, personally and interpersonally, but they did not. The conversation took place across or “over” the boundaries without making them intra- or interpersonally permeable where members could connect with their own emotions or form emotional ties among one another. The second period is, therefore, characterised by anti-thinking.

The next two propositions will be considered together as the one directs the other.

Proposition 2: Cooperation is no guarantee that learning is taking place in a training group.

Proposition 3: Emotional linking is a pre-requisite for meaningful learning.

The group under discussion was conducted as a training group with the purpose of learning about groups and the conducting of groups. Based on the work by Hinshelwood (2003), it was proposed that a training group may on the surface appear to be very cooperative, but that, despite the cooperation, little learning takes place. For meaningful learning to take place, the group has to be prepared to “suffer meaning” (Billow, 2003, p. 200).

In period 2 there was a high level of cooperation as indicated by the high frequency of the inter-member boundary in focus at 63% of the total quantity of the conversation. At the same time, the thematic analysis revealed that the discussion was on an abstract level and topics and themes were not being applied personally and interpersonally. There was, therefore, an absence of passion which Billow (2003) describes as “an intense mode of ‘experiencing experiences,’ ...more than merely ‘thinking about’ or ‘reacting’ to experiences” (p. 212). In the absence of the passionate dimension of interpersonal experiences in the group, emotive learning was restricted. The situation changed during period 5 when one member revealed his reasons for resisting passion. He revealed that he was not prepared to become emotionally involved with the group and that he had decided this before the group commenced. He also revealed his reasons for the decision together with emotional content which reverberated with the group. After that, the group engaged with one another on an interpersonal level as indicated by the directedness and interpersonal boundary in focus which constituted 69% of the total quantity of the conversation. During this period, the members also applied and explored the topics and themes personally and interpersonally in the group.

Propositions 4 and 5 are discussed simultaneously in the next section.

Proposition 4: Owing to a heightened dread of expressing H, groups in traumatized societies may appear to be particularly co-operative while, in fact, members are disconnected and isolated.

Proposition 5: Trauma leads to a reduced capacity to think.

Previously the situation was described where, specifically during the second period, members were very cooperative but, at the same time, emotionally disconnected from one another. During this period the group reflected elements

of the basic assumption group: I: A/M as described by Hopper (2003a, 2003b). The cooperation was, therefore, superficial, expressed as –H. Also, throughout the first 8 of the 11 sessions, the group was particularly reluctant to express H. It was only during the ninth session that the group could start expressing H through confronting one another and verbalising mistrust of certain members in the group. Anticipated destructive consequences could also have contributed to the reluctance to express H in the group (Bion, 1961).

A possible further contributing factor to a reduced capacity to link in the group is the role that trauma played. South Africa, as a society, was traumatised during apartheid years and is possibly still being traumatised through ongoing violence. Based on the work of Hopper (1996, 2003a), it was concluded in a previous chapter that groups in the South African context are likely to display symptomatic behaviour of the fourth basic assumption. In this state members act between, on the one hand, contact-discarding defences or, on the other hand, fusion-desiring behaviour. It is therefore likely that defensive and emotionally contact-avoidant behaviour by a member were partly motivated by that fact that the group took place in a traumatised society. The group, on the other hand, showed signs of fusion-desiring behaviour with their persistence that group members had to cross the threshold into what they referred to as the “feeling space” of the group.

In addition to this one member specifically stated that his reason for not wanting to become emotionally involved with the group was due to a personal traumatic experience in his recent past that had affected him and his family. He, furthermore, stated that he had decided to be in the role of an observer before the group started.

Another possibility was that this member unconsciously identified with the leader who was in the dual roles of leader and researcher. It is possible that the member was “studying” the group as opposed to actively participating in the group. His lack of emotional engagement can therefore be explained in terms of his chosen

role in the group. This link was however not made explicitly in the group and no additional information can be provided. It remains an important consideration for future research.

When a group or members have experienced trauma it can contribute to a diminished capacity to think and, therefore, link with the group and group members and group-as-a-whole (Symington, 1990). This is most likely to have been one of the largest factors contributing to the decision of the particular individual to restrict himself to the role of an observer in the group and not to become emotionally involved with the group. He described an experience where, during the year prior to the group, he and his family had suffered a trauma that had had a long-lasting effect with which they are still dealing. This experience led to a conscious decision not to engage on an emotional level with the group. Based on the traumatic experience in the past, the thought of relaxing personal boundaries in the group was associated with thoughts of possible catastrophic consequences. In the group, the boundary between him and the group had become a barrier. The traumatic experience could also have had the unconscious effect of reducing his capacity to think and, therefore, to link with the other group members.

Proposition 6: A group in a traumatized society could display amplified attacks on leadership.

It has already been highlighted that, specifically, period 2 displayed characteristics of what Hopper (2003a) described as the fourth basic assumption state. Commenting on leadership during this state, Hopper (2003a) argued that there is quite likely to be attacks on leadership owing to failed dependency.

During the second period, the group-leader boundary, as indicated by the directedness, was in focus for 10% of the total conversation which was also the highest compared to the other periods. In the training group, leadership

challenges were not explicit but rather subtle, with incidences where group members asked the leaders to repeat statements and also passed comments such as “shame on you” after a group leader had tried to elicit a response from a reluctant group member.

The increased focus on the group-leader boundary could demonstrate, or be indicative of, the group being in the fourth basic assumption state in this particular period. The prime indicator that led to the investigation of the period as a possible fourth basic assumption state was the distribution of boundaries in focus, as indicated by the directedness, during the period.

7.1.2.3 Development of the group

Development of the group in the group-as-a-whole framework takes place through an oscillation between the basic assumption group and the work group, and not through progressing through a series of group phases. When investigating development in the group, cognisance has to be taken of the fact that the group was not conducted strictly according to the group-as-a-whole framework and that it was presented as a training group in a limited time frame. Despite this being the case, when the description of the work group by Lawrence (2003) that “They probe realities in a scientific way by hypothesis testing and are aware of the processes that will further learning and development” (p. 95) is applied then the group functioned only as a work group during period 5: session 10. Prior to that, the group was pursuing the survival of the group by establishing and protecting boundaries rather than pursuing the task of the group.

The basic assumption state of the group for the first four periods can be described as fight/flight. The general mood in the fight/flight group is one of paranoia. On a content level, the members would often refer to “judge” and “being judged”. The most dominant theme during the first four periods was self-disclosure and emotional security at an average of 19% of the total conversation

for these four periods. The discussion of the specific topic is indicative of insecurity rather than security in the group. It was only during the fifth and sixth periods that the state of the group changed. During these periods, self-disclosure and emotional security dropped to 3% of the total conversation. The functioning of the group changed, emotional links were formed, and the group actively explored revelations and interactions in the group rather than discussing at an abstract level. An extract from the conversation in the fifth period demonstrates a movement from a basic assumption state towards a work group:

P: It was an answer from your life rather than from a textbook. That's the best way I can say it. K: From a... Yes, it was not an intellectual answer, it was a... A: From your heart and not from your head. P: Yeah, there we go. From your heart, not from your head... Ay: An experience. J: I think you just came into the feeling space (See Appendix G: Transcriptions of session 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9, paragraphs 10.293 – 10.297 for relevant parts of the conversation).

Members, furthermore, invited input and exploration by the group which was positively responded to:

K: I think it's time. Because I have this thing bugging me and I would like the rest of the group's input but I also want to say, I realise H also needs some time during today... Ay: There's two things I've heard. One is the actual shiver and the other one, the growing one which is, it sounds almost like a fear that the shivering will happen. [K agrees] Is that what you experienced the first day, the shivering or the fear?

7.1.2.4 Development through containing

In the group-as-a-whole framework, development in the group is linked to the concept of container/contained. Bion (1963/1984) applied the concept intersubjectively where containing affects both the container and the contained. In the theoretical discussion it was, furthermore, argued that, for the group to progress to a next stage, containment is a prerequisite. When the concept of

container/contained is applied to the periods it becomes evident that for the first four sessions the group was largely uncontained, and it was only in the fifth period that a sense of containment was established.

One of the requirements for a group to act as a container is to have an established group boundary. Ashbach and Schermer (1987) suggest that group development through the development of the group as a container is a progressive process. The first step is the development of a “group definitional boundary” (p. 116). The boundary and thematic analysis of the group showed that the group experienced a sense of group boundary only during the fifth period. This supports the notion that the group did not, or could not, serve as a container in the first four periods because the group boundary was not sufficiently established. A foremost reason for this is the resistance of one member to engage with the group and join on an emotional level, which is elaborated on in the next section.

7.1.2.5 Resistance to engage with the group

The resistance of one member in the group in particular to join the group on an emotional level has been highlighted. In the theoretical overview, an origin of resistance to engage with the group centred on an ambivalent feeling towards the group. Bion (1961) locates the ambivalence in the innate tension between a desire to be an individual and to be part of a group. The individual member's resistance to join the group has been described. His ambivalent feelings towards the group are also clear. An ambivalent feeling towards the group and the consequential resistance to becoming a part of the group is well documented in the group-as-a-whole framework (Symington & Symington, 1996; Billow 2003). On the one hand, the member willingly joined the group with the expressed desire to learn from the group, but on the other hand, he feared the group and expressed an unwillingness to join the group. His ambivalent feeling towards the

group was, furthermore compounded by a recent traumatic experience which led to a rigidity of personal boundaries.

7.1.3 General systems theory (GST) and system-centered therapy (SCT) framework

In the applied process of content analysis, the conceptualization of the group from a systems theoretical perspective, as illustrated by MacKenzie (1990) was used as part of the methodology. How it was applied is described in the chapter on the research methodology.

In this section, other theoretical concepts are applied as examples of how GST and SCT can be utilized to interpret and explicate the results of the content analytical process. They should, however, be applied with caution. On the one hand, GST is a very appropriate framework to apply owing to the fact that boundaries are one of the foundational constructs of the theory (Motherwell and Shay, 2005). On the other hand, applying GST, and more specifically SCT, to the case study group is somewhat problematic. In the technical application of SCT, Agazarian (1997) makes a strong case that the leader should modify boundaries pro-actively and in a predetermined sequence. The group used in this study, was not conducted specifically according to the SCT framework, and the techniques used in SCT were also not specifically applied. When, therefore, the theory is applied retrospectively, note should be taken of the fact that the development in the group could and would most probably have been quite different had the technique of SCT been applied. GST and SCT can, nevertheless, be useful in providing a boundary interpretation of the results of the content analysis.

7.1.3.1 Primary and secondary goals of the group

In the ninth session, the group considered expelling a member from the group. The stated reason was the reluctance of the particular member to become a part

of the group on an emotional level. They also experienced him as being detached and judgemental. From a SCT perspective, in this instance the group was considering extreme measures (expelling a member) for the sake of the survival and the development of the group. In the theoretical overview, it was pointed out the development in the group in GST and SCT is viewed in relation to the group goal. The primary goal of a group is survival, development, and transformation (Agazarian, 1997). The secondary goal is the task of the group. If there is a clash between the primary and secondary goals, as there was in this case, the primary will take preference.

In the theoretical discussion it was pointed out that in the theory and technique of system-centred groups, a clear distinction is made between stereotypical and functional sub-grouping. Examples of stereotypical subgroups are “identified patient” and “scapegoating” (Agazarian, 1997, 2005). In both cases split-off hostility is projected onto an individual or subgroup.

In the case of the training group, the particular individual progressively found himself isolated and the target of hostility from different group members. It was only during period 5, the second last period, that the group was able to form functional subgroups that could work with, and resolve, the split off hostility. Up until the fifth period, then, the group displayed the characteristics of stereotypical subgroups. When the group worked through, and integrated, the split off hostility, the barrier of the stereotypical subgroup was transformed into a boundary of a functional subgroup. It was only after this had occurred that the group boundary was sufficiently established for the group to progress.

7.1.3.2 Roles and “role-lock”

In SCT, the concept of role features prominently. A role is seen as a bridging construct that connects the individual with the group. “Role lock” occurs when an individual gets caught-up in a role and is unable to take on different roles

depending on the group. In role-lock, the boundary of a role has become a barrier (Agazarian & Peters, 1981).

In the training group, the restricted member was caught up in role lock. He created a barrier that prevented him from taking on a more appropriate role in the group. To some extent he entered the group with the predetermined role of observer. As the group evolved, it became progressively clear that the role he had chosen was a self-imposed role that isolated him from the group. What also transpired during the later stages of the group was that the role restriction he placed on himself in the group was also a restriction he placed on himself outside the group. According to Agazarian (1997), this is a common occurrence: “people in a role-lock with themselves are often in a role-lock with the outside world as well” (p. 223). The role-lock, with the accompanying barrier, was, therefore, transferred from the outside to the inside of the group.

According to Agazarian (1997), role lock is indicative of the first phase of group development, in particular the flight and fight sub-phases where the issue of authority is also prominent. In the training group under discussion, issues of authority presented themselves through a struggle around perceived unequal roles in the group. The group argued that the one member basically perceived himself to be better than the rest, and that they felt judged by him. Initially he was quite defiant, and the barrier could not be modified. It was only when he made a personal revelation to the group which gave the members a better understanding of his motivation for his behaviour that they were able to modify their perceptions. Through his personal revelation he deconstructed the status-hierarchy which some of the group members had perceived to exist up to that point.

7.2 General observations

In this section some observations made during the analysis of the data are explored from a more general group dynamics and eclectic perspective rather than from a specific theoretical framework.

One of the observations made in the analysis of the boundary development of the group was the struggle of the group to develop a sense of group boundary owing to the resistance of some members to join the group and form emotional ties in the group. What needs exploration is the effect that the constitution and purpose of the group had on the boundary development and dynamics of the group. The group was constituted as a training-group and not as a therapy group.

In the theoretical overview, it was proposed that a training group may be particularly resistant to “suffer meaning”. Participants may come with the expectation of gaining cognitive and factual knowledge, but the process requires of them to take risks and engage on an emotional level in order to “learn” from the group. Billow (2003) depicts this developmental conflict as essentially a conflict between thinking and anti-thinking in the group. When anti-thinking prevails, members become entrapped in their own minds where thoughts cannot connect with the thinker, emotions cannot be felt, and ties cannot be formed between members.

The developmental conflict between thinking and anti-thinking in the group became increasingly evident as the group progressed. During the seventh session, the group started to distinguish between degrees of engagement with the group and explicitly made a distinction between intellectual and emotional engagement with group. They realised that emotional engagement was required over and above intellectual engagement. Some members, however, held on to the expectation that they had come to learn on an intellectual level.

What made it difficult to deal with in the group is that there appeared to be active participation but the participation was on an intellectual level. Stern (1989) pointed out that this clinging to one view may appear to be involvement but prevents or masks a reluctance to consider alternatives. The particular member in question articulated that he regarded himself as being fully engaged with the group and that he saw no need to engage with the group differently. He, therefore, saw no need to consider alternatives. This particular member progressively found himself in a position where he was being attacked by the group. The phenomenon of scapegoating could shed some light on the group dynamics and boundary development in the group.

In the theoretical overview, scapegoating was discussed from different perspectives. Some interpretations of scapegoating are: misplaced aggression towards the conductor (Foulkes & Anthony, 1965; Lyndon, 1994); a group dynamic phenomenon originating from neither the individual nor the group, but as a result of the interaction between the two (Foulkes, 1982); historically involving the projection of both the “badness” and the “goodness” of the group (Scheidlinger (1982a); the predisposition of a scapegoat to enact the role in a group (Schoenenwolf, 1998); having the effect of splitting the group between an idealised leader and a vilified scapegoat (Lyndon, 1994) and then Agazarian’s (1997) view that scapegoating is an example of stereotypical subgrouping where it contributes to the stability of the group, but simultaneously can also hamper the development of the group.

Some of the above mentioned interpretations of scapegoating are specifically applicable to the particular group under consideration, especially when the fact that the group was constituted as a training group is born in mind. Derived from Foulkes’ (1982) interpretation one has to ask, What was the interaction between the group and the individual member that progressively lead to his being the target of attacks by the group? One possible answer is that increasing dissatisfaction with the group and the accompanying hostile feelings towards the

two leaders were directed at a particular individual thereby making him the scapegoat of the group. These dynamics could have been exacerbated by the fact the group was a training group and that both leaders had a non-directive style. In a training group in general, one can expect a greater dependency on the leader and the expectation of directive interventions by the leader. When the leader does not meet the expectations the group can develop unconscious hostile feelings towards the leader.

From an individual perspective one can contemplate why the particular individual in the group was targeted. Here the interpretation of Schoenenwolf (1998) and Agazarian (1997) can shed light. During the latter stages of the group, it became evident that the individual member at whom the group directed their hostile feelings entered the group with feelings of guilt around an event which had occurred in his personal life. This individual was thus predisposed to a certain extent to receive the hostility of the group. In the analysis of the boundaries it was shown that from period two to period three there was a rapid shift from a limited number of boundaries that were in focus to a multitude of boundaries in focus as indicated by the directedness of the conversation. This could be interpreted as a period of relative stability that was followed by a period of instability in the group. The group also struggled to form a sense of a group boundary. The particular individual was, therefore, not only predisposed to receiving the hostility but he also fulfilled the role of being a partial or temporary container for the group. By doing this he provided stability to the group during a period where there was instability, and the group boundary was not sufficiently established to contain the group.

The individual was willing to let go of the role of the scapegoat, and, at the same time, the group allowed him to assume another role in the group. This could happen only after the group had addressed a number of boundaries and had developed that capacity to contain the conflict in such a way that it allowed for integration rather than splitting on both an individual and group level. The

discussion in the previous chapter on the frequency distribution of boundaries during the sessions, specifically the difference between the third and the fifth periods, supports the above notion from a boundary perspective.

Another concept that can be applied to the group under discussion is that forming links in the group requires, firstly, an intra-subjective process where affect is integrated with reason. It has been described how the barrier that one individual member had created between affect and reason reverberated through the group. Up until the fifth period there was circularity between an unbounded group and, therefore, an inadequately contained group and un-integrated affect and reason. What made the integration of affect and reason particularly difficult was the effect of trauma together with expectations of a learning group as discussed earlier in the chapter. The words of Symington and Symington (1996) come to mind when they stated that, in the case of a group not adequately contained, there is “pain which cannot be suffered, guilt which cannot be endured and regret which cannot be remembered” (p. 55).

The resolution came when the barrier was transformed into a boundary through direct confrontation in a group that had at that point developed sufficiently to contain the conflict.

7.3 Implications of research findings for the practice of groups

The main aim of the study, being explorative in nature and design, was to increase understanding and insight about the development, functioning, and changing of boundaries in a group. How boundaries feature, develop, and change in a group has been explored in the previous sections.

In the section that follows, the implications of the research findings are explored as they relate to the conceptualisation and conducting of a group. Some suggestions are made on how the research findings can contribute to, or inform, the practice of groups. These suggestions are, in turn, informed by the outcomes

of both the theoretical discussion and the empirical research of the study. It is, therefore, not a direct interpretation or explication of the results, which was done earlier, but rather an endeavour to stimulate thinking about boundaries and to explore the application of boundaries in a group setting. It will be shown that boundaries can be used as an operational as well as a guiding construct for the clarification of different dimensions of the group. In the discussion, the focus will be on a training group setting, as was the case with the empirical research, as opposed to other forms of groups.

7.3.1 Boundary informed leadership: towards a mature bounded group

At the outset of the study the management of boundaries by group leaders was accepted as one of the main tasks of the leaders. Furthermore, the maintenance and management of boundaries are generally accepted as essential for the existence of a group. Without boundaries there can be no constructive relationships, neither within oneself nor with other members in the group. Ganzarian (1977) and Skolnick (1992) have given good accounts of the boundary management tasks of the group leader.

In the section that follows it is argued that boundaries can be adopted by the group leader as a central organising and guiding construct including goal attainment. Goal attainment in a group is dependent on a variety of factors but arguably one of the most important factors in any goal attainment in a group is the extent to which the group is a containing and facilitating environment. From a group leader's perspective it may be useful, in his conceptualisation of the group, to have boundary goals in mind that will enable him to lead the group towards the goals. By having clarity on the desired state, or what is referred to here as a maturely bounded group, will enable leaders to lead purposefully and with clarity.

7.3.2 Maturely bounded group

Against the backdrop of boundary goal attainment, in the next section some suggestions are made as to what the essential features of a maturely bounded group would be. This could assist group leaders in their task of managing psychological boundaries.

7.3.2.1 Established and permeable group boundary in association with regulated permeable individual boundaries.

In the beginning of the formation of a group, the structural group boundaries of membership, time, and space can be established early on, but a group psychological boundary can be established only as a result of a group process. When the group boundary has been established there is inside-outside clarity and members have a sense of connectedness with one another in the group. Etlin's (1993) statement that a well-functioning group displays the quality of "boundary integrity" (p. 291) captures the essence of this notion well. An interpretation of boundary integrity is that the group displays the dual qualities of being whole and unified. On an individual member level, the unification cannot be experienced without a connectedness, and connectedness, in turn, cannot be established without boundary permeability. Group member boundaries are, therefore, permeable, yet, at the same time, a sense of integrity is maintained.

Boundary permeability and a balance between open and closed boundaries were emphasised by Durkin (1981) when she described the features of a mature group. The aspect of rigid versus permeable boundaries has been discussed in a previous section. In the ideally bounded group the boundaries would be sufficiently permeable to allow a flow of communication, especially on a group member level. At the same time the group can act autonomously to control the permeability of the boundary and thereby maintain its integrity. Durkin (1983), in her equation of groups with living systems, stated that, "Moreover, as living

systems carry out their boundary function consistently over time, they develop a steady state by maintaining an optimal but ever changing proportion of open and closed boundaries” (pp. 85-86).

7.3.2.2 *High focus on interpersonal and self-boundaries*

Another feature of a maturely bounded group is that there is a high focus on interpersonal- and self-boundaries in comparison to other psychological boundaries. A high focus on interpersonal- and self-boundaries implies that members actively participate in self-revelation and interpersonal engagement. Rutan and Stone (1993) noted that, in this type of group, “Members have learned that transactions inevitably involve two distinct components: the interpersonal and the intrapsychic” (p. 44).

In the empirical research a method was designed to determine the distribution of the boundaries in focus over a period of time, for example during a session. This method allows a researcher or practitioner to compare self-boundaries and interpersonal boundaries in focus with other psychological boundaries in the group over a given period of time. For illustrative purposes the results of session 6 and 10 are displayed as two pie charts in Figure 7.1.

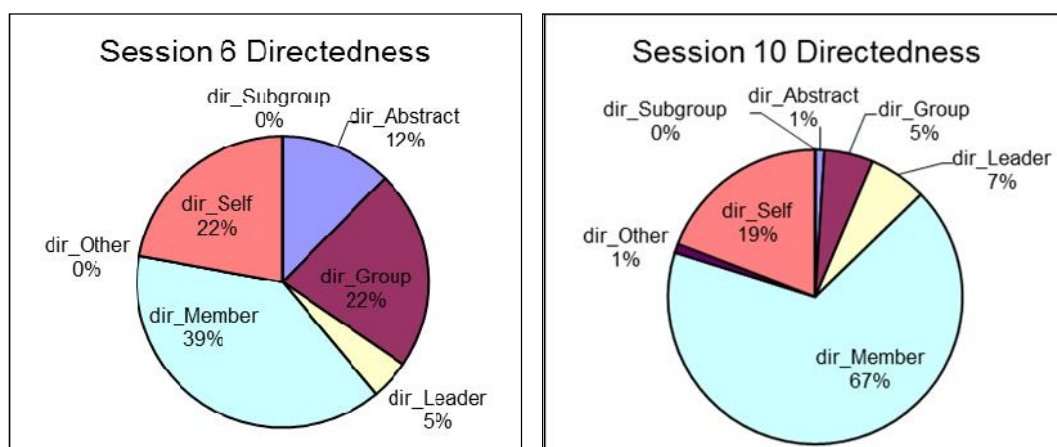


Figure 7.1. Comparison of frequency of directedness between sessions 6 and 10.

In session 6, the self- and interpersonal-boundaries in focus together (dir_Self + dir_Member) constituted 61% of the total boundaries as compared to 86% in session 10. Although the maturity of the group cannot simply be indicated by the boundaries in focus alone, one can hypothesise that during session 10 the group was more maturely bounded and, therefore, more conducive to therapeutic work.

7.3.2.3 The group has inside, outside clarity

A group that is adequately bounded and mature in functioning is able to distinguish the inside from the outside clearly. Rutan and Stone (1993) suggested that this is one of indicators of a mature group. In a mature group, “The capacity has been developed by the group to distinguish between outside events brought into the discussion as resistances and outside events as part of the therapeutic quest” (p. 44).

How the leader can track the status and progress with regards to inside/outside clarity is illustrated through the results of the empirical research.

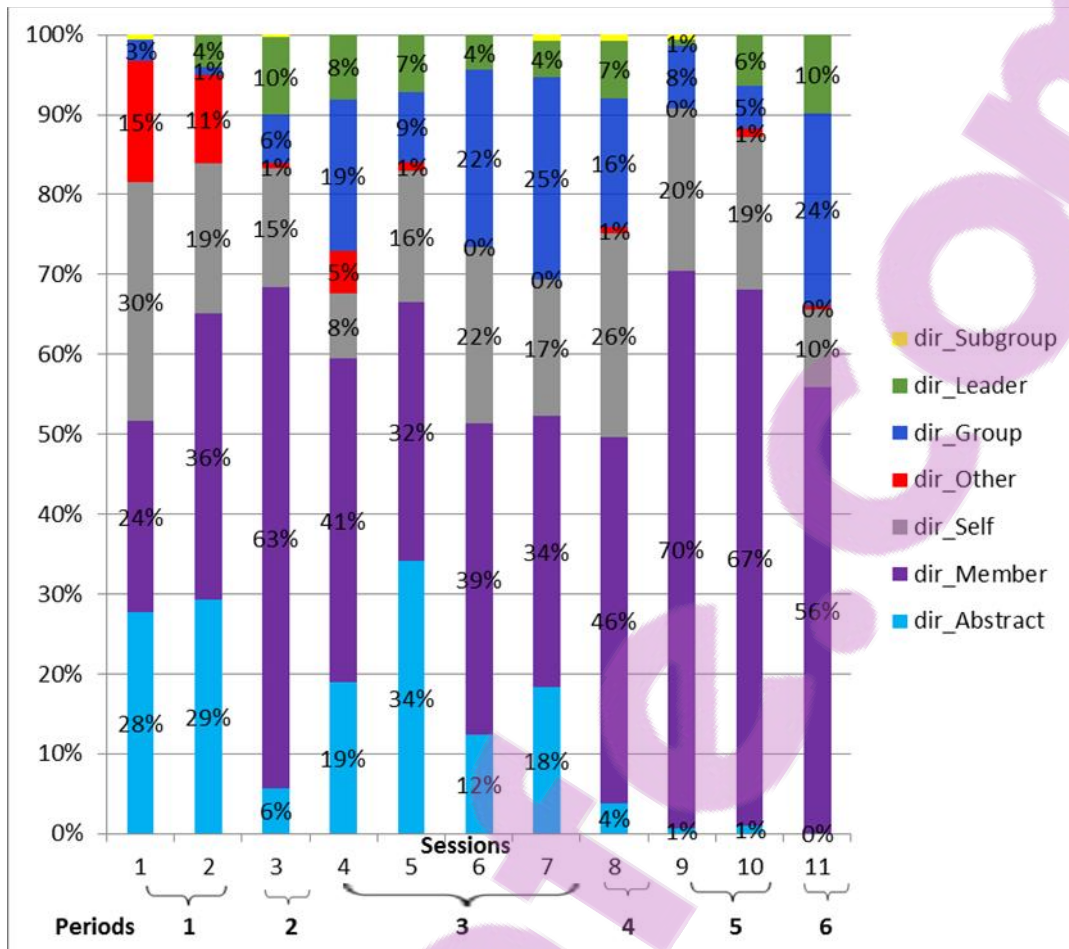


Figure 7.2. Frequency distribution of directedness per session.

In Figure 7.2, which provides a display of the frequency distribution of directedness, the discussion of events external to the group is indicated by the light blue sections (Abstract: indicating discussion of events and concepts outside the group) and the red sections (Other: indicating people outside the group) of the columns. Noticeably during the first two sessions the group spent a large portion of the total conversation discussing events and people external to the group, respectively 43% in session one and 40% in session two. Over the course of the group there was a gradual decline in the discussion of external events up to a point where, during the latter sessions, it was minimal, as indicated by the very small amount or absence of light blue and red sections in the columns.

How boundaries awareness, combined with thematic analysis, can indicate inside-outside clarity is illustrated in Figure 7.3 and Figure 7.4. Figure 7.3 indicates that the theme: Self disclosure and emotional security constitutes a significant part of the conversation during sessions 5 and 6. Looking at Figure 7.4 at the directedness of the conversation in the pie charts, a big difference between session 5 and 6 is that dir:_Abstract is down from 34% in session 5 to 12 % in session 6. At the same time there is a significant increase in dir:_Group from session 5 where it constituted 9% of the total conversation, and session 6 where it constituted 22% of the total conversation. Dir:_Group is indicative of the group-member boundary in focus. These differences between sessions 5 and 6 are indicative of a shift from the outside to the inside of the group. The same theme, namely self-disclosure and emotional security, shifted from being addressed as an abstract or theoretical topic to being made relevant in the group.

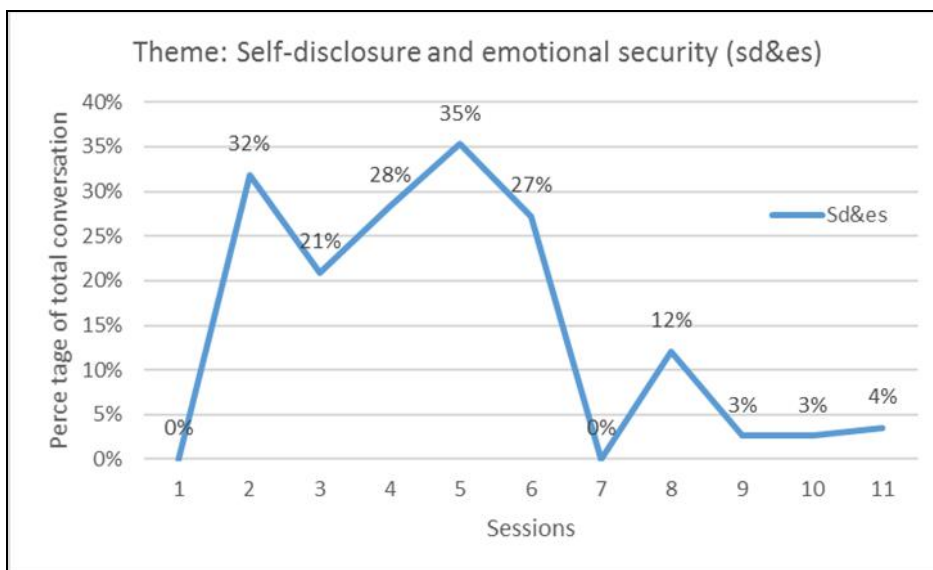


Figure 7.3 Line graph of the theme: Self-disclosure and emotional security expressed as a percentage of the total conversation per session.

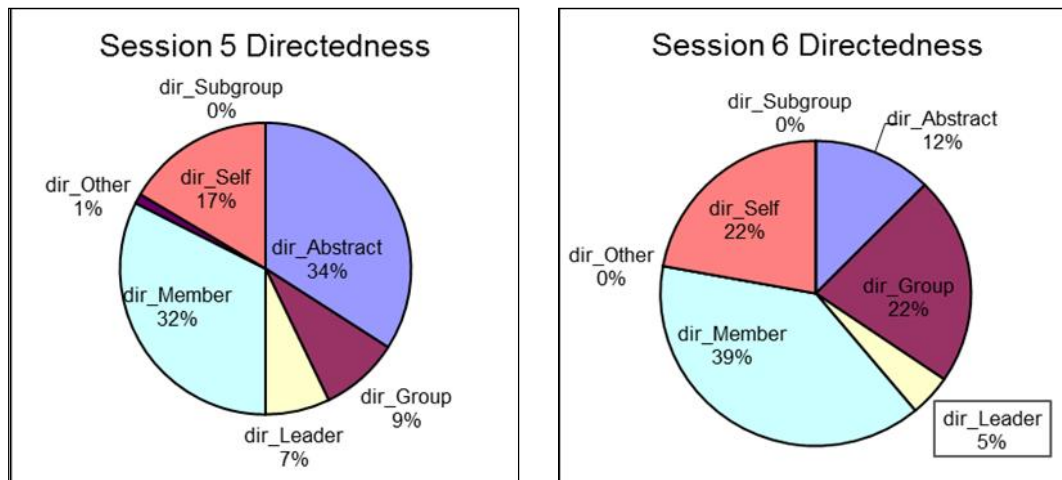


Figure 7.4. Frequency distribution of directedness indicating boundaries in focus for sessions 5 and 6.

The above example illustrates that in this case it was not the theme but the shift of boundaries in focus that indicated a shift towards a more mature group which had increased its capacity to make outside events part of the learning pursuit.

7.3.2.4 Contained group

A mature group is a contained group, and containment is largely a boundary concept. Striving for containment is, therefore, striving for a group to be bounded and to be experienced as bounded. Ashbach and Schermer (1987) emphasised the developmental aspect of the group as container, and they proposed, as a first step in the process of the group developing as a container, that the group must develop a “definitional boundary” (p. 116). In order for a group to act as initial container a group boundary is a pre-requisite. As the group develops as a container, the group is progressively experienced as an entity. In a mature group, the group boundary would be well established, and, at the same time, the group is perceived as an object. The group, therefore, develops from being bounded to being experienced as bounded.

Another important aspect of containment is that it can and should be applied to both thoughts and emotions. Symington and Symington (1996) specifically applied the principle of inter-subjectivity in containment to thoughts and emotions. In an adequately bounded and mature group, members will be able express thoughts and also experience and express negative emotions in the group without fear of destructive consequences. The group will have the capacity to contain these emotions. On a projective level the maturely-bounded group would have the tolerance to hold the projections of the members or the group-as-a-whole. The transforming relationship between the container and the contained would also become evident. Through holding, the group facilitates the transformation of the member and, at the same time, the transforming member affects changes in the group.

7.3.2.5 Inter-member and intrapersonal boundaries are in focus

In a maturely bounded group, the frequency or volume of transactions across the interpersonal and the intrapersonal boundaries are higher when compared with activity across other psychological boundaries. This is consistent with the thinking of Rutan and Stone (1993) that the presence of the intra- and inter-personal in transactions is indicative of a mature group. Measuring the frequency or volume of transactions across the intra- and inter-personal boundaries would, therefore, be a method of assessing group maturity.

Practical application

The methodology of the empirical research can be applied and used to guide practice. An example of how this can be utilised in practice is provided below. In Session 4 the combined averages of dir_Member 41% (Interpersonal boundary) and dir_Self 8% (intrapsychic boundary) is 49%. In Session 10 the combined averages of dir_Member 67% (Interpersonal boundary) and dir_Self 19% (intrapsychic boundary) is 86%. Take note that dir (directedness) in the graphs is

indicative of transactions across a particular boundary, and it is expressed as a percentage of the total transactions for a session.

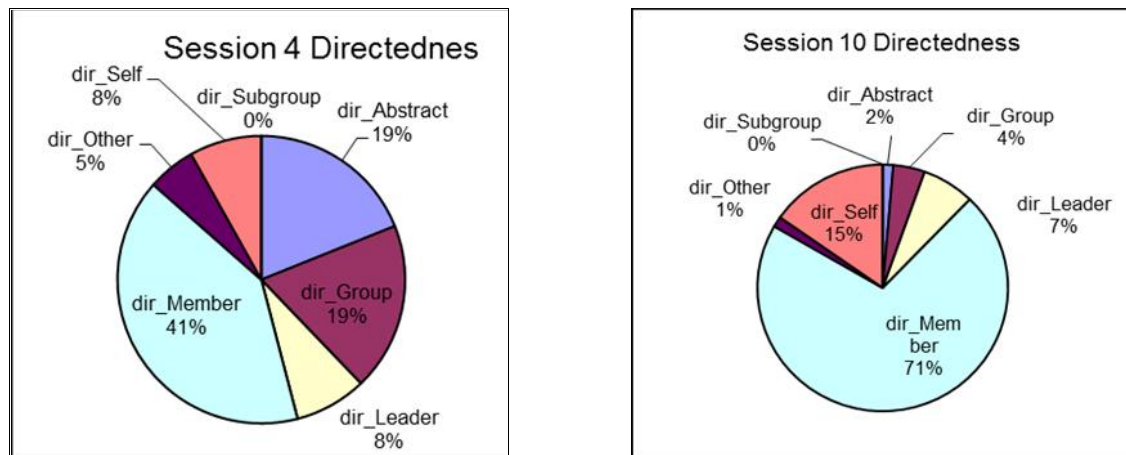


Figure 7.5. Comparison of directedness between sessions 4 and 10.

In session 4, the combined frequency of transactions across the interpersonal and intrapersonal boundaries is 49% compared to 86% in session 10. Measured by the frequency of transactions across the interpersonal and intrapersonal boundaries the group in session 10 is more mature than it was in session 4.

7.3.3 Boundary informed interventions by the leader

The term intervention refers here to actions that will influence the outcome of a group. It is used as a broad category of actions or as a general approach as opposed to a technique which refers to a specific set of actions that can be repeated.

7.3.3.1 Boundary conceptualization of a group

Conceptualisation can simplify complexity. Conceptualisation is used here as a term that refers to the creation of an image through which an understanding can be articulated. In a training group a boundary conceptualisation can make the

complexity of a group accessible and more easily understandable. It can be used as a frame of reference through which the complexity can be expressed and analysed.

In the theoretical overview a boundary conceptualisation was given for the group analytical framework, the group-as-a-whole framework, and GS/SCT framework. The group analytical framework lends itself to conceptualising and understanding communication of different levels, e.g. current reality, transference, projective, and primordial. The group-as-a-whole framework makes the group-as-a-whole unconscious processes accessible, and the GS/SCT framework is especially useful to follow movement or transactions across boundaries.

The conceptualisation of a group cannot capture the full complexity of a group, but it can be used as an operational point of departure. Through a boundary conceptualisation, boundaries would be centralised as an operational construct.

7.3.3.2 Selecting and preparing members for a group

The concept of boundaries can, furthermore, be utilised to complement other selection criteria and to prepare members for participation in the group. How it is applied will depend on the type and goal of the group. If the group is a training group, the members can be expected to be able to maintain the boundary between reality and unreality (loss of reality) and, furthermore, be able to maintain and converse across interpersonal boundaries. For a training group of limited duration, exclusion criteria, based on boundaries and boundary maintenance, would be people suffering from psychosis or a psychotic episode as well as people who do not have a reasonable ability to maintain interpersonal boundaries such as in borderline personality disorder.

The second aspect that can be addressed through boundaries is preparing members for the group. Specifically, to address the tension and potential dilemma inherent in a training groups. In training groups the expectations of the

facilitators and nature of the training group can be in conflict with the expectations of the members. In a training group, although it is not a therapeutic group, participation on a personal level, which can lead to therapeutic work, is often expected (Yalom, 1995). Contrary to expectations members may have, training groups are not limited to intellectual and theoretical discussions most of the time, instead, members are expected to participate personally and disclose something of themselves in the group. Both too much disclosure and too little disclosure can be problematic and are clearly boundary issues. Although both too much and too little disclosure can be addressed in the group, a training group is usually of limited duration, and dealing specifically with a reluctance to participate can take up so much time and effort that it may impact negatively on the main aim of learning in the group.

The issue of self-disclosure can be partly addressed in an information letter distributed to members before the commencement of the group. It is, furthermore, recommended that participants are prepared in an interview where boundaries are explored which can then enhance the group and learning process. Questions, such as, “To what extent do you expect it will be required of you to disclose something personal in the group”?, could be asked which would provide an opportunity to explore and clarify expectations so that individual, group, and leader expectations are better aligned before the commencement of the group.

7.3.3.3 Introducing boundaries as a guiding construct for clarification of group dynamics

In a training group, out-of-group reflection sessions at intervals can enhance the learning process. The purpose of these out-of-group sessions would be to clarify and illuminate dynamics of the in-group session.

An extract from the letter to the participants in the training group that was used for the empirical study is shown below for illustrative purposes:

... After the group has progressed for a while (a few hours) we will take a break from the group and reflect on what has happened in the group and from then on we will do this at regular intervals. The main purpose these reflections is to capture and make sense of the experience and of what has been happening in the group. To “make sense of” what is happening in a group is one of the most essential aspects of being a good facilitator, but, at the same time, something that is not easily taught. (See Appendix E: Communication to the participants for the full letter).

Although the out-of-group sessions are meant to make sense of what is happening in the group, maintaining the boundary between the in-group and out-group may be difficult. Reflecting on the content of the in-group sessions may be anxiety provoking and also evoke resistance from the group members, especially if there is a fear of being “exposed.” Anxiety levels that are too high may impede learning.

To maximise the advantage of the out-of-group-sessions, it is proposed that transactions across boundaries are used as entry points for the discussion and reflection on the dynamics in the group. The quantity of transactions and shifts in boundaries in focus can first be identified in the reflection, and then the underlying dynamics and implications can be discussed. There are distinct advantages of this order:

- It is less threatening and anxiety provoking;
- It allows for scrutiny of the flow and process as well as the punctuation of significant moments which the can be explored further; and
- It does not, from the outset, position the training in a specific theoretical framework, which makes it possible for the group leader to make use of concepts from different frameworks to elucidate the dynamics.

7.3.3.4 *Exploring group dynamics and development in the group*

Boundaries can also be used as a construct to explore and interpret dynamics in the group, similar to the method employed in the research. In the theoretical overview, many group phenomena and dynamics were considered in relation to boundaries in the group; for example, scapegoating as a group dynamic phenomenon was extensively discussed in relation to boundaries in the group. Utilising boundaries as an operational construct can become a link between theory, including the conceptualisation of the group and practice.

7.3.4 Boundary informed techniques

Existing techniques in the practice of groups can be enhanced or complemented through a focus on boundaries. Few practitioners of group therapy place such high emphasis on specific techniques to influence boundaries as does Agazarian (1997). Techniques that she employs to influence boundaries include, fork-in-the-road, subgrouping, and boundarying. These techniques can be adopted in leading a training group even if the group is not presented in a SCT framework. There are also other techniques that can be adapted to focus on, and influence, boundaries.

Below are a few suggested ways in which techniques can be applied to influence boundaries:

1. Interpretations can be made with reference to boundaries, e.g. “The group is struggling with some members who you sense have positioned themselves outside the psychological boundary of the group.”
2. The group can be assisted, especially in the beginning, to bring external events to the inside.
3. The group can be guided to explore group psychological boundaries actively before focusing on the self- and inter-member boundaries.
4. The group can be alerted to the difference between intellectual and

- emotional engagement and the boundary effect thereof. The fork-in-the-road technique can be helpful in this regard.
5. The group can be guided to progressively take responsibility to manage its own boundaries. Through an awareness and monitoring of boundaries, group events such as scapegoating may be detected and modified as an early stage.

7.4 Summary of research outcomes and contribution

In the next section of the study, the main research outcomes will be highlighted. Firstly, the main outcomes of the theoretical overview will be discussed, and, secondly, the outcomes of the empirical study. Finally, some suggestions will be made with regard to the application of the results and future research.

7.4.1 Main outcomes of the theoretical overview

In the first part of the thesis the concept of boundaries was explored in three different theoretical frameworks. In the introduction, it was highlighted that seminal group theorists and practitioners did not emphasise the word and concept of “boundary”, but that this does not mean that it did not play an important part in their theorisation (Motherwell & Shay, 2005). How boundaries feature in the frameworks was established through a process of inference. Some of the main outcomes of the theoretical exploration, with specific reference to boundaries, are noted in the next section.

7.4.1.1 Boundaries in the group analytical framework

1. A boundary represents a linking rather than a dividing concept. A boundary does not demarcate a binary structure with an inside and outside. In the conceptualisation of a group, boundaries link the individual with the group and the group with society. The outside is reflected in the inside, and the inside reflects something of the outside.

2. A boundary, as a concept or construct, is not a given of the group but an abstraction made by the perceiver which offers an opportunity for continuous dialogical scrutiny. Boundaries are, therefore, treated as a movable and changeable construct in group analysis. An example would be that pathology in the group could be located in different parts of the group at different stages.
3. The conceptualisation of the structure of the group is a layered structure displaying levels of communication from the level of current reality through the transference and projective levels to the deep collective unconscious or primordial level.
4. The group leader is conceptualised as being part of the group and inside the boundary of the group. As the group develops and matures, the role boundary of the leader becomes more relaxed which allows the group to assume the role of the agent of change progressively.
5. Development in the group takes place through making the boundary between the pre- and sub-conscious and the conscious more permeable. That which is latent or covert is progressively made overt.
6. Developmental enhancing dynamics affect boundary relaxation but, at the same time, fulfil a function in boundary maintenance.
7. Destructive dynamics in the group result in fixed or ridged boundaries and, possibly, the collapse of boundaries.

7.4.1.2 Group-as-a-whole framework

In the group-as-a-whole framework three boundaries are emphasised primarily: the group-as-a-whole boundary; the group/leader boundary; and the conscious/unconscious boundary. In the theoretical overview, a number of propositions were formulated. The construct of boundaries was centralised in the formulation of the propositions. A summary of these propositions is provided below:

1. Anti-thinking is a state of entrapment where boundaries have become

barriers.

2. Cooperation is no guarantee that learning is taking place in a training group.
3. Emotional linking is a pre-requisite for meaningful learning.
4. A work group represents the presence of passion and not just an absence of basic assumptions.
5. Owing to a heightened dread of expressing H, groups in traumatized societies may appear to be particularly co-operative while in fact members are disconnected and isolated.
6. Trauma leads to a reduced capacity to think and, therefore, to link.
7. A group in a traumatized society could display amplified attacks on leadership.

In the analysis of the data of the empirical study, the propositions were applied in the interpretation of the data.

7.4.1.3 General systems theoretical framework

Some of the main outcomes of the exploration of boundaries in general systems theory and system-centered therapy were:

1. In both general systems theory (GST) and system-centred therapy (SCT) boundaries are treated as a central and operational construct.
2. The individual, group and context are inextricably linked. In field theory, which informed group systems thinking, behaviour is seen as a function of life space.
3. In SCT as an applied theory of GST, boundaries are modified in a predetermined sequence.
4. SCT, in particular, has contributed to the development of techniques that are aimed at boundary manipulation and modification.
5. The conceptualisation of a general systems group is, to a large extent, a boundary abstraction and boundary representation. An adapted version of

Mackenzie's (1990) conceptualisation was presented earlier.

7.4.2 Main outcomes and contribution of the empirical research

The main outcomes and contribution of the empirical research are highlighted below.

7.4.2.1 A method for exploring boundaries in a group

The study and research questions required a research method that was able to identify and reveal boundaries, including boundary movement in a group. It, furthermore, had to make provision for a longitudinal analysis over a period of time whilst allowing for the explication of small parts or identified moments in the group.

A new method, based on content analysis, was designed to meet the mentioned criteria. A recording of a group was transcribed, and the text was then analysed through a computer assisted programme using Atlas.ti computer software qualitative content analysis procedure. The advantages of this unique method are that:

- It allows for a longitudinal analysis, e.g. boundary changes can be traced over the duration of the group and in depth analysis, e.g. through scrutinising themes and content.
- It includes both inductive and deductive processes. The inductive procedure required the researcher to be intensely involved in the analysis, and, in the deductive analysis, certain predetermined theoretical aspects were applied to the content.
- The computer assisted qualitative data analysis, using Atlas.ti, keeps a thorough audit trail that is available and can be scrutinised by other researchers. This can potentially contribute to the quality of the research.

A disadvantage of the method is that it is tedious and time-consuming. The transcription of audio to text takes time, and the method requires a line by line analysis and codification of the text.

7.4.2.2 *Prioritisation of boundaries in the practice of group*

The outcome of the research has shown that boundaries as a construct can be prioritised in conceptualising groups and conducting groups. The concept of boundaries can, therefore, be a guiding construct in the conducting of groups.

Boundaries can also be used as a guiding construct for practitioners and participants, particularly in a training group. As a guiding construct, it can assist in directing attention to and identifying boundaries in focus, boundary obstructions, changes to boundaries, and movement in a group. Directing the attention through a focus on boundaries will, however, be an initial step in the interpretation of group events. An awareness of boundary dynamics will fall short of providing a dynamic interpretation of the psychological processes underlying the boundary movement. Existing theories that provide a dynamic explanation of group phenomena will have to be employed to achieve further understanding.

7.4.2.3 *Boundary as a linking as opposed to a dividing construct*

The outcome of the research supports the notion that a boundary is a linking construct rather than a dividing construct. This is consistent with group analytical thinking (Foulkes, 1971; Ettin, 1993; Dalal, 1998 and Stone, 2001) that advocates that the outside is inside and the inside is representative of the outside. This point was illustrated through the empirical research, where group events, including the intra-psychic boundary, interpersonal, and member-group boundaries were greatly impacted on by a traumatising experience an individual member had prior to the commencement of the group.

7.4.2.4 Emotional engagement and the role of trauma in group boundary formation

The resistance and reduced capacity of one member in particular to link emotionally with the group, and the effect that this had on boundary development was discussed previously. It has also been highlighted that the resistance was, to a large extent, informed by a traumatic experience in his personal life. The effect that trauma can have on group development, and the fact that the group was conducted in the South African context which is to a large a traumatised society was also discussed.

The impact that the above-mentioned events had on boundary development was, furthermore, indicated. There was a dramatic shift in the directedness and frequency of transactions across boundaries from the initial sessions to the latter session of the group (see Figure 7.2). During the earlier session, the conversation was characterised by a high volume of transactions across the group boundary and a focus on boundaries external to the group. During the latter sessions, this changed significantly, and the highest volume of transactions was across the personal and interpersonal boundaries. This happened only after the particular member relaxed his self-boundary, made a personal revelation to the group, and engaged or linked emotionally with the group.

7.5 Suggestions for future research

Suggestions for further research should be seen against the backdrop of this study's being an exploratory study. It has been an attempt to increase understanding and insight with specific reference to boundaries in a small training group. There are, therefore, many aspects of the study that solicit further research some of which some are highlighted below.

7.5.1 Suggestions regarding the research method

1. One of the objectives of the study was to design a method that would meet certain criteria, which could be utilised to assist research into boundaries in groups. Although the method was designed and applied with success, it is tedious and labour intensive and, perhaps, unsuitable for that reason for further research. The method could be improved or adapted to make future research more feasible, especially when it is expanded to becoming a comparative analysis between groups. The method is essentially a mixed method (concurrent procedure) approach where qualitative strategies and a quantitative strategies are employed (Creswell, 2003). One has to accept that, in qualitative research, the researcher has to be intensely involved which would inevitably be time consuming. Some steps, however, could possibly be made less labour intensive and time consuming through the use of technology such as automated speech-to-text transcriptions.
2. In future research, the method could also be adapted and applied in creative ways. An observer could, for example, be trained in scoring the directedness of the conversation and transactions across boundaries “live” during a session. The number of transactions, as well as the duration of the transaction, could be quantified and made available immediately after the session. This could then become a useful instrument for building theory and enhancing the practice of groups. The qualitative aspect of the method would, however, be affected by applying it in the above suggested way, but a qualitative analysis of the content of the conversation could be applied at any stage. A brief example is provided in the next section on how the method could be applied in practice.

7.5.1.1 Example of the application of the method

The theme of *parenting* was prominent during different stages of the group, specifically during session 1 and session 8 where it was one of two dominant themes during the conversations (see

Appendix G: Transcriptions of session 1, 5, 7, 8, for full transcripts of the conversations). The combination of boundaries in focus, however, was significantly different during the two sessions mentioned. The similarities, and also the differences, of these two sessions were identified by the application of the method of boundary analysis. The purpose of the discussion that follows is to demonstrate how, through applying the method of combining a thematic analysis with a boundary and phase interpretation, the understanding of the group dynamics can be enriched.

Results of applying the method

The theme of parenting and parenthood (ph) was one of two dominant themes in the first session, constituting 29% of the total content of the conversation. It then re-occurred as the dominant theme during the eighth session when it constituted 31% of the content of the conversation for the session. Parenthood also occurred as a theme to a lesser extent in the fifth period where it constituted 18% of the content for the session but it was not a dominant theme (See Figure 7.6)

When the theme of parenthood is combined with the boundaries in focus for the respective sessions there is a significant difference between sessions one, on the one hand, and session eight, on the other hand. During session one, the abstract and other directedness, which is indicative of boundaries in focus external to the group, were 28% and 15% respectively compared to session eight where the abstract and other directedness were only 4% and 1%. Although the same theme is discussed, the boundaries in focus are very different between sessions one and eight. In session one boundaries, apart from abstract, in focus

were inter-member at 28%, self at 30%, and other at 15%, compared to the eight session where the inter-member boundaries were in focus for 46% of the total conversation and the self-boundary 25%.

In summary, the difference between sessions 1 and 8 was that in session 1 the discussion was predominantly in the there-and-then compared to session 8 where it was predominantly in the here-and-now. A graphical display is provided in Figure 7.7. In the pie charts, the boundaries in focus are expressed as a portion of the total boundaries in focus for that session.

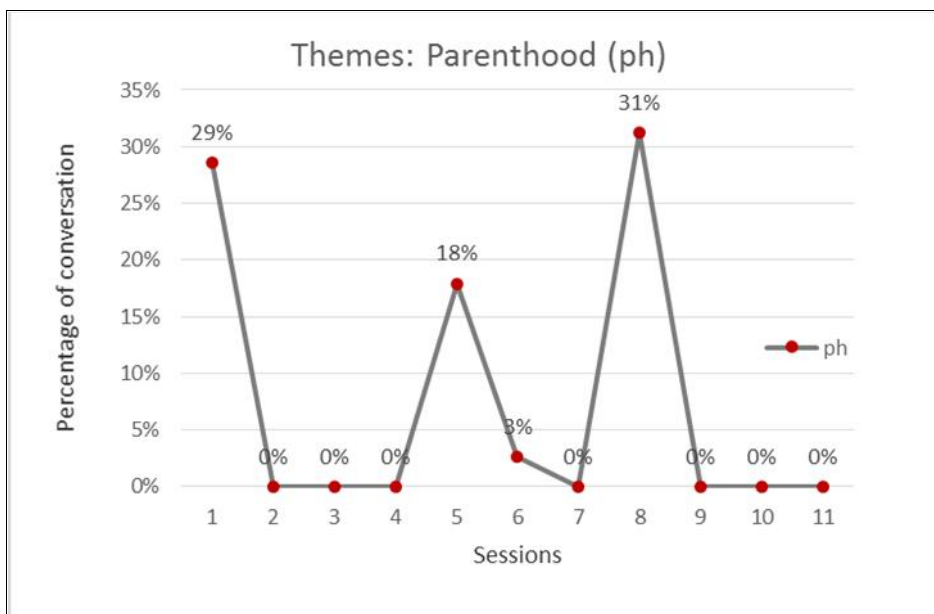


Figure 7.6. Theme: Parenthood, displayed as a percentage of the total conversation per session.

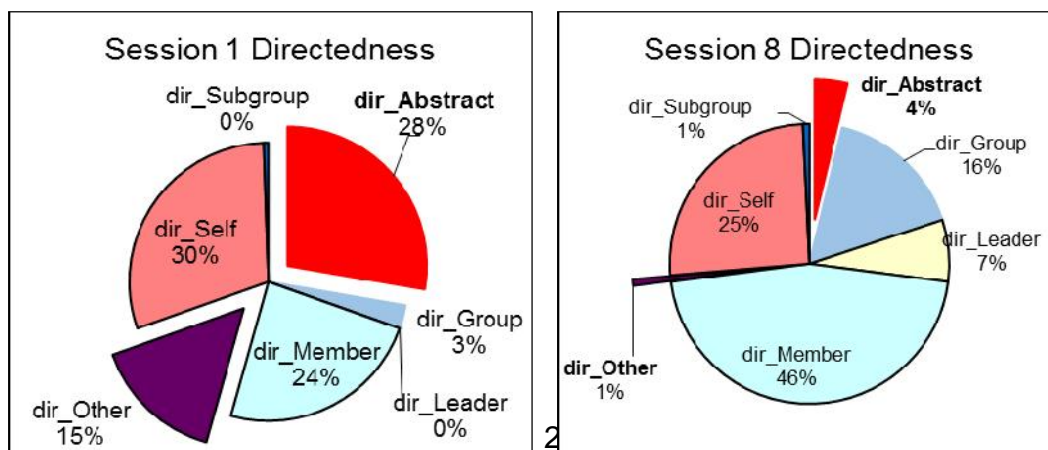


Figure 7.7. Comparison of the directedness of the conversation between sessions 1 and 8.

Discussion

Parenting as a theme is not uncommon in groups, and it often relates to issues of dependency, security and authority, often manifesting in relation to the group leader (Behr & Hearst, 2005).

In the first session, the theme of parenting and parenthood related to insecurity and anxiety about whether the group leaders would be good enough parents for the group. Some vignettes from the group illustrate this point. In session one a group member posed the question, “S: Do you think that some people are naturally just better at it or I mean for example is there some skill... what is it that makes a good parent? What makes a good mother for that matter?” The question was then followed by a discussion on the qualities of a good parent and parenting including dealing with difficult children and parental responsibilities during different stages of child development.

The latent theme of whether the group leaders will be “good enough” as illustrated in the above were then followed by whether all group members will be acceptable and “good enough” when a group member posed the question, P: “Did anyone here have a kid that wasn’t planned? No, I’m just asking because we’re speaking about preparing for parenting and wanting a kid. I wonder what it’s like for someone who doesn’t have that.”

These questions and issues were raised at a stage when the group psychological boundary or a sense of a group-as-a-whole had not been established. The boundary significance of the thematic issues was that the ability of the group leaders to hold and contain the group as well as the criteria for inclusion were brought into question.

The insecurity in the group and its impact on boundary development in the group, especially during the beginning stages, could have emanated from, or been intensified by, some of the group members knowing the two group leaders in a professional and personal capacity before the group. Two members in particular knew both the group leaders in a personal capacity. This could have led to expectations of an extension of the relationship and role confusion which would have had a significant impact on the boundary development in the group. The boundaries of confidentiality, in-group versus out-group, possible abuse of power or special treatment, can all be related to and addressed through the theme of parenting. Rutan and Stone (2001), and Cohn (2005), acknowledged the inevitable impact the relationship prior to the group can have on the group. As a result they recommend that boundary issues be addressed prior to the start of a group and when the group commences.

Another latent issue in the group under discussion which was addressed indirectly through the theme of parenting was that of risk taking. The relationship between taking risk in the group and the group boundary is an important aspect of boundary establishment and maintenance in the group. Members can take personal risks in the group only if the boundary of the group has been sufficiently established and is well maintained. (Cohn, 2005) The link between taking risk, boundaries, and leader responsibility is illustrated in the following comment by a group member in session one:

“R: I think I would be a lot more protective, it’s like [son’s name] is walking along a edge of a cliff and you know, as long as I’m watching he’s ok. I’m willing to let him experience being at the edge of the cliff but I think if it actually was a daughter, I would actually want to keep her away from the edge of the cliff.”

In session 8 the dynamics between group phase, boundaries, and content were quite different from that in session 1. Instead of talking about good enough

parents in general and indirectly about risks, members were starting to take actual risks in the group. The theme of parenting and parenthood still featured strongly. This point, where a group member takes a risk through self-revelation, is illustrated by the comment of a group member:

F: So I feel if my dad had said to me something to the effect that you're my son and I love you, I would not have been insecure. I don't think anybody's opinion would have mattered because for me being... being important to my dad, I think would have been enough. I think I would have achieved a lot more than I have right now. Because I think my insecurity stopped me from taking risks and it's only now that I've started taking risks."

Cohn (2001) emphasises the fact that it is the qualitative aspects of the group boundary that enables risk-taking in the group, "In group psychotherapy, the frame delineates the boundaries of the group and creates a group environment that is sufficiently predictable and 'safe' to allow patients to take the risks for growth" (p. 5). During session 8, the group boundary was, therefore, sufficiently established in order for group members to start taking risks in the group.

The above discussion is not exhaustive but it serves as an example of how, the identification of boundary movement combined with process and content can enhance an understanding of the group dynamics.

7.5.2 Suggestions to further the research outcomes

1. One of the specifically stated reasons by Babbie and Mouton (2006) for undertaking an exploratory study is to "test the feasibility of undertaking a more extensive study" (p. 80). The feasibility has been established. A study of boundaries in groups can be extended to groups conducted within a similar theoretical framework as well as a comparative study of boundary development in groups conducted in different frameworks. The fact that boundary movement can be quantified makes the method particularly feasible for a comparative study.

2. A boundary formulation of a work group is when a high frequency of transactions across the self-and inter-member boundaries co-occurs with a low frequency across the group boundary as well as a low frequency of externally directed conversations. This working formulation can be further tested.
3. The feasibility of the suggestion made in the study that the concept of boundaries can be utilised during a training group as a sense-making concept can be tested further in practice.
4. A boundary explanation of groups and group development can be developed. Such a formulation may not be able to explain the full understanding of a complex phenomenon such as a group, but it can enhance or complement existing theories or theoretical frameworks on groups. Such an explanation could lead to a boundary model of groups and group development.

7.6 Limitations of the study

Some limitations of the study are that:

1. The research design was a case study. Although this allowed for an in-depth study of the particular group by applying and testing the method, deductions that are generally applicable to groups cannot be made.
2. The group was, furthermore, a training group of limited duration. Boundary dynamics in a group with a different purpose and structure may be very different from the case study group. The contribution of the study should be considered within these limitations. I am, however, confident that the method, with some refinement and context sensitivity, could be applied in other areas of group work.
3. The study group may have been the “ideal” group for exploring boundaries owing to the effect previously breached boundaries had had on the group resulting in a particular slant of the results. Boundary issues and shifts may not be as evident in other groups as was the case with this group.

7.7 Concluding comments

The study set out to explore boundaries in a training group. A conclusion reached at the end of the study is that boundaries are a living construct. Rather than being conceived as merely a dividing line, boundaries are areas of connection that can be restrictive or space-creating. The demonstration of the restrictive and unforeseen impact on boundaries that individual boundary decisions can have on a group was one of the highlights of the study. One group member's personal preoccupation with boundaries, owing to an experience of a breach and violation of interpersonal boundaries before the group, had a profound impact on boundary dynamics and boundary development in the group. Initially the group felt incapacitated and frustrated, but, through persistent engagement, the group managed to transform its own boundaries. A relaxation of a personal boundary through self-revelation reverberated throughout the group and affected boundaries on all levels. These changes were clearly evident in the quantification of boundaries in focus and boundary movement.

The further operationalization of boundaries as a construct holds promise for the understanding of group dynamics and processes, which can enhance the application of groups.

By viewing group interactions through a boundary lens, new perspectives arise, enabling group leaders to harness the healing and transformational potential of groups more effectively. In a traumatised society, and groupings within that society, where continuous breaching and violation of boundaries occur, healing can take place through establishing, regulating, and mending of boundaries.

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Appendix A: Coded transcription of session 4

The following pages display an output created by Atlas.ti of session 4, after the transcript of the conversation was coded. In the column on the left is the transcript of the conversation. Paragraphs, which are automatically numbered, indicate a switch in conversation between speakers. Speakers are identified by an initial. In the column on the right, each line or paragraph was coded with a directedness code and a thematic code. This procedure was followed for the transcripts of all the sessions which comprised 176 pages.

001 **Session 4 - Tape 4**

002

003 4.1 G: Should we go for another little while?

004 [Silence]

005 4.2 J: I almost sighed

006 [Laughter]

007 4.3 J: I wish

008 4.4 G: Ja

009 4.5 D: Then you did

010 [Laughter]

011 4.6 N: I'm thinking that the introverts are very tired now.

012 4.7 [Laughter]

013 4.8 K: Even the extroverts

014 [Laughter]

015 4.9 N: I mean, people, the whole day

016 4.10 H: Don't lie

017 4.11 N: sorry?

018 4.12 H: Don't place labels on people now

019 4.13 P: I think that - I was thinking about this earlier. Is, this would actually be an excellent teambuilding strategy. As opposed to making people play games - and I don't have anything against that, please don't take this the wrong way - but I think that a lot of insight comes into a session like this. If you throw 10 people together who are in the same department and you leave them to start making conversation on their own. I think that it's a good way to bond. I actually feel that I know all of you to a certain extent, maybe not personally, but, in a way, how you work, what you think. So I think that if you were to go into a teambuilding to use this on a first day it would probably work quite well as opposed to making people walk 10 feet up in the air

020 4.14 S: It would be interesting, though, if you do that in a context of a team that works together, if it comes to them easily or if they just talk about work, if you don't give them a subject.

021 4.15 P: I have to admit, I was actually taking it more from ... um, when we started honours we had a team building but we had to really get to know one another specifically because we would be working in groups throughout the year. So, we were a new group and I think this would work very nicely as opposed to, like I said, walking on high ropes. So, ja, you know, getting people to [laughs] why are you smiling at me

022 4.16 D: I can't see you up there.

023 4.17 P: what's that?

024 4.18 D: I can't see you up there.

025 4.19 P: Ja, yes, good point, see? I don't have a fear of heights,

] a&fp_Administrating participation~
dir_Group~

] a&fp_Administrating participation~
dir_Self~

] a&fp_Administrating participation~
dir_Abstract~

] a&fp_Administrating participation~
dir_Abstract~

] a&fp_Administrating participation~

] a&fp_Administrating participation~

] a&fp_Administrating participation~

] dir_Member~ pid&d_Label/lab

] dir_Abstract~

] group_Group/team building activity

] dir_Abstract~
group_Group/team building activity

] dir_Other~
group_Group/team building activity

] dir_Member~ group_Group/te

] a&fp_Clarifying communication~ §

] dir_Member~ group_Group/te

] dir_Self~

		but jis, that instilled fear.	norm_Group pressure to participate
026	4.20	G: No, but what is it that's different here?	a&fp_Administrating participation~
027	4.21	P: There, you're so concentrated on - like it or not - most people are competitive by nature. Maybe not cut-throat competitive, but competitive to an extent. They also have this image that they want to go drink. So, if you don't climb the high ropes, well then, you're not really part of the in group, are you? I mean it's a perception that you generally have in the group. I mean, if one doesn't want to do it, they're almost forced to because of the group around them	dir_Abstract~ norm_Group pressure to participate
028	4.22	J: Is that the same here?	dir_Member~ norm_Group pre
029	4.23	P: But not with the fear factor. You know, I mean I know - I don't know, I heard - J, you were there. At the masters camp Barbara broke into tears, because she was so terrified of the height that she felt pushed to do it. Now here, if you don't feel like talking, you sit back. I mean you listen and as soon as you have input you can give it. And at some point everybody has given input here. So, ja. How do you think it would work in a team building?	dir_Other~ norm_Group pressure to participate
030	4.24	J: very good, but you need lots of time	dir_Abstract~ group_Group/tei
031	4.25	P: Ja, ja. But I'd rather sit and do this with colleagues than what we normally do on a teambuilding.	dir_Abstract~ group_Group/team building activity
032	4.26	G: But what is the fear? Is the fear of being excluded, the possibility of being excluded from the group	dir_Member~ norm_Group pressure to participate
033	4.27	P: That forces you to do it? Yea. You, you...	dir_Abstract~ norm_Group pre
034	4.28	G: So it's not really about the heights, it's the ...	dir_Member~ norm_Group pre
035	4.29	P: No	dir_Leader~ norm_Group press
036	4.30	G: Yes. So in this group the possibility of being excluded is far less than in that situation.	dir_Group~ norm_Group pressure to participate
037	4.31	P: Yes, I think so.	dir_Group~ norm_Group press
038	4.32	G: Is that what you're saying?	a&fp_Clarifying communication~
039		[Silence]	dir_Member~
040	4.33	J: I think there's also pressure in this group. Not to climb high, but to give input . So I think there is some kind of pressure to take part, otherwise why aren't you sitting in a corner doing nothing to become part of the group	dir_Group~ norm_Group pressure to participate
041	4.34	P: But do you think that there's more pressure here, or more pressure there?	dir_Member~ norm_Group pressure to participate
042		[Silence] [05:22]	
043	4.35	A: Maybe it depends on who you are as a person. Because some people, like me I love the high ropes stuff, the more adrenalin the better for me that's no pressure at all but this is maybe that much more difficult for me.	dir_Self~ norm_Group pressure to participate
044	4.36	R: Part of the tension in a group like this, particularly when you sit in this room together, is the requirements of this group is that you give the appearance of depth in	dir_Abstract~ sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a

		the conversation or situation, but the nature of the relationships is that you can't go further than superficiality, so the tension that you feel in this type of conversation is probably the mirror, or same as the type of fear someone feels climbing up to the high ropes, it's communicating something that has the appearance of sufficient depth but playing with keeping it at a sufficiently superficial level so that you're not freaking out everybody else listening to you. So that's the tension that arising in this group or that is different to but no less potential and I think that that is why some of us are fairly tired.	
045	4.37	P: I know	dir_Member~ sd&es_Self-discl
046	4.38	D: What do you make of that, R's comment?	dir_Member~
047		[Silence]	sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
048	4.39	D: Obviously, very profound	
049	4.40	R: Or else very confusing!	
050		[Laughter]	
051		[Silence]	
052	4.41	S: I don't know what you're saying is true, I also think what she's [A] saying is true that to me personally this is not as intimidating as climbing or doing the high ropes not because I'm necessarily afraid of heights but it's because I think the pressure is maybe there so much more real, I don't know I've never been through one of those sessions but I think that it is more of a question that people more, I think it's bad if the facilitator is standing there and saying "rah, rah you have to climb this thing" and you don't really want to but you don't have the guts to say but I'm not going to. So I think it's sort of, if you're not a very assertive person then it's more a fear of it's a physical thing than ... but I think as she [A] said it's very true that it's how you are, if you're comfortable talking and sharing then it's not nearly as scary as doing that.	dir_Abstract~ norm_Group pressure to participate
053	4.42	A: One of the ...	
054	4.43	R: What, sorry, in my point that I was saying, in the talking and sharing, the energy goes into saying, how do I make the talking and sharing look deep but to actually keep it at superficial because I don't have a relationship which facilitates depth but I'm in a context that expects depth.	dir_Abstract~ sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
055	4.44	J: What do you mean by looking deep?	dir_Member~ sd&es_Self-discl
056	4.45	R: Sorry keep asking your question and I'll ...	dir_Member~ sd&es_Self-discl
057	4.46	J: You said that the pressure that you had to make the conversation appear deep what do you mean by that?	dir_Member~ sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
058	4.47	R: Um, I wouldn't say that it was a pressure but I think that that is what makes this kind of dynamic work so if everybody, if we were to sit here for the whole 3 days and just talk about the weather, this context would	dir_Abstract~ sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a

		probably fall flat but the more that we dig into stuff that's less superficial than the weather that then gives the appearance of the success of the group conversation and the group situation that is being constructed here so that's, and that's the side of the group but at the same time there are no relationships inside this group that are sufficiently intimate.	
059	4.48	K: I don't think you know.	dir_Member~
060		[Laughter]	sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
061	4.49	R: Ok well let me make it as a generalized statement, there are generally, so even if there are 1 or 2 people, say you and me and I think we have a relationship that ... but you have to take that out of the group context but her, in the group context, the relationships lack intimacy and lack of intimacy mitigates against sharing information were it goes beyond relatively superficial stuff [10:05]	sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
062		[Silence]	
063	4.50	R: So what I'm saying is that you can sit here and really share great conversation and stuff, but ... um ... this would be very different if compared to if you were sitting with your family or your 10 best friends ... the intimacy and the level of conversation.	dir_Abstract~
			sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
064	4.51	S: If I have to very honest not necessarily friends or family but if this were a team that I was really part of and they had issues, this process would have been a lot more difficult for me. It's almost easier to open up to people that I don't have an intimate relationship with. If something gets damaged then it's And if I really had an issue with you, and I knew that in this environment there was a possibility that I might have to tell you that, I would be much more stressed. So I don't experience this thing of ... ag, pretending to be ... I was actually quite amazed at the level of depth that we've been able to reach, seeing that we are all strangers and we started talking about smoking	dir_Self~
			sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
065		[Laughter]	
066	4.52	S: So I think I experience it differently from you	dir_Member~
067	4.53	R: That's possible	sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
068	4.54	H: Ja, I can imagine a few people, a few of my colleagues that I have, would definitely not want to have a circle like this	dir_Other~
			sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
069	4.55	J: Why not?	dir_Member~
070	4.56	H: Clash in personalities, conflicts of the past, now having to act like I'm interested in the person or wanting to have a relationship for 4/5 days would make me uncomfortable	sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
			dir_Other~
071		[Laughter]	
072	4.57	D: So where does the pressure come from then? He [R] says that he thinks it's to maintain the pressure of	dir_Member~
			norm_Group pressure to participate

	wanting to go deep or wanting to go deep yet remaining superficial. Somebody else [S] says no it's something different it's easier to talk here so ... yet everybody feels tired, or a lot of you say that you feel tired so what's the pressure then, where did the energy go to?	
073	[Silence]	
074	4.58 H: I think that we have been talking about going deep but we haven't really gone deep	dir_Group~ sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
075	[Silence, then laughter and undistinguishable mumble]	
076	4.59 H: We are talking about personalities and stuff, like on the surface, we haven't drilled down yet, that's where the pressure will come in. opening up more of your self.	dir_Group~ sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
077	[Silence]	
078	4.60 G: So it's going to get more stressful?	dir_Group~ sd&es_Self-disclos
079	4.61 H: Mhm. I think so but also it's going to get more safe as we get to know each other. There might be an urge to open up. If we walked out today and didn't come back tomorrow then this is the level where we will end, we will end at a superficial level but as we progress ... I would feel safe.	dir_Group~ sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
080	4.62 D: So that's what takes the energy, the investment in making this safe enough to the degree that you feel comfortable with the whole of it. So that's the real pressure? Because that is an investment that each one makes to his or her own call ... saying, yes this is what I want, this is what I want to happen, this is where I want to go, this is what I want to take home. I mean can we urge you to think about this this evening because this is the actual real opportunity to think what is it I want to invest into this, what is it that I would want to take out because it taps my energy, I mean everyone is tired now, where did it go, it went to exactly that ... create the space that is safe enough for me to explore, to take it as an opportunity to take something home what ever that is.	dir_Group~ sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment a
081	[Silence]	
082	4.63 N: I'm not tired	a&fp_Administrating participation~
083	4.64 D: Good for you	a&fp_Administrating participation~
084	4.65 K: Ja, well we invested everything in you	a&fp_Administrating participation~
085	[Laughter]	dir_Group~
086	4.66 G: What would you like us to do N? [15:08]	a&fp_Administrating participation~
087	4.67 N: Can everybody have a segment of a session like I did? Advice thrown in ...	dir_Leader~ norm_Equal participation~
088	4.68 D: Can everybody have a?	dir_Member~ norm_Equal part
089	4.69 N: A session like I had, it was an hour on me...	dir_Leader~
090	4.70 K ... A bit of balance from your side	norm_Equal participation~
091	4.71 N: Yes, so ...	
092	4.72 G: That's not possible now so what would you like us to do now?	a&fp_Administrating participation~ dir_Member~
093	4.73 N: Oh, now, I don't have a plan for now but for the next 4 days can we have a session for everyone. So how did	dir_Member~ norm_Equal participation~

	you grow up?	
094	[Laughter]	
095	4.74 K: Pass	
096	4.75 G: Ja ... how many of you are tired?	✂ a&fp_Administrating participation~
097	[H, F, Ay, P put up there hands]	✂ dir_Member~
098	4.76 G: So what would you like to do now?	✂ a&fp_Administrating participation~
099	4.77 F: I personally would like for us to break this thing up, I'm exhausted, I'm finished.	✂ a&fp_Administrating participation~
100	4.78 K: I didn't know that.	✂ dir_Self~
101	4.79 G: Thank you F Ok we'll go with F. Well that's the end of that, for today.	✂ a&fp_Administrating participation~
102	4.80 D: Are you all good?	✂ a&fp_Administrating participation~
103	4.81 G: All alright?	✂ dir_Member~
104	[Indistinct speaking]	
105	4.82 G: Let's just take a 5 minute break and then we come back in here, and it's not back in the group so we are going to look at what has happened to day but it's not like in group. Ok?	✂ a&fp_Administrating participation~
106	4.83 K: Are we going to put the tables back here, or not?	✂ dir_Group~
107	4.84 G: Just for practical reasons it would be nice if we can put them back, to create the illusion that it's different now so if we can change the space it would be nice but then tomorrow morning we would have to do it again.	✂ a&fp_Administrating participation~
108	4.85 P: That's just odd that we all have to turn around and face the board.	✂ a&fp_Administrating participation~
109	4.86 G: No so we don't have to	✂ dir_Leader~
110	[Tape jumps, J absent]	
111	4.87 G: Just write briefly your own experience of the day	✂ a&fp_Administrating participation~
112	[J returns]	✂ dir_Member~
113	4.88 G: This is just for yourself so that you can refer back to it, because it's difficult to remember. Think of it as a journal	✂ a&fp_Administrating participation~
...		✂ dir_Member~

Appendix B: List of themes and topics in Atlas.ti

This appendix shows the themes and the topics for each theme as it appears in Atlas.ti. In Atlas.ti a theme is referred to as a “code family” and topics as “codes”. Each code family consist of a number of codes.

Code Families

HU: Greyling PhD (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11)
File: [D:\PhD 2013\Research\Atlas\Greyling PhD (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11).hpr6]
Edited by: Super
Date/Time: 26/10/13 05:36:35 AM

Code Family: Administering & facilitating participation (a&fp)

Created: 28/04/10 05:52:22 AM (GV)

Comment:

Description: The leader or members administer practical arrangements such as time and membership. Participation is facilitated through guidance and clarification of communication as well as invitations to speak or elaborate.

Codes (5): [a&fp_Administrating participation] [a&fp_Clarifying communication] [a&fp_Clarifying interpersonal interaction and communication] [a&fp_Invitation to speak or elaborate] [a&fp_Regulating temperature]

Quotation(s): 438

Code Family: Directedness of conversation (dir)

Created: 22/12/09 06:00:01 AM (GV)

Codes (7): [dir_Abstract] [dir_Group] [dir_Leader] [dir_Member] [dir_Other] [dir_Self] [dir_Subgroup]

Quotation(s): 2405

Code Family: Engaging in group (engG)

Created: 27/04/10 02:48:56 PM (GV)

Comment:

Description: Engagement on a personal and emotional level with the group is the central theme. Conditions of engagement, the effect of engaging and dis- or non-engagement, as well as types of engagement are discussed. Reference is also made to personal disclosure as part of engagement with group but it is not the central theme.

Codes (5): [EngG_Conditions/type of engagement] [EngG_Effect of (non)-engagement] [EngG_Effect of engagement] [EngG_Engaging/disengage with the group] [engG_Lack of disclosure and engagement]

Quotation(s): 264

Code Family: Group (group)

Created: 29/01/10 04:00:40 AM (GV)

Comment:

Description: The group is the subject of discussion and it is referred to in 3rd person

Codes (11): [group_Group as experimental space] [group_Group atmosphere] [group_Group common interest] [group_Group development] [group_Group facilitation] [group_Group occupation (future)] [group_Group transition] [group_Group/team building activity] [group_Incident in group] [group_Purpose and usefulness of group] [group_Seating arrangements]

Quotation(s): 133

Code Family: Metaphysical (metaph)

Created: 30/04/10 12:34:09 PM (GV)

Comment:

Description: Topics addressed are of metaphysical nature such as energy or forces of nature.

Codes (1): [metaph_Energy flow/transpersonal]

Quotation(s): 47

Code Family: Norming (norm)

Created: 29/04/10 05:48:40 AM (GV)

Comment:

Description: Rules pertaining participation in the group, including frequency and pattern of participation, reciprocation, giving and receiving feedback etc are being established.

Codes (10): [norm_Appropriate participation in the group] [norm_Equal participation] [norm_External party] [norm_Group pressure to participate] [norm_Inviting, giving permission for feedback] [norm_Membership negotiation] [norm_Order of participation] [norm_Permission - seeking and giving] [norm_Reciprocal relationship] [norm_Response choice/freedom]

Quotation(s): 194

Code Family: Parenthood (ph)

Created: 22/12/09 06:11:09 AM (GV)

Comment:

Description: Discussing different aspects of parenting and parenthood

Codes (1): [ph_Parenthood]

Quotation(s): 182

Code Family: Personal identity and disclosure (pid&d)

Created: 22/12/09 05:50:38 AM (GV)

Comment:

Description: Act of revealing something personal that may not be known or obvious to the group. This includes disclosure of personal history, preferences, vulnerabilities, relationships etc.

Codes (18): [pid&d_Dependence/Independence] [pid&d_Family/cultural heritage] [pid&d_Identity/Self defining] [pid&d_Introducing self] [pid&d_Label/labeling] [pid&d_Learning/insight through revealing and exploring in group] [pid&d_Life goal] [pid&d_Marital/partner relationship] [pid&d_Mirroring] [pid&d_Name/naming] [pid&d_Need to be needed] [pid&d_Occupation/career] [pid&d_Physical reaction/tremors] [pid&d_Rebelling] [pid&d_Self confidence] [pid&d_Self expectations] [pid&d_Stability versus change?] [pid&d_Vulnerability/not being in control]

Quotation(s): 427

Code Family: Random topic (rt)

Created: 30/04/10 01:41:31 PM (GV)

Comment:

Description: A random topic that does not fit with the other themes and which does not have an obvious relevance is discussed

Codes (1): [rt_Smoking]

Quotation(s): 12

Code Family: Relational (relate)

Created: 30/04/10 10:53:03 AM (GV)

Comment:

Description: Topics are discussed that are associated with interpersonal relationships. In most cases direct reference is made to relationships in the group. Topics included are: intent and effect, receiving and extending help, interpersonal learning, being judged and being validated in the group.

Codes (12): [relate_Being understood/misunderstood] [relate_Burdening versus voluntarily helping] [relate_Effect - interpersonal] [relate_Effect of participation, being open/closed] [relate_Gaining value/learning] [relate_Getting, seeking help] [relate_Intent and effect] [relate_Judging in relationships] [relate_Layers (distance) in relationships] [relate_Personal versus member's needs] [relate_Personalising communication] [relate_Valuing others and feeling worthy]

Quotation(s): 484

Code Family: Role (role)

Created: 30/04/10 11:53:14 AM (GV)

Comment:

Description: Discussing, exploring and attempting to understand roles people play, particularly the member-role in the group.

Codes (1): [role_Role in group]

Quotation(s): 42

Code Family: Self disclosure and emotional security (sd&es)

Created: 27/04/10 10:10:02 AM (GV)

Comment:

Description: Risk and benefits of self-disclosure in relation to the group context - more specifically the emotional security provided by and experienced in the group.

Codes (5): [sd&es_Apprehension of self disclosure] [sd&es_Authenticity and transparency] [sd&es_Honesty/safety] [sd&es_Self-disclosure/investment and security] [sd&es_Self confidence and emotional security]

Quotation(s): 337

Code Family: Teaching (teach)

Created: 27/12/09 03:59:30 AM (GV)

Comment:

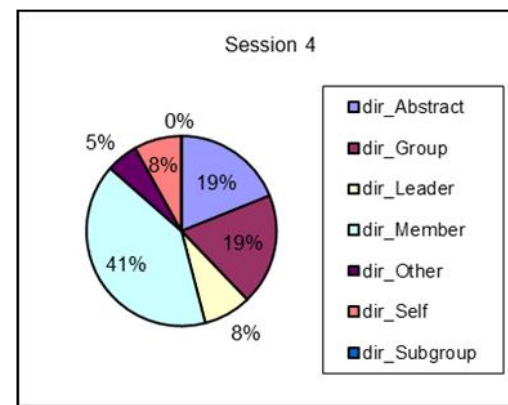
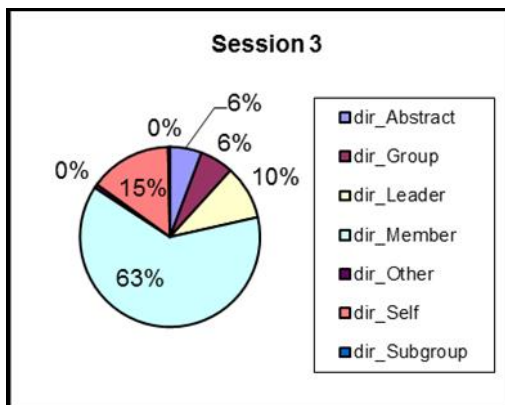
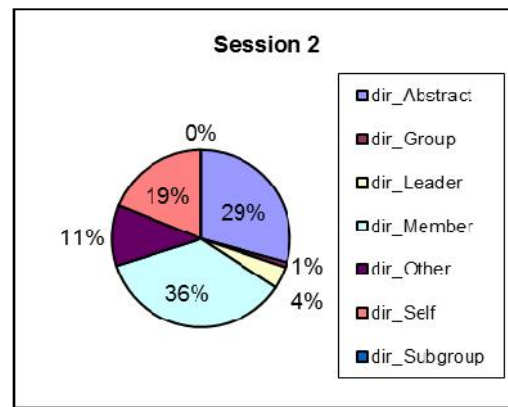
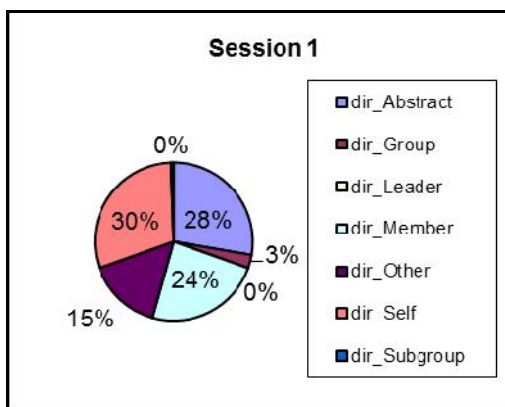
Description: Considering teaching as a profession, including the relationship between teacher and pupil

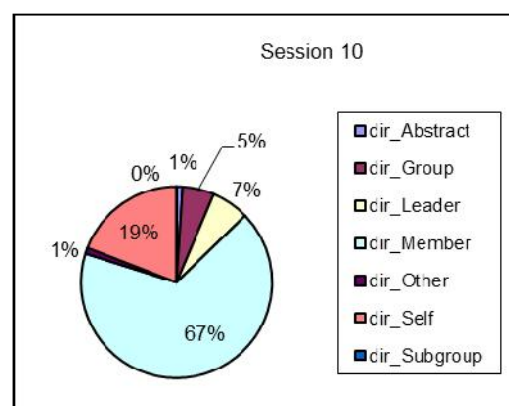
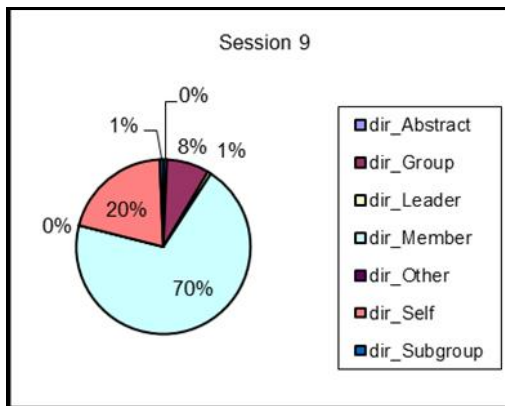
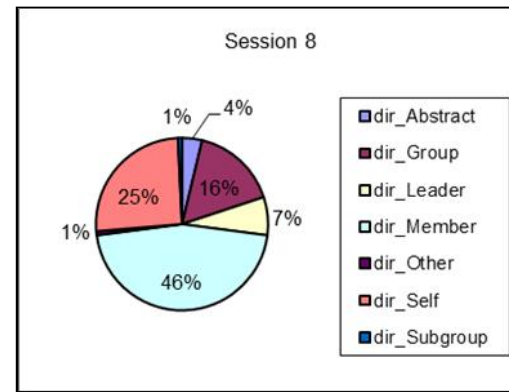
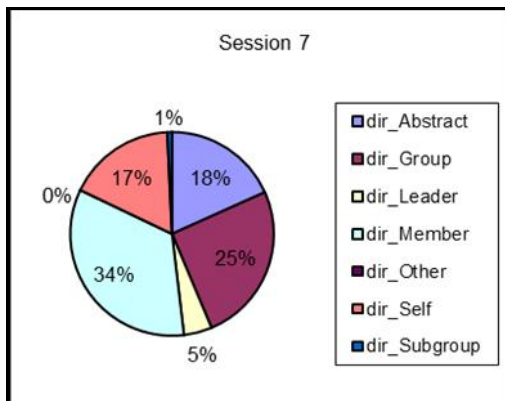
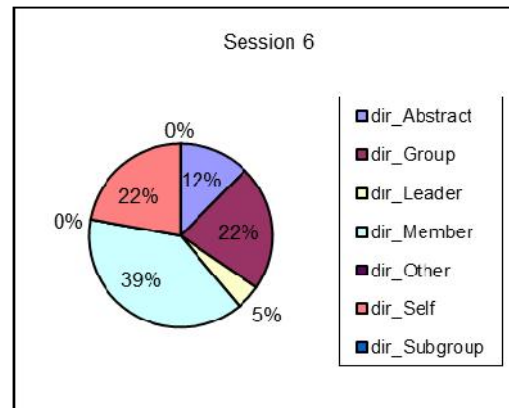
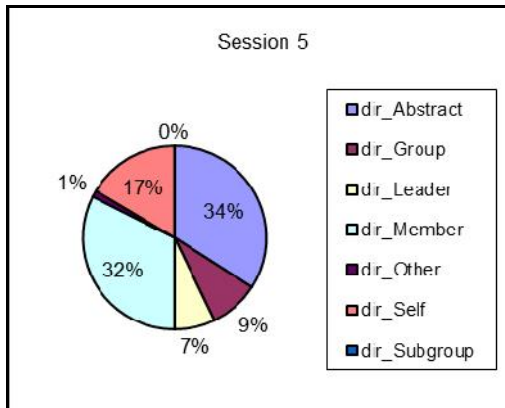


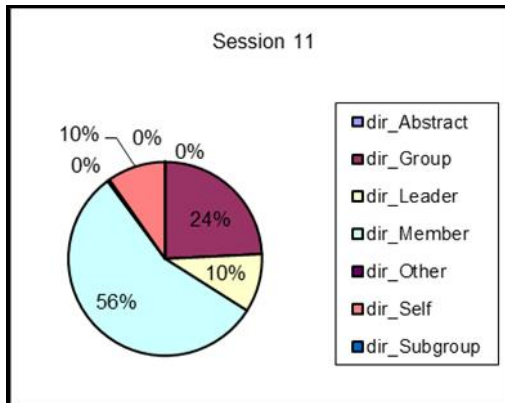
Codes (2): [teach_Lecture/lecturing] [teach_Teachers/teaching]
Quotation(s): 60

Appendix C: Pie charts of directedness of the conversation for all sessions

Below is a display of the pie charts of directedness of the conversation for each session. Directedness indicates transactions across boundaries.







Appendix D: Table of themes

In the table the themes are expressed as percentages of the total conversation of a session. The table was used to create the stacked columns and the line graphs of themes per sessions which appear in chapters 6 and 7.

Ssn	A&FP	Group	Sd&es	relate	engG	teach	Rt	Role	pid&d	norm	metaph	ph	
1	7%	6%	0%	1%	0%	0%	7%	0%	38%	14%	0%	29%	100%
2	10%	0%	32%	2%	0%	19%	0%	0%	24%	15%	0%	0%	100%
3	8%	0%	21%	59%	0%	0%	0%	11%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%
4	35%	9%	28%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	26%	0%	0%	100%
5	14%	5%	35%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	27%	1%	0%	18%	100%
6	11%	6%	27%	38%	0%	0%	0%	0%	7%	9%	0%	3%	100%
7	13%	16%	0%	19%	33%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%	18%	0%	100%
8	10%	11%	12%	13%	10%	0%	0%	0%	10%	3%	0%	31%	100%
9	17%	5%	3%	17%	44%	0%	0%	1%	0%	15%	0%	0%	100%
10	19%	0%	3%	16%	7%	0%	0%	2%	51%	2%	0%	0%	100%
11	46%	7%	4%	16%	4%	0%	0%	0%	13%	11%	0%	0%	100%

Appendix E: Communication to the participants

The following two letters were sent via email to the group members. The first was sent towards the end of the year prior to the training group and the second at the beginning of the year in which the group took place.

Letter one

Dear Participants

Group facilitation training group

This is just a short message to make contact with you and to give you some practical information about the workshop next year. I am aware that two or three of you will receive this message although you are not sure at this stage if you will be able to attend the workshop.

I confirm that the venue is the School for Business Leadership (SBL) in Midrand. We will meet in the entrance on the first day, Monday the 9th of January. You can register between 08h30 and 08h50. We will start with the group at 09h00. The traffic on the N1 and in the area of the SBL is very busy around 08h00 so please allow enough time so that we can start on time. The workshop will finish at 16h30 every day except Friday when we may finish a little earlier. It is important that all the group members are available for the full day, especially for the first three days. I hope that everybody can arrange your time so that you can all be there for the full time. We will have tea breaks and lunch will be served in the restaurant of the SBL.

I will send another mail in the first week in January to prepare you a little more for the first three days of the workshop. Of all the work I do these courses are what I often enjoy the most and I hope that you are also looking forward to it.

Regards

G V

Clinical Psychologist

Letter two

Dear Participants

Training group in group-dynamics and facilitation

We hope that you all received the previous e-mail with the practical arrangements. If not please let me know.

The first three days will provide an experience of being a participant in a group. This will and should be a unique experience that makes this course or workshop different from most other courses in group facilitation. The facilitators, G and D, will not introduce a topic or content but instead this will unfold as the group progresses. After the group has progressed for a while (a few hours) we will take a break from the group and reflect on what has happened in the group and from then on we will do this at regular intervals. The main purpose these reflection times is that we will capture and make sense of the experiences and of what happened in the group. To “make sense of” what is happening in a group is one of the most essential aspects of being a good facilitator but at the same time something that is not easily taught. The first three days usually takes a fair amount of energy so expect to be a little tired at the end of each day.

The fourth and fifth days will be practical and partly theoretical. I will be presenting and facilitating the last two days without D, who will co-facilitate the first three days.

You do not have to prepare anything. Please bring a book in which you can make personal notes.

G and D

Appendix F Consent Form



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Dear Group Member

Utilizing the training-group encounter for research purposes

In the outline of the procedures for the training group in group dynamics and facilitation it was mentioned that data from the group encounter will be used for research purposes. The research is for a thesis in partial fulfilment of a PhD in Psychotherapy in the Department of Psychology at the University of Pretoria under the supervision of Dr A A Gildenhuys. The title of the thesis is "Exploring the concept of boundaries in a training group encounter".

A video recording will be made of the sessions during the small group encounter and at the end of the group you will be asked to give written feedback on your experience of the group. A transcription of the video recording and the written feedback will be used for the research. The data will be used for research purposes only and the recordings and transcriptions will be kept in the researcher's possession.

Your identity as a participant will be protected at all times. The research output will only include a written analysis of group dynamics and detail through which individuals could

be identified will be omitted from the transcription to safeguard the anonymity of the participants.

The group experience will last for three days that will be followed by two days of intellectual reflecting and sense-making of the learning during the group. Please take note that if you feel emotionally distressed due to the intensity of the experience or for any other reason both the facilitators will be available for debriefing after the training. They can also assist by referring you to an appropriate professional if the need arises.

If you are in agreement that the group may be used for research purposes as explained above, please sign this letter and give it to the facilitator before the start of the course/training group. Giving your consent is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time without redress.

I, _____ hereby give consent to voluntarily participate in the research study entitled: Exploring the concept of boundaries in a training group encounter.

Signature: Participant_____ Date: _____

Signature: Researcher_____ Date: _____

Appendix G: Transcriptions of session 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9

This appendix includes the full transcripts of the conversation during session 1, 5, 7, 8 and 9. Note that session 9 starts with number 10. Paragraphs are numbered whenever the conversation switches between speakers. Speakers are identified by an initial.

Session 1

- 1.1 K: I decided not to be first.
- 1.2 G: OK
- 1.3 Ay: I think you've just nominated yourself.
- [Laughter]
- [silence]
- 1.4 P: We were standing outside now and smoking. And I realized that I really think more people should start inventing inside smoking rooms because it's freezing outside.
- [Laughter]
- 1.5 P: So, I really think they should organize a room inside where you can smoke, that has proper ventilation and doesn't affect anyone else. Just by the by. [laugh]
- 1.6 G: How many supporters do you have in this room?
- 1.7 K: Definitely me.
- [laughter]
- 1.8 P: There you go, there's one. I don't think there're any other smokers here, so.
- 1.9 K: On the other hand I told J and the rest during the previous session that's were I started smoking because they brought me in, I was working in Absa as a IT project manager, so they brought me in to the smoking room for meetings so that where it all started.
- 1.10 S: Excellent for networking, though.
- 1.11 P: It is, I agree.
- 1.12 S: The smoking community is very tight, that's where all the "skinner" happens and that's why most the "in the know" people are in the smoking community.
- 1.13 P: That's true, I found out more in a smoking room than I did in the office.
- 1.14 N: And they tend to be more friendly to each other, it's like oh we smoke let's hug.
- [Laughter]
- 1.15 P: I would have to agree with you. At [?] proper ventilation cause I worked in a Company called [? company name] and we literally had to smoke on the stair case which was quite a distance from the office because there were no windows. There was one right at the bottom of the stairs so then the entire room got amazingly smoky, you couldn't breathe in there, so if you wanted to smoke you rather went nah, I'd rather not. So ja.

- 1.16 S: So they would think that you'd stopped.
- 1.17 P: To an extent, it becomes very annoying as well and like I said a lot more is there than in the office. So.
- 1.18 N: During the introduction though, I was thinking of um besides the main facilitation thing I must have a plan b for the course you know you have the main focus, yes we must learn about groups and teams it's like a given but then I must always have a plan B, you know you can't always do one thing as a woman.
- [Laughter]
- 1.19 P: So let's see, so I decided at the end of this week I must draw some knowledge from A because she sound's like she's got a lot of stuff to tell me. Well she doesn't know yet so I'll suck it off her.
- [Laughter]
- 1.20 A - I mean it's interesting that she says that because I think I walk into this group feeling quite intimidated and just kind of less than so thanks.
- 1.21 G: Why's that?
- 1.22 A: It's just that because everybody introduces themselves with their qualifications you know and you often find that, you know, your self esteem often comes from that, well you its like "I've got my this and that and I studied this so I can introduce myself that way because other people will immediately be impressed in the sense that I am and having been a mom for 6 years, its not that easy to introduce yourself as anybody having much to offer apart from being a mom.
- 1.23 H: I was also thinking because I introduce myself first, why do I introduce myself in my professional status and why don't I introduce myself by saying I'm a mom with 2 kids, undefined. Because that's also a large part of my identity being a mom. So ja
- 1.24 Ay: Don't you think it's because of we sort of in the school of don't mix business with pleasure. Facilitation in the course, we tell the stories about ourselves that are relevant to the context.
- 1.25 K: I would agree with that because, you know, when I meet women, married women with children, I also feel intimidated because I'm not married and I don't have children and the first question that they ask is how many kids do you have and I think wow is that the only thing that's going to make me a woman. You know.
- [05:11]
- 1.26 R: I am a married father of a 2 year old so that's how I'm redefining myself to you. I have a wonderful little boy called [son's name], his name is the same as A's daughter's name so and ja being a father of a 2 year old is probably the most rewarding and challenging part of who I am right now. One thing which I just think is that it's one thing you go into with no road map because, you, I'm not making a boy, I'm forming and responding to who he is and as he's discovering himself I'm being the dad.
- 1.27 N: I would like to record that.
- [Laughter]
- 1.28 R: S said that I have a wonderful wife. My wife is an academic, but she's some one who's managed to balance her studies and being a mom. So I've been very fortunate in the process

- 1.29 A: I mean that is the kind of person I really admire because I mean with you and everything that you are doing at the moment. I guess when I had my kids I just, there was no ways that I could go back to work, I just could not get that balance, ja so that's what I maybe need to strive for, is to be a mom and be a good mom and to feel good about that and just to maybe have that little bit extra which makes me feel good about me. In a different area.
- 1.30 H: I think that it's a very personal thing, I mean it's got a lot to do with your personality. I, myself would have gone mad if I had to have been a full time mom. My husband is actually, I think, a better parent than I am because I feel sometimes selfish, I need to do a lot of self things and that's where my job comes in. My kids drive me crazy.
- [Laughter]
- 1.31 H: This holiday has been very long.
- 1.32 A: It's like I said to a friend of mine last night I can't believe how quick this holiday has gone I said but I'm actually been so sad that kids have to go back to school.
- 1.33 N: I think everything has, well for me it's moving from work, work to aid your clients so that's why I said you need a plan B because you're finding yourself at this crossroads [indicates to left] work and [indicates to right] life, what is your values what are... how do you define yourself in all these things. I've been finding that yes there's working but here's also a bigger part in life which is oneness, fatherhood, motherhood and I think it's interesting. More and more organizations are adapting to that degree of realizing that "babies on board" on cars, I saw 10 cars on the road [indicates a sign] "baby on board". Quite interesting.
- 1.34 Ay to N: What's your plan B? You've spoken about it but...
- 1.35 N to Ay: Kids
- 1.36 Ay to N: Ok Kids
- 1.37 N: Mother of 2 kids, wifehood, [indicates circle] a relationship.
- 1.38 S: Personally I think motherhood is something I'm very scared of mostly because I think I feel like you do [indicates to H] that's how I feel about my friend's kids, I spend an hour with them and then I'm tired, you know and then you get more selfish the older you get, the longer you've been married. It's very difficult you know giving up the afternoon naps, just going to the movies when you want. I don't know.
- 1.39 P: I think it's like you feel the responsibility factor. My sister in law just had a little one, the baby is now one month old and I had it for one day, yesterday actually. It was just so tiring I mean, my god, the baby cries and he needs things all the time, you've gotta be with him all the time. It's just it's very taxing and I think having the responsibility of having to take care of something and actually look after somebody for a good 18 years or so, it's just ... daunting to say the least.
- 1.40 K: I think it's more than 18 years.
- 1.41 P: [laughs] ja probably. And I know I'm 22 and I still rely on mummy and daddy very much.
- 1.42 Ay: Well isn't it like you look after them for 12 and then try and get them back into the house for the next 6.

- 1.43 P: [laughs] probably
- 1.44 A: J, you haven't said anything
- 1.45 J: I am thinking about my baby now and hey, ja it's true, you start thinking ... and someone said to me on holiday that having a baby is such an intensive experience that brings out the worse and the best in you and that's something that I'm starting to experience. There are these moments when I really think that it brings out the best in me and then there are these moments when I feel argh, man I never knew that these parts of me existed. I get so frustrated when he doesn't stop crying and when I can't do what must be done to make him stop crying, that feeling like when you ... totally out of ... you have no control. You learn ... well I'm learning a lot more about my self than I've done for a long time because other things you can more or less control, keep things along straight lines and then there's something disruptive and um ... like when you go to a restaurant, not blending, sophisticated, drawing the atmosphere, there's this little thing, baby and he's crawling everywhere and if he wants to go there, he's going there and you bring him back, put him back.... It's a real...interesting... and good experience.
- 1.46 S: Do you think that some people are naturally just better at it or I mean for example is there some skill... what is it that makes a good parent? What makes a good mother for that matter?
- 1.47 P: I think personally one of those things that I've always believed is the first step would be actually bonding with the kid. I think that that is the very first thing. I think a lot of people who don't like kids and either by mistake or a rash decision... because they're not really into it, it doesn't really work out too well. So think that... I noticed recently that a lot of mothers tend to get frustrated and want to move away from the kid and they don't really understand it. Like when a baby cries, like when you [J] said why is he crying, I mean why can't I stop him from crying and that frustration leads to a lot of conflict especially between relationships and stuff so understanding exactly what's going on ... my sister in law does this excellent thing, he cries so she sits down and feeds him, if he doesn't want to drink then she changes his diaper and if he keeps on crying then she calls the baby nest they have a baby nest helpline, so she says "my baby is crying" and they say "ok just lay him down for a while" and now she's gone out and got like a 100 different books on baby care, no really, can tell you exactly whether the baby can see or not, how far the baby can see, whether the baby can hear or not... I mean, all these small little details helps her in terms of getting to know her baby better, with bonding, so she is not as frustrated. I don't know, it's my personal view point, I'm not sure what really makes a good mother or not.
[12:59]
- 1.48 H: I think a good parent is someone that... um... that's got the inner journey inside, the knowledge of self ...it's very important for a parent to ... be able to know yourself in the way you raise your kids ... um... its not everything that you have in a [?] life not trying to do much for your kids, letting them be what you couldn't be... you have to learn to relax and not try and control everything
- [Silence]
- 1.49 Ay: Did anyone here have a kid that wasn't planned...? [Looks around circle]... no I'm just asking cause we're speaking about preparing for parenting and

wanting a kid. I wonder what it's like for someone who doesn't have that "inverted commas?"

1.50 P: Well not personally but my best friend went through it... um... she was 16, the boy was 17 and she fell pregnant, completely unplanned, ...um... she stayed at home and had 2 other kids after that and then she started working a year ago but ... um ... from birth she says that one of the worst things for her was she felt that almost, like the kids stopped her from what she wanted to do, she wanted to finish matric, she wanted to study afterwards and she couldn't do that and because of that unfortunately there was a bit of resentment, you know I can share this with you guys because you don't know her but um ... ja, she says that it held her back a lot because as far as she's concerned.

1.51 A: And how is she as a mother, after having the child?

1.52 P: It's a difficult question because like I said we are quite close but um as far as I'm concerned she's not a very good mother, she just isn't. She tends to be very inattentive, she doesn't really play with the kids um ... all children are all temper queens, oh well one is a girl, two are boys but they're drama queens and kings like you wouldn't believe. You walk into a shopping mall and they want a chocolate and if she says no, then they throw themselves down on the floor, kicking and screaming literally, I've seen it and I've walked out of shops because I don't know what to do. So, um ... like ... sometimes the second one is [child's name] she will come and say, "mummy can I color in my book and come and color with me" and she will say "ag later, take your books and go sit in your room, I just ... I need to watch my soap operas". That sort of ... so I don't really ... and that's why I say ... I think the planning and the decision to have kids, for me is quite important. Cause that, I've seen what has happened with those 3 and it's not...

[15:54]

1.53 Ay: My sister had a kid that was unplanned and the exact opposite things happened with her, it's given her a sense of purpose and that it's really helped her

1.54 F: I... I... really don't think that you need to plan to have babies for you to be a good parent in the end because I ... I don't know what I am but I'm taking care of a 10 year old ... an 11 year old now and it's been that way for 3 ... 2 ... almost 3 years now and um ... I'm enjoying it, I can't say it's given me a purpose because I think my purpose is a whole lot bigger than that but ... ja ... the way I relate to here is I see her as a project, I'm not a great project manager but I ... I ... I manage her the way I would manage a project. I think about her future, what is it that she likes and what is it that I can expose her to that would bring out her potential and um ... ja ... my life does not revolve around her but that does not mean ... I still do things that I like but I still feel that I'm doing a pretty good job and coming to what A was saying in terms of her feeling like she's intimidated by the titles, it's funny I think I was speaking to J the other day and we were speaking about titles and one of my biggest struggles is to say really who am I because if you listen to me I say I practice clinical psychology because I feel that, for me that that is a better way of putting it because I don't want to say that I am a clinical psychologist because I think that's [End Tape 1: Part 1] [Start Tape 1: Part 2] That is part of what I do but I feel that I'm a lot bigger than that and if I say that I'm a clinical psychologist then I make that a primary part of my identity which is not ... um ... I'm a parent as well, I'm a brother ... um, um... and all

these things that are very important to me and so for me to come primarily as a clinical psychologist would ... in this context I understand it but in other contexts if someone were to ask me “so what do you do”, I find I do a whole lot more than just clinical psychology. So part of my identity is I’m not proud of myself because I do clinical psychology, I’m a “clinical psychologist”, I’m a dad or I’m a brother or this and that. I’m just proud of myself because I am me, the fact that I was born gives me an identity not ... ah, I don’t know it’s such philosophy... suppose that’s were I’m at

1.55 S: That’s a great place to be ... that sense of self.

1.56 F: To such an extent if my niece should die, I mean that would be such a painful experience but I don’t live for her and even if I had kids, I don’t think that I would be living for my kids, they don’t make me who I am, life should still continue even if their should die.

1.57 A: It’s funny that you said that because just 2 days ago [husband’s name] had taken the girls off for the day and I had the day to myself and true to form I was sitting there and thinking if the 3 of them were to die in a car accident what would I actually do because I feel like I’m so enmeshed in those 3 lives and I said to [husband’s name] afterwards that it is a bit of dreary thought but this is what crossed my mind. We’ve just moved to Jo’burg, would I move back to Durban I don’t know because I don’t feel that there is something there drawing me except my mom, I’m staying in a home now where his mom is right next door, I don’t know if I would want the responsibility of her either because she is getting on in life and I don’t know, I didn’t commit to that without him as my partner committed to that as a marriage and I actually got a bit shaky thinking, because my mind just went crazy and I thought who am I without the 3 of them. Sorry I’m getting all ...

1.58 N: I think it’s such an interesting question because I thought at a certain age you stopped asking that question and I find myself that I have to stop asking this question, there has to be a point and time when I know, that I’m not asking but for me it feels like it is a continuous life question, when you become a wife you ask yourself that and when you become a mother and then it’s the question again, then when the kids leave home then ... it’s a revolving life question, it’s..

1.59 J: Where are you now?

1.60 N: Now, I’m supposed to choice a career, it’s quite a, like I’m almost a wife, I’m almost a wife, it’s like eh, I wish I knew what is this, I wish I knew I could say that I work for J, then it’s that, I would ... I wish I knew ... I could say I work for D or something just that ... I’m there, like I need to get there now, I’m so tired of, I’m finishing my master’s, I’m finishing, I’m finishing, I’m gonna do my ... and I find out that at the end of the year I’ll know my career and then I’ll be starting this wife thing and work. Oh my gosh, what now, it’s a, I think it’s a revolving question and the sooner that we deal with that, that we’ll always be asking and revolving and finding out who we are and I don’t think that one’s life purpose is you are A and that’s it, I think that as people enter your life as, you face different circumstances that changes, you might be a wife and that’s it for that time and you do your best in that, and you become a mother and you do your best in that, and you become a lecturer, I have to think of those 260 students and I have to make sure that they become who they need to be and just that, ja, I’m at a point

where I need to be excellent in one, what I'm doing at the moment because I'm not guaranteed of eternity with that place. I don't know if I'm making sense.

[5:06]

- 1.61 Ay: So do you want to settle down?
- 1.62 N: Or just a definition, or just like ok, I'm this, you know. I don't know but it's frustrating but anyway.
- 1.63 S: I just think what's more scary is when people just accept, you know, having their identities locked up in other things and they don't even question it. I find that more, I think it's actually quite or a refining moment for you that you've actually come to that place where you ask that question and not just, I know many women who just accept that their identities, they actually loose their identities in family and marriage and I think that's more scary. To me, I think.
- 1.64 Ay: I just hope that life stays interesting because I can identify a lot with you N because at this sort of time in our lives there's a lot happening you've got to forge a career, find a relationship, decide what the relationship is going to be and I think that once I'm married for 15 years, will things suddenly calm down? I don't know what the answer to that is but I hope not because then you'll get bored and I'm sorry.
- [Laughter]
- 1.65 N: I just... I think... I'm reading a lot of books at the moment on this and that but then, like, women want stability but just that diligence, continuity, I think and then there all these things happening, career, kids so I don't know if I agree with you.
- 1.66 K: I don't like the fact that you say women that wants stability. Don't we all or do we all?
- 1.67 G: I think people.
- 1.68 N: People want stability?
- 1.69 G: [nods]
- 1.70 N: But he just said now that he hopes not.
- 1.71 S: I think some people thrive on change but I don't think you can make a general assumption that people wants stability because I think that's not necessarily true. I also think that also, maybe, where I'm even different to you [indicates towards N] because I enjoy the journey. Not necessarily wanted to get to a specific [indicates with hand], not that I want to be this. I enjoy the emerging sort of road.
- 1.72 P: I like the strange things popping up every now and then, and the curve balls and all of that. It's exciting
- 1.73 S: Otherwise you miss life, if you keep on waiting for something at the end point. I think.
- 1.74 N: I think I'm more, sort of like a control freak. In a nice way but like I want to know what's happening I need that sense of knowledge like, the process, the process sort of guarantees you things coming up that you would never think possible.
- 1.75 R: I don't think that the 2 are mutually exclusive because I think you live in the danger of being a victim of life where you just passively takes what life hands to you versus being too much of a control freak where you try and create something which life hasn't given you the tools and the context to actually create. I think there is actually a balance between the two where we can actually become who

we want to become but who you want to become today may be different from who you wanted to become yesterday and who you will want to become tomorrow, I think we need to make decisions today around our circumstances, who do I actually want to become and then take active steps towards that. But then be prepared a you said [indicates to N] from a perspective to tomorrow reevaluate whatever I've got tomorrow and make active decisions because, I think, you know that the passive, you know the people who just life passively they get to the end, you know lying on their death beds saying I wish. I don't want to get to my death bed and say I wish, I wish that I had done all of those things that I should of tried that I didn't because I either didn't have the courage or I wasn't able to, so to die with as few regrets as possible, I think would be a big part of that life process. [Silence] Sorry I suppose to die intentionally with a goal.

[Laughter] [09:46]

1.76 H: I think that goal setting is very important and to define what it is that you want and to define that for yourself and then work towards that. I would you encourage you to do that.

[Laughter]

1.77 H: How old are you now [to N]

1.78 N: I'm 24

1.79 H: I don't know but in my own experience, in my twenties I was just like you, always searching for some big ideal but when you reach twenty going on thirty, I don't know if you can really say that for everyone, but it's like you come into your own, you just grow into yourself

1.80 Ay: Ja, I just react strongly against that because I've had, I've had significant people around me saying "Ay it's just part of growing up".

[Laughter]

1.81 Ay: That frustrates me. In that case I don't want to grow up.

[Laughter]

1.82 G: I'm missing something here, I...

1.83 Ay: No, no it's just like, you know, like at certain stages of your life it's ok to have experienced certain insecurities because that's part of...

1.84 G: That's why they say...

1.85 Ay: That life's a process, at 29, 30 tick, you're mind set changes and now it's ok, now it's... You know, when I'm 26 it's ok to ... because that's part of growing up... that sort of...

1.86 G: You don't like that.

1.87 Ay: Well I enjoy being in that, I enjoy being in my 20's ... I suppose my perception is that a lot of people older than me that have counseled me with the struggles I go through to answer my life, so it's like ... just go through it now, you'll reach the stage when you'll look back and say, ok now I can see that that was part of the process, you'll arrive...

1.88 F: I think if you ever arrive, you die, I don't think anyone ever wants to... I think that the moment you arrive, you die and honestly I don't want to arrive, I just want to keep going.

1.89 K: I just want to say something to you [N], I think I could change, if I could have changed anything in my past, I would say, I would not be an adult so soon, I

would stay a child for longer, play more and not be so serious, I mean occupied in a career at age 22 and ja ...

1.90 H: That's interesting because now that I'm in my 30's, I actually find more time to play, more time to enjoy the nice things in life than I did in my 20's, when I did go through struggles. Life was tougher then than it is now because now, I've got a better sense of what I find enjoyable in my life, what it is that I want to spend more time on. So that's ... I come back to child like things in my 30's, which I didn't do much of when I was ...

1.91 N: Interesting that it was the other way round. You know, enjoy more 20's ...

1.92 H: I was very serious in my 20's

[General Noise and Laughter]

1.93 S: I think you also gain self confidence later, confidence in your own decisions and ability to go through these changes and that's why ... it's not that you arrive in your 30's, I think, there are still things that changes, like career changes or big life changes but it's just that you're more confident that you are able to handle the things that life throws at you.

[Silence]

1.94 P: I think that when it comes to confidence, I think that you can deal with just about anything. I think that a lot comes from your past and your past experiences, I can tell you, I've been through a hell of, a hell of a lot these past 2 years or so, I mean everything from illness and sickness right through to death as well as a boyfriend being locked up and stuff like that and sjoe its been a real roller coaster ride and as young as I am, I really have the thing, the idea that ag come what may, I'll get through it. Then that's the end of it, if it does come, I'll sort it out but I'm not going to sit and worry about what may happen, I mean if the event does happen then you'll find the best possible solution. So ... I don't face life with any sort of fear or fear of the unknown, some thing like that. I think when it comes to having the confidence to say [?], I think a lot comes from what you've been through already, how much you've been able to get through successfully.

1.95 H: I must say, I think it depends on how you've been raised

1.96 P: Well, ja, I think that my father was always getting us to belief that you can do anything you want to but ... um ... ja, he has given us the confidence to believe that you can be what you want to be, unfortunately it backfired when we had a difference of opinion cause then it was like "hey shut up and sit down" and I was like "but you told me never to shut up and sit down" so ... you know, that sort of thing and um ... ja, I think your support system also plays a very big role. I mean, if you have individuals around you who say "if you go further and fall, we'll catch you" or if you know that you have a sort of safety net then it's a lot easier. So that's what I'm saying. [16:14]

1.97 R: I'm busy doing some reading for a paper that I'm writing at the moment, K and I was just talking about it over coffee and just reflecting a little bit of what you're talking about, that it's through all these experiences that you learn and allow you to [?]. I've also realized that there is a whole lot of value in looking back and saying who you could have been, not necessarily who you have been and then using that picture of who you could have been, to then redefine who you then can be in the future. So I'm not, who I am in the future is not directly related to who I have been in the past so there's not this causal link, all of a sudden my

options are restricted because of things that have happened but you also look back and say that haven't happened and didn't happen and expand the vision of who you can be. And it's a matter of just looking back and rethinking some of those things, so it's a paper on counterfeit your history so, you know that label that they put on you. So I'm kind of playing with it, I'm in the process, I haven't really got to the end of figuring out all of the implications of it yet, I feel that it's been an interesting, different perspective on looking at the role, our past plays on who you want to be.

1.98 H: I find it interesting of how, that every one of us has a story to tell. And the way you tell your story, defines who you are, but the story you choose to tell of two different entities, in my coaching I also have a 12-3 program, restoring your life, so whatever happened to you in the past you can restore it or change your story, say that [END TAPE 1 PART 2][START TAPE 1 PART 3].

1.99 R: Sorry K, am I still talking too fast? If I talk to fast you must just tell me to slow down.

[Laughter]

1.100 K: Somebody once said, and what you've just said and what I've said to [r] the most, one of the most profound things I've heard is that Bushmen believes they walk through life backwards because what you see is what you know, you don't know what is behind your back and the thing is the future is unknown, the past is the only thing that you know. So it's quite a tremendous concept.

[Silence]

1.101 S: I think what said is very impersonal because it's more your, cause I don't think that you can make a statement to say that ... cause I know people who are in their teens who already have this sense of self and purpose in them and then there are people in their 50's who are like kids, who've got no ...

1.102 H: That why I say, the way you're raised, if you were raise a confident teenager, if you were allowed to express yourself then I think you will reach that stage earlier. I've grown up in a very loving home, my parents protected me, we weren't allowed to, well I wouldn't really say we weren't allowed but we were goody two shoes and I was always confident so to me it was a struggle ... like, cutting the umbilical cord, I actually went through my rebellious phase in my late 20's but I was the perfect teenager.

1.103 K: Good for you.

[Laughter]

1.104 J: I think that's me as well. I think I was the perfect teenager and that was my parent's though because I was always doing what they wanted me to do and I was good at it so it's always this recognition that you get, that you've got to play for the recognition.

1.105 K: That's quite a statement.

1.106 J: Yes and now in the past 2 years, I'm in that ... um ... more rebellious phase of my life. Very under the impression ... um ... that for instance this December holiday we were with my parents for that entire holiday, now 2 years ago because I was married and I didn't have children, we really realized that this doesn't work anymore and ... um ... and then we got the baby and we thought that with the baby it would be easier with grandma there to help with the baby, and I just realize that, ja ... [Laughter]. I have much more respect for my parents when I

know it's 2 or 4 days, and you can really just be, or they visit me or I visit them and their holiday house and I've been there since I was a kid and we've been back to the same holiday house and so I find there J picks up the braaing place early in the morning, so there's nothing that can ... and it changes, almost into... to create a revolt that I don't want I, that I also don't like to create that kind of conflict that ... trying to pull into the direction that I want to go to and it's not really the direction that my parents want, that I always want to get their positive feedback from and there are things that they don't really understand so, like studying theology for instance which is something that my dad can't grasp, doesn't really make sense and that's a conflict that I know is there so when I'm there, that emerging um ... ja.

- 1.107 R: There's a thing though J and I'm sure when everybody talked about rebelling through ... they were talking about rebelling by not studying theology.

[Laughter]

- 1.108 G: Rebelling by studying theology.

[Laughter]

- 1.109 K: Bad boy

- 1.110 R: J goes to Oxford and it's like his rebel tattoo and it's like ...

- 1.111 N: I think that it's an interesting label that you are the rebel to the ... what do they call it ...

- 1.112 Ay: The goody two shoes

- 1.113 N: Ja, but to the goody two shoes you're the rebel but to the rebel you're the goody two shoes.

[Silence] [5:15]

- 1.114 S: I think that's one of things I find scary about parenthood is that well you doing the best that you can it may actually be, or you don't always remember the impact that you're go to have on the lives of your children going forward. I had a very happy childhood, very good parents but one of the things which I actually struggled to get away from was that my father was a teacher and he was very performance driven, you know it was like if you get 80% why isn't it 90%, if you got 5 distinctions, why isn't it 6? And to get away from this ... continuously looking for approval is actually quite difficult and I don't think that they actually realized while they were doing it because they thought it was a good thing to push your children to perform and even to the extent about the choice I made about the field I went to study in because he told me, you have a high IQ and you will be a scientist. So, I studied meteorology and after the first 6 months, I knew it wasn't what I wanted to do but to actually find out what I wanted to do, because I was so defined by what they wanted me to do, and that was very difficult to break away from that, although they really thought they were doing the best for me, pushing me to excel into a career that they thought was safe and what I can't also understand is that I've been in 5 or 6 companies and they can't really understand that, you studied meteorology why aren't you a meteorologist so that's... One of the things that I find scary is in parenthood is not to repeat those mistakes.

- 1.115 J: Exactly, the scary thing is to recognize those mistakes in yourself. I've already.

[Laughter][07:01]

- 1.116 P: Up until now my dad still views my job as a play thing [laugh] it's like, no you should have gone into computer science and what are you doing, you know its

such airy fairy stuff, I mean psychology? That sort of attitudes and it's like, ok keep quiet now please.

- 1.117 R: I think parents always do that though, because I was talking to my Gran now as she stayed with us for 2 weeks this December. My Gran is now 75 ... 76 and she was saying that when she left high school, she left in standard 8 ... um, she wanted to go and study nursing but it's that phrase that you need something to fall back on. So my Great-Gran said to my Gran no, no you need to get something to fall back on from nursing so go into that to become a typist and I mean how hectic is that because, I mean if you can't nurse anymore then you can become a typist

[Laughter]

- 1.118 R: Like J's dad is saying go and do your MBA or whatever because then you have something to fall back on in case he doesn't pan out here. Parents just do that because we all live in a different world to what they did, the world my Gran lived in, in the 30's was very different to the world my Granddad lived in the 20's and the world we live in, in the 2000's is very different to the world our parents lived in, in the 60's and 70's. They always want us to have something to fall back on which is the stable thing that they took as the rebellious decision when they were young.

- 1.119 K: I think the nice thing that we must see in all of this, is that they actually want us, you know, the best for us although their advice is not nice to hear or we don't like it or don't follow it, if you can see the message behind it, it's good.

- 1.120 Ay: Do you want the... it may not be the best ... do you have any children?

- 1.121 K: No

- 1.122 Ay: Ok, so I can ask you this question, and then we can wait for the backlash from the other parents. But do you thing you want the best for your kids because you generally want the best for them or because you want to know that you're not a failure as a parent?

- 1.123 K: I can't answer that cause I don't have kids but I ... ja ... [indicates to H] how do you ... [indicates the group] ... the mommies?

- 1.124 H: That's a tough one.

- 1.125 A: It's a good question

- 1.126 Pr: I think that a lot of it may have to do with the anxiety, ah I failed as a parent because I have rebelled a lot, in fact strangely enough, the first time when I rebelled, I came home with 5 A's and they wanted to know what happened to the last one and I said, well that's it I'm not studying anymore, I failed Math the next semester, they weren't very impressed but ... so um ... but they saw that as a failure on their side and later on I rebelled against a hell of a lot of things. When they found out that I smoke, or they suspected that I smoke, I over heard my father telling my mother, "Where did we go wrong with this child, I think she smokes, I think she drinks and I mean, you know, where did we go wrong" ... and then I went against their wishes and moved out of the house and again it can to the entire, "didn't we raise you properly, didn't we raise you better, I mean, where did we go wrong that you can do things like this" so in that it's saying that I failed as a parent that's why you smoke, that's why you go clubbing, that's why you moved out of the house cause I haven't taught you better and I've heard this straight from the horse's mouth so, ...ja... I think it could be different for

everybody but from a personal point of view that's what happened at my place.
[10:46]

- 1.127 N: I think that the initial thing is that you want the best for your kids, but if it backfires then it's "I did a bad job" Your initial heart's desire is "I want the best I want ... " I don't know I'm not a mother but apparently there's this love that you have for these little things but then if it doesn't go well then you feel like a failure because it is your job to raise them, God has placed them in your care and if it doesn't go right ... it's like ... something else... not really ...
- 1.128 Ay: Look, I don't really have a little extension of me, so I don't know what that feels like.
- 1.129 H: I think every parent have at some stage, felt like they have failed in some way and then I think that you feel better in other areas.
- 1.130 Ay: Have you felt that already?
- 1.131 H: Ja
- 1.132 S: I don't think most parents primary motivation is that though them feeling good rather than the best for their kids, I think it's a by product in that, almost your identity wrapped up in your kids. If they fail, you feel as if ... you internalize these feeling within yourself and I don't think it's the motivation that I don't want the best for you, I just want to feel good. I don't think it's the main ...
- 1.133 H: It's also ... it's a journey and sometimes, someday when you feel wow I've done a good job today and others, when something went wrong, that ...
- 1.134 Pr: What about sort of, the way you appear in the community and stuff, in terms of like... I know a lot of people who come into a home and say "did you know that my daughter got the role for this and that, and my son's the brightest boy in the school and he took the dux award and". Um, do you guys think that just that, that ability to boast about it could be what pushes them to push their children?
- 1.135 N: Again, it reflects on them. I saying that, um ... a couple of matrics now, I mean it's a first phase of matrics in the townships that got distinctions, so I'm friends with all of them, I love them, they love me, and now out of the four kids, there's 4 of them, 3 are very artistic and they want to do drama and someone, but these are the first kids to get 4 distinctions, they can not do drama and their parents are now... so I'm in-between, the kids tell me "I want to do drama", the parents say "you will be a doctor, now convince them tell them to become a doctor". So it's that whole thing of community, you know the first bunch of kids in the township to get distinctions, they have to be a doctor, you need to produce doctors in the township, whatever at least you were the first batch that was not pregnant at 16 you know that type of thing, so it's difficult, you know, trying to convince the parents
- 1.136 P: Strangely enough in Ladium as well, if your daughter hasn't had a child by the time she's 16, it's some sort of accomplishment on it's own but a lot of people say, "Well at least she didn't fall pregnant", you know, I mean ... ok ... yay ... it's weird.
- 1.137 F: Can I tell you a joke about kids? Well my niece wants to become a chef or so she says right, and I always catch myself thinking "can't you become an engineer or a doctor or something". But sometimes I've had to, you know, because no one was looking after her, sometimes I've had to take her to my work place and what I usually do is ask the nursing sisters to look after her and stuff and in my mind I

thought, “maybe that will change her mind you know, and she watches us as the patients get fed and she comes to me and says “I would like to cook for them”

[Laughter]

1.138 F: I’m like, ah, ja I have failed.

1.139 J: That’s a sense of purpose, hey?

1.140 P: That’s determination.

1.141 F: So I suppose that as a guide, as a parent I must learn to allow her to be what she wants to be and to support her in that. I ... I don’t think that being a chef is such a great career but for her it looks like it, and if she should, in 5 years time, 8 years time, still want to pursue cooking I should be mature enough to...

1.142 A: Encourage it?

1.143 F: Ja, even if I feel that that’s not a great career [15:54]

1.144 Ay: It’s a great career in society, I mean given the sustenance that is needed. So being a chef is not really a problem because she’ll earn enough to survive and be happy. She could be a teacher.

1.145 J: Or support communism

[Laughter]

1.146 J: I always thought that communism was a great idea.

1.147 Ay: It just went bad in Russia and stuff

[General Talking]

1.148 K: But on the other hand I find that most children of the age of 18 don’t know themselves well enough to choice a career and they need the guidance of parents.

1.149 R: I think it is a terrible injustice to expect a teenager to choice a life path when they should actually just be enjoying life. And as somebody said earlier, just being a child. I think that it is a terrible thing to do to your children and by putting that pressure on them by, “ you’re in matric so you’re 17 but decide what you want to be when you’re 65.” You have 3 times more life ahead of you that what has past, I think that it’s a terrible thing to do, and for me like, with my boy is just over 2 and I find myself checking that the things I’m exposing him to, because obviously he’s 2 so we do want the things that dad wants like go to the air show...but honestly he wants to fly in the airplane because daddy flies a lot but I’m constantly checking that I’m not exposing him to stuff to turn him into what I want him to be but that, because he is only two that’s what I have to do, but I’m constantly trying, I say to [wife’s name] “am I doing enough to hear, in his infantile way he expresses something that he wants that may not be in my [END TAPE1PART3][START TAPE 1 PART 4] plan for Saturday. Every Saturday [names] we go and do something, beach or whatever. It’s just for me, am I hearing what he wants to do on that day or am I ... It’s a huge challenge and for me, actually for me it’s a discipline that I hope I get into for when he hits teenager and he says he wants to do something that’s just totally against my value system and my moral system but where I trust that I’ve raised him enough to trust him to do say “ cool ...” but I’ve made you a type of man that I’m proud of. So for me that’s the kind of stuff that I’m looking at now, that’s the discipline that I’m reflecting back on as myself as a parent and I just hope that I’m successful in it. And again I’ve got a great wife, you slaps me around when I need it but I think it’s also different if, I don’t know maybe A can talk about being a mom of

daughters but being a dad of a son is very different, I think, than being a dad of a daughter.

1.150 A: So would you be more controlling?

1.151 R: I think I would be a lot more protective, it's like [son's name] is walking along a edge of a cliff and you know, as long as I'm watching he's ok, I'm willing to let him experience being at the edge of the cliff but I think if it actually was a daughter, I would actually want to keep her away from the edge of the edge of the cliff. I think it would be a natural, far more protective instinct in me, and I think my Saturday afternoon's would be very different with a daughter but that's it, we'll see down the line. We are planning on adopting again.

1.152 K: That's very interesting why, the morning son, afternoon daughter

1.153 R: For me it would be very important to spend individual time with my children. So that I got to know them as individuals rather than just constantly spending time with them as my kids. There's enough ... you've got Monday through Friday, and Saturday ...

1.154 K: Ok, but it could have been the other way around

1.155 R: Oh no, it could have been the other way around, it's just that. I'm just working Saturday morning's at the moment so it would be very important for me to spend individual time with them.

1.156 S: So it would be a bit bad for you to have a tomboy for a daughter, who wants to be walking on the edge of the cliff and doesn't want the protective ...

1.157 R: That would be the lesson for me to learn and that would be the listening that I would have to do because my natural instinct would be to not have the tomboy but to have the perfect daughter you know what I mean, but the discipline for me to learn would be to say, where's the listening coming ... And the thing I don't know is that I don't know if I would be able to be that so you know, everything is great in principle, you know your [indicates to P] sister or sister in law who's got that hundred books. No ... I mean, it's great theory but when I get there how I actually do it is a different thing. So, we spoke a lot about our roles over here but for me that's a very important part of my wife's place, she ... we are in this together, we are parenting partners so I'm very fortunate that I'm not a single parent because I think that, that must be an incredibly tough place to be, so [wife's name] gives me that objectivity with [son's name] and ultimately my relationship with other children, and I think that I give that to her so it's very important that that comes within.

1.158 A: The word that keeps coming up ever since you asked the question about what makes a good parent not that I would know, but the word which keeps coming up is selflessness and not to the detriment where I might even find myself right now, of becoming entrenched that I don't know who I am as a person but selflessness in letting them try little things that you actually aren't comfortable with or letting them explore a journey that you wouldn't necessarily want them to explore or just forever asking that question, standing back and saying what is good for them right now, whether I agree with them or not, is this a journey that they need to go on. Ja, so that little word has kept coming up. Where it is about them and not about you and your background and your issues and your baggage and letting them walk on the cliff. My eldest daughter is taken to a motor bike because her best friends are 2 little boys, which is the best thing for me because I've got 2

girls, and they are both into motorbikes so now I've had to watch my 6 year old daughter on a motorbike, and she's this real little tomboy and she's going crazy on this motorbike and that wasn't the picture I had, you know. But having said that, I love that she has been so willing and eager to explore this side that I wouldn't have introduced her to necessarily. And what's so nice about like you [R] said having a partner is that since my girls have been born, I've made the decision to introduce boy toys because they were girls and girls have always got the dolls and the prams and so for [daughter's name] we bought her a truck and so we kind of made the effort to do the boy thing but um, I look at the blocks that we bought them, and just the other day [husband's name] sat with the girls and played blocks with them and I couldn't believe what they came up with and it was the most incredible thing and where as I've always built the same kind of thing, the same blocks, because this is what I know that I do with my girls and [husband's name] sat there and came up with a giraffe and a an elephant and for me I sat back and for me it was the most wonderful thing to be able to just enjoy watching this interaction with these 2 girls and their father as, you know, the male kind of role in their lives. It's beautiful and I see it so often where I just do things so differently from him and I love it. It's nice. So you would be a good girl dad [to R][06:06]

[Laughter]

1.159 R: Depends

1.160 A: Hope I can be a good boy mum.

1.161 R: Does this aircon come on here?

1.162 A: I think if you press it, it will.

[J gets up and puts on aircon]

1.163 R: Excuse me it's getting warm, sorry I'm feeling warm, I don't know if anyone else is feeling warm?

[Silence]

1.164 S: I think from my own experiences [to F], you may not want her to become or you may not think that being a chef is a good thing. I think a big thing to try and avoid from a parent's perspective is what I experienced as a child, is I wanted to become all kinds of expert it was kind of like game warden, I loved animals and I kept getting this thing that there's no future in being a game warden they is no money there so just sort of put that out your mind because that's not going to happen, I think that's the thing that's holding you, because when you're small or young, you're closer to your passion or whatever because you are not afraid to try things or to express things. And when that gets squashed, you become so far removed from that , you almost have to rediscover it, you can't even remember what you wanted to be but I think ... feeling how you feel is natural, there are lots of parents like that who don't their children to be chefs they want them to be engineers and I think don't ... from my perspective of being a child, don't squash the chef thing, I think that's the ... [07:59]

1.165 G to S: Where are you now in terms of where you want to be.

1.166 S: I'm on the journey, I'm growing to get there. If someone asks me "what is your passion in life" I can't answer their question. I know where I don't want to be and I know that I'm enjoying where I am now, I'm excited about the future ... but I can't really ... I think I'm still dealing with this issue, it's a whole issue and I

think that there is still a bit of blame there, that I'm blaming my parents for what they put me through, so it's a ... a personal journey that I'm going through but I think that where I'm at now, is a lot closer to where I want to be ... working with people not with statistics and computers but where the regret lies is now my background is ... wrong ... what I studied, that's ... but I also see that if I didn't go through that I wouldn't be where I am now. So the experience was valuable for me, so I'm dealing with these conflicting ... issues around the whole thing. So it's mainly if I do become a parent, not to repeat those ... mistakes.

1.167 Ay to S: There's an if there, so it's not a will

1.168 S: Ja, that is something that both of us are deciding, if we want to have kids where it comes back to your [Ay] question earlier to we really ... ja ... that... well we haven't had an unplanned child but some of our friends had unplanned children but I think that it differs according to context because when you're married ... it's different to when you are 16 but most of them saw it as a very positive experience... in fact they said that if they were to plan it they would never have had kids but now that they were thrown in the deep in, they had to swim and now they can't imagine their lives without them. So I've kind of got this thing that if it has to happen then it's going to happen.

1.169 Ay to S: I'm just interested that that is an option for you, that you and [husband's name] might be ok with not having kids.

[Silence]

1.170 S: It's a ... it's something that neither of us has come to terms with, it's something with are both quite scared of, I think that there is a lot of selfishness there because we don't really feel like making the life change that comes with the parent role but then again all our friends are saying that once the child is there it's such a great thing that you don't miss the past but I'm not biting into that ... it's like, but if you also think why you want to have kids ... if you don't have this real urge to have a child, why do you want a baby ... because you don't want to grow old on your own because that's a selfish reason, why do you ... we haven't figured that out yet.

1.171 Ay: When I was young

1.172 N: That makes you sound old

1.173 Ay: No I'm still young but when I was younger, I have a cousin who carries the same surname as me, and so it's up to him and I to keep the family name/lineage alive and that was quite a pressure thing to have your aunts and uncles and dads and grandparent especially saying "you're carry the [surname] name" so you going to have to have a son and I was like ooh ... look I want to have kids there's no doubt about it but I just found it interesting an option not to have.

1.174 R: speaking about interesting, I had an interesting experience in the middle of last year and J and I always joke about it, he's an Afrikaans [English surname] and I'm a English [Afrikaans surname] and people talk to me in Afrikaans and they get English and they speak to J in English and they get Afrikaans but in the middle of the year my dad came down for 3 months and came to spend time with us and the whole lot and he brought this big, fat family bible thing and before he brought the family bible thing, I sort of drifted around, "I'm a white, male South African" that was about how deep my sense of lineage and historical identity went. Well, he brought this bible with him and literally tracked our family tree,

genealogy right back to the 3 original [Afrikaans surname] brothers who landed in South Africa, which ship they came in and where they came from in France, even which brother we had ... we were a direct descendant, even [place name] which was stolen from us... anyway ... there are land restitution issues here as well [laugh]. The interesting ... weird ... no interesting thing for me was that my dad was the oldest brother, I'm the oldest son of the oldest brother and now [son's name] is the oldest son of the oldest son but there's ... there's ... suddenly a weird sense of rootedness that came through it. I don't feel connected to the whole Afrikaans [surname] thing but I feel connected to something that I wasn't connected to before and then my dad took down my marriage details and [son's name] details and went and updated it in the [surname] family tree at the Huguenot Monument and that was like ... whoa ... you know when you go and visit the Huguenot Monument that R there is like ... me... it's just like very weird and not that we've got the responsibility to carry on the family name maybe like it's been communicated to you [Ay] but in a very weird sense they was a sudden switch in who we were actually, in a sense of rootedness that didn't exist before, with no pressure attached because we feel no pressure to continue it on but it was the sense of hey my son belongs to something bigger than just R and [wife's name] in Cape Town, it was like this huge thing.

- 1.175 N: It's quite interesting, my brother's name is our surname and we also have quite an interest in family history and that his name actually means that he has got quite a big responsibility on his shoulders, it's like I didn't get that but it was the son that who came late into the family that got that name and so ...

[Silence]

- 1.176 P: It was like you were saying now that you realized all of this when your dad came. I was ... it's strange to think that with us that we are told these stories from quite a young age, you know, like your great grandmother came from this caste in India and she came down to South Africa and then she met up with this guy and he was from a different caste and that caused problems and then from there this happened and that happened, it's amazing they actually kept track of it for so long because any uncle who comes home will say, "ja, did you that your great great aunt actually did this and that and that" and you're like, ok ... cool ... nice to know ... but... it's strange but we don't have a document and that's what got me now, that even though we know all of the stories and we know who's who in the zoo, there's nothing solid about it, no body has taken the time to draw up a family tree and say "this is actually how it looks". Maybe it's because they had 14 kids each [laughs] that might be a bit of a problem so maybe that's the reason but it's not a document. It's pretty sad when you think about it

- 1.177 N: It's quite precious what you have there.

- 1.178 P: Hem, it is

- 1.179 R: I just think it's awesome to have ... the cool thing is that I have no responsibility to update the family tree that's ... my dad's done it all.

[Laughter]

- 1.180 R: I've had a completely different perspective of Bosch 'n Dal until now, that's my vine

[Laughter]

- 1.181 N: I heard it on Oprah the other day that she's actually some descendent of Elvis Presley.
- 1.182 Ay: Who Oprah?
- 1.183 R: Lat week when I was reading an article on ... there's a univ... high school in LA that is offering Zulu, it's actually teaching Zulu to the kids and it's a small class of about 20 odd. What they did was they set up a video conference between some kids in South Africa and this class of kids learning Zulu because they were coming out for a trip to South Africa and the whole article was like, the kids in South Africa asking "so are you looking forward to seeing the Big 5?" and the American kids were absolutely confused so they had learnt the language but they had no idea about anything else. So Big 5 for them, they were kind of going ... textbook ... Big 5, big 5 ...
- [Silence]
- 1.184 Ay: Anything else
- 1.185 F: I'm just wondering why are we talking about all these ... I'm trying to find out why are we talking about this? And I ... talking about family trees, parenthood ... I just think that there is this thing in the world, everyone is trying to find out "who am I" I'm not sure if I'm correct but at least that is what I am doing, um ja ... and I can't think of anything else, except [END TAPE1PART4][START TAPE 1PART 5][18:00] that the whole talk is centered around ... on some level ... or do some extent ... who am I ... in relation to the world
- 1.186 N: So, we're trying to debrief this session from the beginning
- 1.187 D: We will do that maybe at a different time.
- 1.188 N: No, what I'm saying is that we've been subconsciously ... F has been saying why have we been doing all of this ... so
- 1.189 Ay: Well if you put a group together, people who don't know each other then you find common points of interest.
- 1.190 G: So what is the common point of interest?
- 1.191 Ay: Well, family ... um ... beliefs ... kids ... parents
- 1.192 R: It started off with smoking.
- [Laughter]
- 1.193 P: Well, I prefer talking about smoking than silence, so that's um ... silence just kills
- 1.194 R: There was an interesting study done that [name] talks about a lot where they took Soap Opera's where Soap Opera's are a reflection of the culture where the Soap Opera represented. And the study looked at how long those cultures were comfortable with relative periods of silence. This was done because our company works with a group ... in Asian Pacific region that brings guys from the US and from China, Cambodia, those guys too. The average American was comfortable, in these Soap Opera's, with 9 seconds of silence, the average Japanese person was comfortable with 90 seconds of silence and the dynamic that they had to deal with was getting people into a room where after 9 seconds the Americans were starting to get like ... too much silence ... and the Japanese after 9 seconds are just sort of settling into a rhythm of waiting for the next minute and a half. So at the end, the Americans feel that the Japanese aren't contributing and the Japanese think that

- the American's are so rude because they spoke ... you know what I'm saying ... just reflecting on what you [P] said.
- 1.195 P: Ja, I know ... I have an issue with that much silence it just gets to me
- 1.196 K: It is strange that you say that because at some point of time we were asking ... I wanted to ask you, "are you ok with silence" because I picked it up immediately, I specifically said that I didn't want to start and then there was this silence and then all of a sudden you just started speaking, it was like I picked up you felt the need to speak and break up the silence.
- 1.197 P: I would rather have to throw myself off a cliff than have to stay silent for too long. I'm just not comfortable with ... with that much silence. I don't know what it is.
- 1.198 N: I was like that and I realized that I had to learn, I was told that sometimes I speak when I'm not supposed to and so kind of see how can I hold it.
- 1.199 P: I think that's ... I think that ... we all knew to be quite it would start a conversation eventually I just don't see the point in making all of us uncomfortable, I just think we should suffer for longer than necessarily. I mean, yes there are times when you've got to be quite, that's when other people are talking so ja.
- 1.200 A ask N: When have you spoken when you were not supposed to?
- 1.201 N: Oh, all the time. I speak for a profession.
- 1.202 G: Today?
- 1.203 N: Excuse me.
- 1.204 G: Today? It's a question.
- 1.205 A: Did you speak when you shouldn't have today?
- 1.206 N: Oh, today?
- 1.207 G: Maybe that's a question you could ask the group.
- 1.208 N: Ah, ha. I think I will maybe reflect on it at the end of the day... but at the moment ... I'm a 2 weeks later, realizing person. So, I'll think about it at the end of the day and write it down.
- 1.209 A: I asked that question because I have a perception that in specific cultures women speak at specific times or are requested to speak. So I'm just wondered if you said that because it's like a cultural thing, that you've experienced or...
- 1.210 N: No, I've been raised in a different way that, I'm a talker, I talk, the family listens to me, everybody, I speak all the time. So when I come across people in relationships, friendships, working environment, I'm told that sometimes my personality doesn't let other people speak so lately it's been a lesson, a conscious lesson that I've had to do, to shut up and let other people speak, don't talk at all times, listen you know. And in a relationship as well I just want to speak
- 1.211 P: So you mean listening is like an effort to you?
- 1.212 N: It is! Like ... but I'm proud of myself so far that
- 1.213 Ay: We will let you know at the end of the week if you spoke far too much.
- 1.214 G: Maybe earlier. You can do that earlier.
- 1.215 Ay: I think that she's done a great job so far.
- 1.216 N: It's difficult though I went on a camp the one time and it was a fasting camp, you know where you don't eat.
- 1.217 R: What a terrible camp.
- [Laughter]

- 1.218 P: You say camp and I say fun
1.219 R: and did you still have to pay full price, hey.
1.220 N: No it was a cheap camp
1.221 J: You're daughter wasn't there.
1.222 F: No she definitely wasn't.
1.223 N: So we were like for 3 days and it's like fine, so I thought that I could do this
but when we got there, they were like we are also not talking. I cried, I really
cried. I was like I can take not eating but I can't take not talking.
1.224 G to P: There we go.
1.225 P: There we go, that's why we get along so well.
1.226 G: So can we go and have a cup of tea. 15 minutes, quarter past. Good
END TAPE1PART5 (Last part only 6min15sec)

Session 5

- 5.1 G: Ok, so we are back in the group again, I don't know if everybody slept alright, I know that some did and some didn't. When you are busy it's sometimes difficult to come down. Ok, but we are back in the group and we can pick up from where we left off yesterday or we can start anywhere else, it doesn't matter. [Silence] Or if you have been wondering about something last night or if there's something you want to ...
- 5.2 K: Yes I was wondering about something. I told her [H] that I'm struggling with, and now it's different level from what we spoke about yesterday. I know that the aim of this whole course is that we ... yes, well I'm not going to repeat the aim... and yesterday, well I thought that it's turning into therapy, group therapy session, which is not necessarily bad at all but if that's what it's going to be then my participation is going to be different so I need to understand, where are we going and what is this, ja ...
- 5.3 G: You're looking at me as if you want the answer from me?
- 5.4 K: Well you're the facilitator so I don't know if the rest of the group should decide what this is about or should you lead us into that, I'm not sure.
- 5.5 H: I was also wondering in a um ... corporate set up, if we have a group like this um ... I thought that yesterday you were aiming at, saying that it's all psychology so the group dynamic works at a psychology level but in the corporate environment, how much would you actually want to share on a personal level?
- 5.6 J: So, how honest can you be?
- 5.7 H: Ja
- 5.8 J: Because there's ...
- 5.9 H: Because there's history and stuff going on and politics and stuff
- 5.10 K: and the contents is ... ja
- 5.11 H: Ja
- 5.12 N: Sorry what did you say?
- 5.13 K: And the contents is different.
- 5.14 Ay: My feeling is, is that the group is going to go where we want it to go and in a corporate setting or any other setting, there's probably going to be a purpose for why ... the reason that the group has come together. For us of course the purpose is of course to get trained up in facilitation so for these 3 days we take the group where we want, there's no ... so if we want to deal with personal issues and stuff like that, then we choose the safety and ... of the group or we can choose not to. I just come back to what F said yesterday that we are a group, that's who we are, the key thing is that we have stuff to deal with, the last 2 days is just for training as facilitators. Whether in group time you deal with personal stuff or work stuff it doesn't matter it's the process that's the important thing.
- 5.15 H: Do you agree with him?
- 5.16 J: Ja well I think yesterday we went exactly where we wanted to, yesterday. There wasn't a question being posed, we didn't have to talk about [?] or nothing,

- we could talk about the weather, or economics or drugs, or the poverty problem or anything. But I do think in a corporate setting if you can give people the feeling that they can be honest I think you can get people to [?]. it's like what we spoke about yesterday about honesty.
- 5.17 H: Ja, because that's the question that I want answered, I see a lot of value in doing it like this and my experience of facilitators actual teaching sessions, is that we go into the SWOT analysis and learn blah, blah, blah and this is a nice new way of starting things but I was just wondering um if that would be applicable ... how would such a session start then and how would
- [Silence]
- 5.18 D: You [K] said that your participation would depend on the decision of the group in what way did this discussion help or not help?
- 5.19 K: Ja... it helped...
- [Laughter]
- 5.20 K: Coffee or tea, yes thank you. Ja it helped.
- 5.21 D: But in what way [05:59]
- 5.22 K: Um, I will just have to see where it's going and I will be ok with that, it's not structured yet, again and I will be ok with it, it'll be good and I will go a long. Start sharing if the time is right and if the context is right and if not then I'll keep to myself and go off and see a therapist somewhere else.
- [Laughter] [Telephone rings]
- 5.23 D: And what says the rest?
- 5.24 R: Excuse me guys, someone wants ... [R leaves, to answer phone][06:29]
- 5.25 H: I think it's just a matter of your comfort zone, where ... your controlling side ... where
- 5.26 G: Is your comfort zone being stretched?
- 5.27 H: I was just wondering, it's what F said yesterday, it's up to me to decide what I want to share in this group. So I was just wondering to what extent will I learn, what will I take from the group because each of us has our boundaries?
- 5.28 D: So in a way it leaves more control with you, you take that decision how much to share?
- 5.29 H: I'm not sure if I should lose my control or should I hang onto it?
- 5.30 K: Let go baby!
- [Laughter]
- 5.31 G: What is that letting go? What needs to happen?
- 5.32 H: That's what I'm not sure of, what needs to happen. Don't know. [Silence]
- 5.33 S: Doesn't the fear of losing control come back to your vulnerability? Because I think you said you fear losing control if you don't feel safe, if you don't feel safe you tend to [shows clenched fist]

- 5.34 N: This makes me think of um ... of the high ropes because this is exactly like the high ropes, control, can I go up there, what if I fall? The same thing. Interesting.
- 5.35 G: Ja, it could be the safety ...
- 5.36 N: Yes! Can I trust this rope? Who built this pole? What is ... Why?
[Silence]
- 5.37 G: Is there anybody who would like to explore something in the group? Is there something that happened ...? That you wonder about?
[Silence]
- 5.38 J: I would like to. [Clears throat] um ... Yesterday after ... just before I arrived at my house, a friend of mine called me and said that he was in the vicinity and could he come over for drink? And he came over and he stayed there and we talked together and [R reenters room] it was great, when we started talking, the topic that he started to share was
“how authentic can one be” or when can you be...
- 5.39 K: The universe can hear your message.
[Laughter]
- 5.40 J: And this is what I said to the other oke. I asked him if there was something he was wanted to test or share or kinda test something in the group and I said yesterday when I arrived that a friend of mine came round unplanned and started talking and told me of a colleague of his that was very respectful so I can always be authentic, always true. They are both actuaries and he thought actuaries walk into a meeting as this young guy, and everyone looks at you as this clever guy and you feel pressure to always have the answer because if they don't get the answer then they ask you for the answer and he said that with this friend, he heard the 3 most liberating words that ... he said “I don't know” and then he spoke about authenticity and what I started to wonder about is, is there a correlation between your willingness and your ability to, to just be yourself and be totally authentic and your relationship with your dad? And we started to talk about that and as you grow up your dad allows you to either be yourself or he allows you to be what he wants you to be within that you create so many boundaries to get his approval so our discussion then was about that strange strength or intensity of the son wanted approval from his dad, in the end wanting approval from your dad, what would you do and what would you not do ... [silence] so do you think that there is a relationship between total authentic and yourself in the outside world and having a good relationship between a son,
I don't know if you're a girl with your mother, I don't know how that relationship works because I'm not anyone of those but I am both the others.
- 5.41 K: I don't know if you know of transactional analysis, parent, adult, child. Now part of that same theory, that same field is that every person is that every person needs [?] that's basically a natural thing even if it's just recognition by saying your name or greeting you. That is a form of a [?] so to want to have your dad's [?] is normal but if you are driven by it, if your choices get driven by it just to get the [?] then um ... ja, we can debate if something is normal or not but I would say that, then you need to think or start thinking about what's going on and are you

- really making this choice because of you and are you more connected to self or is it to please your dad and I don't know if I would get it right from here. [13:36]
- 5.42 S: What I would think is that when you are growing up your family is your context and I grew up on my own so I didn't have brothers or anyone to fight with but I think that that is where you are taught certain skills and I think that if your father is not open to you having a difference of opinion or if he tells you that you must do this and you just say no then I think that you are going to struggle with this later on as well because then if you ... it's almost a skill that you haven't learnt, you haven't been able to practice, you just always defer to the authority figure what he wants and I think that goes back to authenticity because you are not able to tell him, "I don't want to do this or I don't want to become what you want me to become then you won't be able to say no to other people later on.
- 5.43 G: Can I, can I just for a second ... are both of you trying to explaining, explore?
- 5.44 A: I was just kind of feeling ... sort of answers to J and I need to ask more questions to get to where J is at.
- 5.45 G: So what do you want to ask him?
- 5.46 A; Um, ja, just, I don't really know what to ask you, I just can relate to what you are saying with my mom and being authentic and just a little example happened on Sunday morning because my mom is staying with us at the moment and she wanted to go to church and I didn't actually have it in my head that I wanted to go church on Sunday morning, I just felt that I didn't want to go but I keep feeling that I had to go for her and [husband's name] actually walked into the room and said "do you want to go church" and I said no, so he said "well make the decision for yourself" and it was that whole thing of being authentic for who, was I being authentic because she was wanting that or was I being authentic for myself or was I being authentic because ... and it was just this turmoil over one stupid thing and I'm 33 years old and I was wanting to please my mom about going to church and I do it often and everything that H said yesterday, I could relate so much to being authentic to my mom and saying things to her, and being honest to honest and being afraid because she would take it to the grave with her, I feel that it would cause so much offence that I couldn't actually be authentic about how I am feeling at the time about certain particular information. [16:17]
- 5.47 J: You see what I when I talked to this friend, we talked about a third friend of ours who previously said to us that when he grew up, his dad wanted him to played rugby and he became the 1st team captain, and his dad wanted him to become good at academics so he became the dux scholar of his school, his dad wanted him to become head boy so he became head boy and he says that still he knows that none of those would be enough, none of those would make him good enough. I said, how can you be so strong because it's quite intense if you think about it and so that need to get approval from your dad can be so strong that you can do all of those things and it's not anyone in the class that can become the dux scholar it requires some hard work so that relationship when you are very small, can it have such an impact on you that it also starts to define how you relate to other institutions or people, or expectations.
- 5.48 G: Is that friend, you?

- 5.49 J: No
- 5.50 G: Without the rugby.
- 5.51 J: No, no that friend is someone else
- 5.52 D: Does that include the comrades?
- [Laughter]
- 5.53 J: No that specific friend id not me but there is a lot of correlation but still I know that when he's with his dad he's very [END TAPE 5 PART 1][START TAPES PART 2]
- destructive for him . So in my case, I realize that if I talk about this then it's almost like complaining with the white bread under your arm, and there are so many great things about this but also there are things that I know that my dad wants to ... or that he kind of approves more of other things and that's been part of the whole debate within me regarding what do I do and what do I not do. So when I was in matric for instance, I wanted to study theology but I couldn't because I couldn't even tell my dad that I wanted to study theology because it doesn't make sense so I skelm told my mother that this is what I think I want to do and then I went to varsity and the guy from the university talked "sense" into my head and I decide3d I won't study this but even before that in std 8 I chose economics as a subject and not history because my dad has always been history, that's a hobby, you can read that up afterwards, do accounting and economics and so I took accounting and economics up until my 3rd year of varsity and subtly I tried to communicate my feeling towards accounting by getting 50% for it and I got 50% for it all the way through and my other subjects were good and that's that thing of almost not being willing or able or having the guts to take on, to say listen I just don't want to do this I want to do this and then when this friend of mine spoke about this yesterday and I thought ... what is it that he brings up this topic of him and his dad and the topic that he started to raise and he's also from, in his school he was also the head boy, the goody two shoes, the best teenager that a parent can wish for but now afterwards we kind of laughed about it and said it gets much more expensive to start getting rebellious now than it was when we were 13. so he went and bought a Audi TT just to show his dad because he knew that his dad thought it a stupid, impractical, expensive, windgat car, you don't but it and that's a very expensive way and me, I'm thinking of going to study overseas also as a way to cut that umbilical cord and it just gets more expensive the older you get.
- 5.54 A: To rebel?
- 5.55 J: To rebel
- 5.56 K: I wanted to ask the group. What is it that you understand by the word authenticity or being authentic? What does it mean to you?
- 5.57 J: To me?
- 5.58 K: Well to[indicates group] I want to come back to you but um, ja ... are we all having the same idea about what authenticity means?
- 5.59 N: What's your idea of it?
- 5.60 K: Well if I can define it 1st in terms of connectedness, well for me it means to be totally connected with yourself, to know yourself fully, that is something that I

- don't think we can ever even reach on this earth [03:41]. So to me it's a lifelong process, getting authentic more and more because you get to know yourself more and more as life progresses but ja, um ... but ... once you know who you are, who you really are and are so connected with yourself then only can you start deciding what do I present to the world and what not, so what of this that I present is truly who I am and so in that way authentic and what not is what I hide and mask. That's my view.
- 5.61 P: How true am I to myself, you know... do I really, if I come across as extroverted am I really actually that because if I'm not then I'm lying, if I am then that's authentic, being true to yourself.
- 5.62 R: I think there's a balance though because authenticity isn't just about ... It's a large amount of self-knowledge so that you're able to do that sort of interior landscaping but it also has a great sense of awareness who you are in community with because true authenticity is not selfish or selfless, its about knowing what to reveal because it's not only about your best interests but also the person who you are about to reveal to and also not necessarily what you do but how you do it all of those things together would make up a multi-faceted thing that would make you an authentic being as opposed to being just an authentic act or this being an authentic phrase, it's all of those things together that make you an authentic person.
- 5.63 K: So buying a TT to rebel is not necessarily authentic because you don't like that car specifically?
- [Silence]
- 5.64 K: It is not authentic to but a TT when you would rather could have bought something else but...
- 5.65 R: So are you saying that there is another part, that authenticity is part of a process so that Audi TT may be a strange part of the process that you speak about, moving towards a place where he is able to be more authentic. So if you look about it in isolation it may be a slightly deceitful act but in the context of where he's trying to get to a more connected relationship he feels with his dad...
- 5.66 K: More disconnected
- 5.67 R: More disconnected, whatever the case may be ... that ... look at the context of where he is going
- 5.68 K: So it's just a different way of saying that these are my borders? Its still being authentic because we sort of assume that by telling him is the more authentic thing to do its just not the [?] it seems. It can be just to but a TT, telling him...
- 5.69 N: Don't you think its exploring? I never got a chance to get a TT so what if I like it, I was never given the chance to explore that part of me, so its maybe I'll explore and maybe I'll like it. Its not that I hate it necessarily to prove to my dad but it's I want to find out if I like it.
- 5.70 D: So what we are saying, if you're agree is that rebellion in this case could be a gauge of authenticity or not, could be connected or exploring in addition to just finding [?]. is that what you're saying>
- 5.71 N: In addition to just finding [?]?>

- 5.72 D: Yes it could be connecting as he [R] said, or it could be exploring as you said or it could be stoking. Maybe not, is that how we define authenticity, is it not something that we can explore more to find out what it is that we mean because that was the question? [Silence] If I was correct in saying that what K was saying that rebelling is another way of connecting with the relationship?
- 5.73 R: No its more saying, looking at the act of buying an Audi TT in isolation, you would label it as being a potentially negative act but looking at it in the context of the process that he's moving through, could reframe what you're seeing and actually ...
- 5.74 D: His way of connecting with his dad, he could of bought the TT to connect with his dad although he could of bought it in isolation. That's the
- 5.75 R: Using K's example of connecting with his dad as a adult and not to remain connected to his dad as the child
- 5.76 D; Oh well, connected, whatever way you look at it. She [K] also expanded the definition of authenticity by it could be just, something he explored, something within him, of buying a TT that he didn't know before. It started off by saying that by rebelling it was just to get [?] from his dad or ... not [?] ... but to um ...
- 5.77 K: Break the tie
- 5.78 D: Ja, to disconnect, I said the wrong word, so that same act that already could have completely different meanings attached to it that's what I think that we should, maybe need to explore a little in terms of when is something authentic, how does it relate to other things in the context.
- 5.79 J: so are you rebelling for the sake of rebelling or are you rebelling for the sake of trying to figure out who you are?
- 5.80 R: I don't think a rebel often knows
- 5.81 J: Yes, well that's when you explore. So are you going against or are you rebelling just in order to be a rebel or are you doing that to actually make a stand? For what you feel, or what you are or what you want to be or where you want to explore. [10:18]
- 5.82 N: I think as Ay was saying, that everybody want to find a purpose and to be more authentic and more in touch with yourself. And the rebelling in the context of exploring would be the initial ideals, but when you are restricted to being that then it's rebelling with "because you said I can't do it, I'll just do it". You know what I mean? So if you're rebelling and just not being part of the status quo to explore who you are, then its still healthy, you can do that but then if people say "no you can't but red shoes, nobody does that" and its like what if I actually like red shoes then it doesn't even go to I like them or I don't its just, it just I'll but them. So I think initially it starts with a cause of trying to find out who you are?
- 5.83 A: So what you is [N] saying is that to rebel is to be authentic?
- 5.84 N: If put in the right context, and then if their parents or whatever is saying you cannot explore that part of you then you are like but why not, and then you do it in a bad context its like, just because you said it, I want to.
- 5.85 K: I get a feeling of flow of energy when ... the energy is from the inside out meaning I want to explore how it feels like to have red shoes then it's exploring

- them, the “thing” but then its sounds to be more ok when its someone out there telling you not to, than when it’s the energy is this way [indicates towards self] from the outside, in. I don’t know it’s a weird sense that I just don’t know.
- 5.86 H: I sometimes feel that way, I explore to find out about a thing of authenticity, and then
- suddenly my mother would come and say “what are you doing” so it started out as just me exploring myself and then it kind of turns into rebellion, well I will do it because she now finds it offensive or whatever. So I ... it might not start out as rebellion but it turns into rebellion to prove a point.
- 5.87 K: But it only turns into rebellion when you’re mother starts interfering so an external energy flow, force, whatever came into the picture.
- 5.88 N: The theory its comforting
- 5.89 S: The question in my mind is if you take the TT example, did he really want the TT or did he buy the TT just to irritate his father because that to me is the key thing and what actually motivated him to go and buy that car because if he bought the TT because it’s his dream car and he really wanted it and at the same time if it irritates his then it’s a different dynamic to I’m doing something I actually don’t want to do and its actually bad for me because its going to put me in debt for ... but I’m doing it just to prove a point
- 5.90 P: Cutting your nose to spite your face
- 5.91 N: But I think for me, it was because I was never allowed to go that route so what if it’s that I like that route.
- 5.92 R: So it depends on the motive?
- 5.93 F: My opinion is, that it depends on awareness, if I am aware that I am going into debt because I want to prove a point, then I would think that that is still authentic because I am aware that I am doing this act even though its not the wisest thing ... but it is that awareness regardless that its going to cost me, that’s authentic. If I’m coming to you and [name] invited me to a party that I don’t want to go to but I decide or I pretend to have had fun at the party but to have fun at the party, its still authentic because I am awareness that I don’t necessarily like you but this will make [name] feel good about it, about
- himself you know his organizational skills so I’m going to pretend to be having a good time, for me that is still authentic.
- 5.94 R: But F, what happens if everybody in that group things jeez but this party sucks, [name] has no organizational and part planning skills so everyone says to [name], what a wonderful party, I had such a good time, [name] goes to bed at night thinking, you know I should do this as a career, he resigns from his CEO position of a fortune 500 company and goes into party planning and in a years time, he’s on the street because he lost his house and he lost his car. I mean extreme example but that’s ... if we are taking it to extremes that’s the logical extension of [15:38]
- 5.95 J: What I’m thinking, lets say the buying of a TT or going over seas to study or...
- 5.96 D: What would that be, what’s the over seas studying for, just an example?
- 5.97 J: No that’s me.

- 5.98 D: It's you?
- 5.99 J: Ja
- 5.100 D: Meaning?
- 5.101 J: Meaning I'm wanting to go and study over seas to do theology
- 5.102 G: Father thinks it's not a good idea?
- 5.103 J: Yes but what I wan to say is if that act to buy this car or to ... if this act is in essence an act of communicating to your dad that you are wanting to cut the umbilical cord then it's a very expensive way to say that, there are cheaper ways of saying that, just sitting down and saying this is what needs to be done. So there's obviously a distinction then because if that's the only way of communication by buying the car to spite or convey a message but if its really a dream that you want to pursue but you just don't know how to say it or how to say it, then it also would have been cheaper to have just had the guts when you were 18 to say that and then get your dad to pay for it [Laughter] than ... because now you have to pay for it yourself because if...
- 5.104 K: I want to ask you something first. I'm sorry ...
- 5.105 J: No what I saying, is that it also depends on the motive. Is going to study overseas just
for ... not spiting my dad but conveying a message to him which I know that its not, I know that the fact that I want to do that will require a serious cup of coffee in the next few months because it will really require us to talk about the whole thing, it sounds crazy to you, it doesn't sound crazy to me at all so I know that that act will require communication but that act is not ... ah ... a way of me trying to communicate something to [END TAPE5PART2][START TAPE 5PART 3] him. That's what I said.
- 5.106 K: So you feel like you're being honest with yourself now?
- 5.107 J: Yes. I feel like I'm not lying with myself... ja [Silence]
- 5.108 K: He's saying that his act to go study overseas ... [to H] Are you asking me?
What I hear is what you [to J] say, you made a statement that you want to go and study overseas is really because you want it, but you realize that you must handle it with your dad which I think is very considerate of you. And not just saying cheers here I go ... You talk about coffee and having this conversation but if you are honest and saying that then that's great but is there no external force driving you overseas or is it just to prove a point? Because I think that that would not be healthy. I don't know, do you understand what I am saying J?
- 5.109 J: Yes
- 5.110 K: Specifically you
- 5.111 J: Yes
- 5.112 K: I just want to ask another question...
- 5.113 J: But she thinks that's what I said
- 5.114 K: Ja but then I said but only if you're honest when you say that then I wouldn't have a concern if I were you.
- 5.115 J: So you think that there is a possibility, that I'm ... 5.116 K: Lying to yourself to actually prove a point to your dad.

5.117 J: Yes

5.118 K: But ja

[Silence]

5.119 D: But the question is how to find that out?

5.120 K: Hmm

5.121 N: I think that when J poses it to himself to actually explore that which is what we are talking about, which is if he doesn't go overseas then he'll never know whether it was really for himself or just to spite his dad. True it's an expensive exercise but choices are expensive as you grow up. And, um he's always wanted to do it from matric but then he owes it to himself to explore that.

5.122 G: In the act, or in the ...

5.123 N: In the act per se. Because he's always wanted to do the act. Do you know what I mean? Either if he is fulfilled by it or whatever he is defined in that act, he has been restricted from doing it. Either he is rebelling or he needs to explore it fully.

5.124 J: You see, I think that something else is Um ... explore on what [?] said is that what I need to find out is if this act is because of the right reasons so in order to explore that in order to find out why, what are the reasons for wanting to go there to find out whether these reasons ... do you need to go there to answer these reasons or can you do something here? ... do a [?] or something here and you solve those reasons, you don't have to go there. So that's what I learnt is part of the exploration process of age that I need to do before I go there. ...Just checking that I am there for the right reasons because there is the possibility that I am there for the wrong reasons.

5.125 N: But also if ... I'm sorry ... but also if you don't do it won't you always beat yourself up for the rest of your life or thankful for exploring that phase.

5.126 P: Just out of curiosity, it might seem like a simple question but why do you want to go overseas to study? 'Coz that's what really is ... do you want to go overseas to study? Why can't you do it over here? Because what's the motive behind the overseas part?

5.127 J: Yes ... I am actually quite at peace with the fact that if it doesn't work out overseas then I can do it here so if I don't get a bursary or scholarship or whatever, if that doesn't work out then ill just do it here so that takes it out the corner. But if it can work out then I think it'll be a really nice experience, you know to extend the base of where I've studied before, not in the same ...

5.128 P: So you're thinking off the ...

5.129 J: [?] tradition that gets taught here, perhaps a different angle so I think that that would be nice.

5.130 P: Ok, so its obviously for the experience?

5.131 J: Ja

5.132 D: Also there's a wonderful new university in Vladivostok

5.133 P: In where?

5.134 D: In Vladivostok

5.135 K: Is that Russia?

[Laughter and general chatter]

5.136 R: But not only with that but J you were talking about theology and that ... is it not a part of growing up where the opinion of your dad actually lead to you not [?] and this is a decision that I'm actually making for myself and you're informed of it but you actually have no say in it but that means that if this should fall apart then the only person who is to blame is me because as long as I have you as a key stake holder in the decision to do it, then I either do it because he said that I can because I don't do it because he said that I can't, whatever happens down the line, I've been able to share a portion of the blame with you and part of growing up is saying now that you know what I'm doing but I actually don't care what you think because I'm making ... Not that I'm specifically talking about J but ...

5.137 D: Because it sounded like ...

5.138 R: Sorry, I,I

5.139 G: But I think that it's a good thing that you said

5.140 R: Because I was making it a more general statement around the TT and ... because I'm not sure if J's personal relationship with his father is so ... it might be an unfair and improper statement to make about ...

5.141 J: No it was

5.142 R: Ok, well that's...

5.143 J: I immediately associated it with the thing that I was ... that's all

5.144 G: And if you ... sorry F

5.145 F: In relation to what R was just saying I would think if it because, for example if J goes there to get validation from his dad or to rebel against him but that lives with him all the time because after he's finished that also something that he has to do ... to either get validation or to rebel further, so the focus shifts all the time so it's a never ending cycle and I think its time that you ... ja.

5.146 D: What does it do to you to see that?

5.147 J: To me?

5.148 D: To see that in J? [to F]

5.149 F: What does it do to me? [silence] I think it hurts me ja. It hurts me because I would not like to see you go through that cycle that never ends

[Long Silence]

5.150 G: Could I get back to what you [R] said earlier that you think that you are going to go to parties because someone tells you to ... so I think what you said to J is very valid and valuable so maybe there's ... something to do with the parties ...

[Laughter]

5.151 R: No, in the context that I said that in, no its because the relationship that I have with J is one part of his life so obviously his relationship with his father is a small part of whatever is revealed in this conversation. I didn't feel comfortable or appropriate making a statement directed at J about what we were talking about, I felt more appropaie putting it out her [indicates to centre of group] as something for the group as J or one of else could pick up as relevant at that point. So for me, it wasn't purely directed at J it was

really in the context of the conversation of the [indicates around the group]. That could be based on the relationship that I have with J that I don't feel that I have the right to [?]

[H gets up and leaves the room]

5.152 J: No but I can't remember what you said exactly ... because whatever you said ... I think that it was very true what you said so I don't have any problem with that can't remember exactly what you said but I just felt that this is the right thing to be saying to me but what did you say again?

[Laughter]

5.153 J: Coz what F was saying is also true, so I don't want to be confused here.

5.154 D: Let me just ... you get what F said?

5.155 J: Yes

5.156 D: But you didn't get what he [R] said?

5.157 J: No, I got what he said but I felt he ...

5.158 D: So you would like him to just say?

5.159 J: Just say it again

5.160 R: So, I think there comes a point in our lives where ...

5.161 J: Oh, yes I got that ... where its just informing him of ... yes, yes, yes

5.162 R: And then its that we don't have take responsibility 100% ourselves, we can blame him

5.163 S: Something that I hear when you say that, is that J when you do this TT thing or going to Oxford instead of directly confronting your father with the fact that there is something

wrong in the relationship, its almost the easy way out. Cos you're making a ...

5.164 J: The short term easy and the long term difficult.

5.165 S: Yes, and let's say that you just buy the TT car but there is also the risk that he's not going to get the right message.

5.166 N: Sorry, interpret.

5.167 S: No, lets say that I just buy the TT, how do I know that my father will get the message that I'm trying to send him, and the reason that I'm buying the TT is that I'm too afraid to actually go to him and say, "Dad, we have issues that I think that we should be sorting out and so now ... it's almost coming back to not wanting to tell someone "no I don't want to go to your party" instead of thinking up an excuse like, "no I'm washing my hair", it's the same thing and then in the end, what R was just saying is that now I've bought the TT it hasn't had the effect that I've wanted, now I'm sitting in debt but I can sit back and say "now it's my fathers fault" ... so it's sort of a easy ...

5.168 J: But there's one more thing to explore and that's what D referred to, why not go to Vladivostok. Um, ja, so why ... there's a TT element to that subject. Oxford's a grand name like a TT is a grand name; well Vladivostok is a no name place. So, no that's another that I have to be thinking about and um I wonder if I should even be answering that. But I want to answer it so that I can listen to what my answer is so you can ...[mumbling]

5.169 G: Is that what you would like?

5.170 J: Yes

5.171 G: That we listen and then we [indicates towards J]

5.172 J: Yes ... Lets use your time for my own selfish purposes [Laughter] ... ok, well firstly I thought that I want to study theology but at a different university than Tukkies as that's where I have studied before and I don't want to do a theology degree there just in order to get a different view. And if I look at universities, let's say overseas, it must be a place

where you can speak English or you can ... if you understand. So I applied to a whole variety, well several of them and when I went over to visit some of them to get a [general shuffling]... when I came back, firstly I came back with a general sense that [H re-enters room] I want to study theology and I don't really know where that is. Secondly, if I study theology, I want to do it at a secular university and not at a theological seminary, evangelical fundamentalist seminary. Coz basically I had applied to one of those, so that's what [? Tape distortion]. So I realized that it needn't be overseas, it can be here as well ... it's not a big, to be overseas it's not the big drive. I could do it here as well so I'm fairly easy with those 3, um ... so what I thought is that I've applied I'm going to see what happens, and if it happens that I get accepted, if it happens that I get money to go and to ... then I'll try it because its bit of like a romantic atmosphere and something different. So what happened is that I got accepted at almost all of them, I haven't heard from 2 yet and then if I did get accepted at all 7, then why Oxford? They all cost the ... so my [?] I immediately thought, it was a gut-felt reaction, I didn't actually think that there's Aberdeen and Cardiff and the other universities and all of them so why Oxford? I ... when we visited there, the Oxford ... the kind of romance that was there just really ...

I think that it's the same thing that made me decide to ... [?] society, my favourite movie ... it really felt great ... and they also have a very interesting way of teaching, they ... so what I did, [?] studying theology at an undergraduate level, and post graduate. So at an undergraduate level you don't get content to work through and write exams, you write an essay each week and then you have to defend your essay against your tutor so that sounded to me like a very interesting way of study that I'm not just regurgitating facts so, and all of them cost the same, except its certainly more expensive to go to Oxford than any other English university [long silence] Ja

5.173 K: Does that answer your question?

5.174 S: One question for you is knowing all of this, you obviously ... jy't uitgedink , why did you make such a strong correlation between this and the TT thing earlier, if you have al of this logical justification and reasons for why you want to do it, why was there such a strong correlation for you? Why did you initially identify this with the TT story?

5.175 J: Because there is a, there is a brand to Oxford, now I can't ... say it's not ... I can't say that Oxford is the University of [?], because it's not that's just the way it sounds, uh ... so if I ... if you know that I was going to Oxford [END TAPE 5: PART3][START TAPE 5: PART4] you have a perception of that university, just

- the same way that you have a perception of the TT, or something else, so I don't know, there almost feels as if there is something that needs to be explained
- 5.176 S: That there's a status to it, a ...?
- 5.177 J: Yes, but I'm saying that its something that almost needs to be, um ...
- 5.178 K: I want to ask the group something before you go on, I ... you're assuming something of us which is not true from my side. I don't think that way at all, if you say Oxford, I've been there, I know exactly what you're talking about, it's absolutely the atmosphere at Oxford's great and the reasoning for wanting to go there, makes sense to me so I don't think you're a snob or I don't think it's a bad name or I don't think any of that so I'm just wondering again, is there that invisible judge, judging you, wanting to, making you want to defend, then who's that invisible judge because it's not me, I don't know if [indicates around the circle] its not us
- [Silence]
- 5.179 Ay: I would also say that I'm confused because your rationale for your going to Oxford, is like sound, its really sound but nowhere in this thing did you refer to a correlation between the decision to go Oxford and the relationship with your dad. That was your first question so I would just like to ask you to answer your question. Is there a correlation between you wanting to go to Oxford or any other [?] and a desire or wise to ... as you referred to it to break the umbilical chord with your dad?
- 5.180 J: Um, I think you could, well require me to have a good conversation with my dad, it won't really work just informal because I have that relationship so I know that from that
- [?], if I just phone him out of Oxford and ... so I know that he will want to, I kinda feel I want to just give him that, um ...
- 5.181 S: Psychological space
- 5.182 G: Ja, you would like him to understand you
- 5.183 J: Yes
- 5.184 Ay: I think that the question is going to be, what do you plan to say to your dad? Cos you spoke about, that you don't want just to inform him, give him some information to go on ... what do you plan to say?
- 5.185 J: I think that this is what I want to do and ... although it doesn't make sense perhaps to him, its part of who I am, part of what I want to do, but I know that that conversation is going to be emotional laden because it links up with a whole lot of previous things, it links up with not taking history in Std 8, it links up to studying HR BCom, HR management and not theology or psychology or sociology or something that is totally removed from business so it links up with previous decisions...
- 5.186 Ay: Is he aware of these decisions or will this be the first time that your dad hears of these [?]
- 5.187 J: Ja I think so, what's most difficult for me is that I never have his attention so I know all of this from his side [?] so you're studying theology, what are you going

- to do after this, are you going to become a domineer, do you thing about these things so I know that goes against...
- 5.188 Ay: Does your dad need to hear this information or do you not need to tell him?
- 5.189 J: What do you mean
- 5.190 Ay: Just asking that if it's the first time that your dad is hearing this then should the attention be on parenting that you feel for the last 27, 28 years. We discussed yesterday that all parents are not great parents but if this is the first time that he is hearing this, that he may... because I think that parents take that on themselves, asking themselves... we discussed that yesterday, asking what [?]. So I'm asking, will it be beneficial for your dad to hear this or is it beneficial for you to tell him? Or both?
- 5.191 J: I think both
- 5.192 Ay: I don't know what the answer? I just think that there is a fear that your dad may be, it may not be good for ...
- 5.193 J: When I think of my baby, I want to know him and I what to ... and I think what also hurts my dad is the fact that there is some part of my life that I am not really disclosing to him so there is part of my dreams and thinking that I'm not discussing with him al the time and I think from my dad's point of view, it must be nice to know these things, to know that that's what your son is thinking, that is what he's debating and not just to hear now at this stage of the race that this is what I feel and I think that's going to...
- 5.194 S: To be hurtful to him but is also going to free?
- 5.195 J: That'll free us both.
- 5.196 S: Ja
- 5.197 J: If you [to Ay] in my situation, what would you say to him?
- 5.198 Ay: No, what I've said, I still haven't worked out exactly how to say that
- 5.199 K: I just want to ask you something because the word keeps on coming up, I'm not sure about the English, the umbilical. I want to ask you; do you want to break the umbilical cord or do you want to break the fact that you act to please him [F leaves room] because of the call, or whatever. Het jy nodig om die kol te breek is dit waaroor dit gaan of is dit eintlik iets baie spesiaal dat jy graag sou wil hou maar jy wil nie meer 'n pleaser wees te wille van jou dad em omdat daars 'n band tussen julle
- 5.200 J: Whats important to me is that the relationship.... To not be dependent. Not to be the son [indicates a lower level] but to be, well I'll always be the son but not to be dependent on, to need to feel he cares for his, he's being protective, so. Cutting the umbilical cord is meaning not wanting to, to create the impression in myself first I suppose of always wanting to please and. ...
- 5.201 G: Its not that you don't want to have a relationship with him
- 5.202 J: I want to reframe or rephrase the relationship
- 5.203 P: [?]
- 5.204 J: To cut the cord, its something that's attached to a baby ...
- 5.205 S: Are you afraid of having that to associate with? Because something that I'm sort of thinking is that, by putting the emphasis on Oxford and the brand and all that,

- its almost as if you are wanting people to tell you not to go Oxford so that you don't have to have the conversation. It's a Do you understand what I am saying?
- [Silence]
- 5.206 J: Ja, well I am afraid [G talks to A], afraid as in scared as in as I've explained yesterday that I know that such a conversation will be very valuable, push and pull but I know from the status quo that it's a good thing to let it go. Does that satisfy [F returns]
- 5.207 N: [?] answer the question, are you afraid?
- 5.208 J: Yes
- 5.209 Ay: Would you still want to have the conversation if you weren't going to Oxford, if the finances didn't appear?
- 5.210 J: Yes
- 5.211 G: [?] what do you think he should do?
- 5.212 K: Sorry I didn't get the ... 5.213 G: What do you think he should do?
- 5.214 K: What I think he should do?
- 5.215 G: On that question, you asked the question... the rest of you have to answer 5.216 K: I would say he has to have that conversation
- 5.217 G: Regardless?
- 5.218 K: Because its more about the Oxford story, its about really redefining the relationship, his dad needs to buy into that decision or he needs his dad to buy into that whatever the case may be but ...
- 5.219 Ay: Also J, I don't know if I may but something that you haven't said but that I've heard you say this past weekend, is that you struggle to tell your dad what you do and you were saying that its important that your dad doesn't necessarily approve but that he understands ... and just to go from asking questions to offering ... I just think that in whatever form you need to start a conversation with him, along these lines, as its important that I'm realizing now is that I need to have a similar conversation with my dad because I just think that it needs to happen, that its part of becoming an independent child.
- 5.220 G: You saying ... that what you said is that it reverberates within a few people in the group, this ... maybe not the talk with the mother or the father but this redefining the relationship with important
- 5.221 Ay: And I think that it would be different for each and every person, I mean the conversation that I must have with my dad is vastly different to what J needs to ... but I think that ... reframing the relationship needs to happen
- 5.222 G: Let me just ask you a question [indicates round the group] ... the, how authentic did you experience J to be in the last half an hour or so?
- 5.223 K: Very ... [more empathically] Very
- 5.224 G: Very

- 5.225 K: And I appreciate that and I want you [speaks to J] to know that I appreciate that. Its not easy and you opened yourself up with very sensitive stuff ... thank you for trusting us
- 5.226 Ay: I must agree with K, but I felt that I don't know ... how do we know that it was authentic
- 5.227 G: The question is how did you experience it?
- 5.228 A: I think um
- 5.229 G; Was it true to you?, Yes
- 5.230 A: Sorry ... I also think the fact that he said, "I'm going to tell you my story and you can give me the feedback, I kinda feel that that was proof that he was authentic
- 5.231 G: That this is it?
- 5.232 K: Yes, its really real and ... im going to give it to you the way it really is. I think that if someone wasn't authentic, they wouldn't be so open to feedback, somehow, and willing to receive it
- [Long silence]
- 5.233 D: Where are you at?
- 5.234 J: I ... I know that the first thing that I need to do is to start this conversation, regardless of whatever, and then I also think that in my process of determining whether what I want to do is for the right reasons is not the major thing that I need to do, I just need to have that conversation with my dad and after that has cleared out of the way there will be a lot of cloudiness that will be out of the way so maybe after that conversation with my dad, I may have even realized that jee I don't want to go to Oxford, I don't wan to study theology, I just want to stay here and buy a dog and [laughter] ... so that might happen but it might also be that after having that conversation, I might afterwards realize that now I know, I don't only want to do this but I know have a companion or partner in someone that I do respect very much, someone that I really want to understand me and that I have him as an ally in this process. So I think that that conversation will also clear up a lot more than I will be able to by asking myself or asking the others, even if I ask 30 people I'll get to the same point that this needs to happen.
- 5.235 D: So what you need to do, is to make a decision on either to cut that cord or to loosen it, or you could replace that and you need to weigh up the risks of each of those three options and that will determine and assist you in that conversation because both Oxford and theology would just be a replacement of that cord and it might be necessary for you to sort out that, because that's actually what you ...
- 5.236 K: So that why you're a facilitator? That was brilliant, I hadn't thought of that.
- 5.237 G: Just to close a little bit J, so the shift from [G looks behind, D gets up and leaves] the question of what is the meaning of ... so there's been a shift from the focus on that, to a focus on your relationship with your dad. Is that something that happened here? That you need to do this, regardless
- 5.238 J: Uh ... yes, um well I'm not sure if I understood you correctly, I need to [D re-enters room] I need to have this conversation with my dad regardless of a lot of other things

- 5.239 G: Regardless of a lot of other things, yes and that...
- 5.240 J: Has to do with holiday, December holiday house, it has to do ...
- 5.241 A: Cleaning up the braai
- 5.242 G: Cleaning up the braai, yes!
- 5.243 J: It has to do with, this conversation has to do with a lot more than Oxford or ...
well, than me studying theology
- 5.244 G: Ok and that, this you realized now
- 5.245 J I think that it was reinforced
- 5.246 G: Reinforced by what happened here?
- 5.247 J: Yes, it was very valuable
- 5.248 D: A Toyota conquest, registration something I cant read 542 GP, has its lights on
... not here [Silence]
- 5.249 G: Ok, what ... are you? Is there anything more that you would like to clarify with
the group
- 5.250 D: There could be some things that are hanging that you would like
- 5.251 G: Ok, should we take a 10 minute break? ... Great 25 minutes past. Then we are
going to take a break at more or less 11 again ... so this is not the official tea
break

Session 7

- 7.1 G: Let's see if we can go for about an hour and then maybe if it works out that
way then before we lunch we can have a short reflection session.
- 7.2 So we can just [?]
[Laughter]
- 7.3 D: [?]
- 7.4 P: I get it.
[Silence]
- 7.5 N: We changed seating patterns. It's cool. We didn't do it after the first tea.
- 7.6 P: But why did we do it?
- 7.7 A: Why is it cool?
- 7.8 N: I think before the...
[Laughter]
- 7.9 Ay: It's a great [?]
- 7.10 N: Now that I'm forced to think about it.
- 7.11 A: You were only authentic and you didn't really mean what you said.
- 7.12 N: No. It's interesting that J said this morning, cause I said: "I must shut up, I
must shut up" but he said that's impossible because that's the way you actually
communicate what you are thinking. So there must be a balance between thinking
before you speak and [?] anyway, that's beside the point. The point is, what I hate
to call is, it didn't happen before the first break is, because we were still on J and
there was not full closure so we still all held our same positions. But now we are
happy with J and where we all are.

- 7.13 Ay: Like a new chapter?
- 7.14 N: It's like a new chapter. So we...
- 7.15 K: It's interesting now.
- 7.16 H: Ja.
- 7.17 F: I'm wondering what this says about me cause I'm still in the same chair.
[Multiple people talking]
- 7.18 N: So what does it say?
- 7.19 P: I was actually aiming for the same chair. I just [?]
- 7.20 N: Sometimes you don't...
[Laughter]
- 7.21 P: I'm just being honest[laughs].
- 7.22 R: [?]
- 7.23 A: [?] from where I came from.
- 7.24 N: Sometimes you don't mean to move but circumstances and situations
- 7.25 J: [?]
[END TAPE6PART2][START TAPE6PART3]
- 7.26 P: But K, if I'm not mistaken you are the first one who changed seats on the first day.
- 7.27 N: She wants to tell us something.
[Laughter]
- 7.28 K: I did that specifically because uhm, when I sat here and I saw the faces, there was some expressions that I could see but the people here [gestures to adjacent seats] I couldn't see their expressions.
- 7.29 P: OK, so...
- 7.30 K: So I decided to sit there to get the other's "input" in terms of expressions and...
- 7.31 J: And everyone shifted round and you ended up seeing the same people.
[Laughter]
- 7.32 K: Fortunately not, no. But ja, and what I noticed, I shared that with J, is that already the group dynamic has changed for me when we changed. I don't know if you experienced it?
- 7.33 Ay: I, when we were debriefing yesterday, I battled to remember who said what because I think about the position and the direction of the conversation. It helps me remember.
- 7.34 P: No, I was asking because the last time I was on a course we had nametags but they were placed on the desk so we'd switch seats just to confuse the facilitators.
[Laughs] So I ended up being [name]. I was just curious.
- 7.35 J: [name][surname]
- 7.36 P: No, but it was just first names so I pulled it off. No, but I was just curious.
- 7.37 S: How do u think the dynamic changed when you switched?
- 7.38 K: How do I think or why do I think?
- 7.39 S: What was the change that you observed?
- 7.40 [?]
- 7.41 K: Ja. It's a good question cause I can't really answer it. [Laughs] Uhm, because it's gut feelings and stuff. It's not something that I can verbally express. But uhm, if I really have to, it can also just be the fact that we moved into different levels of

- we started with the smoking and after break we went to a different level. Maybe it's in that that I also, I don't know.
- [Silence]
- 7.42 K: Energy flow again. I'm a big fan of energy. So then that's why I say, I can't visibly see it but it was different in how energy flowed.
- 7.43 J: Can I ask you about energy? You spoke about energy flowing out of you and into you and the universe speaking to you...How does it work? What is it about?
- 7.44 K: Uhm, it's not scientifically proven because if you find an engineer who is very into science they will disagree with me, 100%. But uhm, everything has oscillations, everything is energy according to Einstein, you know that. So matter is energy. Everything that exists is a form of energy. So then there was this guy, what's his name? I can't remember, but he did a study on emotions and energy and he found that happy emotions vibrates with high altitudes and fast whereas sad and depressed emotions has [gestures to explain] longer lengths and ja, so and that made me realize then the spirit must have energy as well. I started reading on that and that is what I found in the [?], so my body, spirit, emotions, everything vibrates and has energy. So that's the philosophical origin of what I'm saying. But what since...
- 7.45 J: [?]
- 7.46 K: Since I got aware of it, ja, I really experience it. If I'm down that day and I deliberately try to get faster energy in my life by laughing or you know just or thought patterns, positive thought patterns, I feel better. Or, even in a work situation. Jis, you're going to think I'm new age or something. [?] But even in the work situation everyone is focusing on something but just believing so much that this is going to happen, and there's this positive driving energy force towards this specific goal then it's like the whole universe is putting forces together to get there. If it's within the universe's end goal as well.
- [05:02]**
- 7.47 P: Do you think it's...
- 7.48 K: You can't bullshit, sorry, you can't bullshit certain basic universal natural forces. And for me as a Christian that energy is God and the Holy Spirit but for a new ager it is the universe or I don't know, any god for that matter.
- 7.49 Ay: So then when J's friend visited him last night and spoke about authenticity, you said the universe has a message.
- 7.50 K: Ja, ag I found it in my life as well. Sometimes when life or this energy or this force or this whatever you want to call it, wants to teach me something it is that this message can either through books or people crossing your journey or I don't know, it gets reinforced. Not once, not twice and it's extremely interesting if you become aware of it.
- 7.51 J: [?]
- 7.52 F: It's something that I've not really delved into. Pretty much, ja.
- 7.53 D: [?]
- 7.54 H: No, I agree with everything K said. I found it in my life as well.
- 7.55 K: If you are quiet enough and you start really to listen to this. These signs or forces or whatever in your life, it is amazing how clear they speak but you also

- have to be connected. At times when I'm not connected myself I just don't hear it. I just don't see it. I mean, I make mistakes, horrible mistakes.
- 7.56 G: How then can we apply it to the group? This theory, this philosophy?
- 7.57 K: I would like to ask, does it make sense or does it make not sense at all, first.
- 7.58 J: But G said something yesterday [?] you say that before, that nothing is coincidence and that links very strongly with what you now say[points to K]. [?]
- 7.59 Ay: G, why do you want to bring that into the group?
[Silence]
- 7.60 G: Uhm, ja, cause we are in the group, so if we can apply a theory in here, maybe it can have more meaning for us.
- 7.61 H: I think this group will, each individual within this group will [?] what he or she has to bring at this point in his or her life.
- 7.62 D: So you're saying it is beneficial to bring into the group, is that what you're saying or what?
- 7.63 H: Ja, I think us being here in this moment, for these five days has significance in different uhm, well, it will have a different significance in my life than it will have for A for instance, but I will learn what I need to learn at this stage in my life and the same for A.
- 7.64 D: Anybody else have opinions on if it's valuable to share that in the group? Bring it to the group as G asked, why is it helpful to... anyone else?
- 7.65 R: Has it not been brought already though? It's been brought already so what you're saying is do we kick it out, not do we bring it in? That's actually the question. It's here already...
- 7.66 K: It's there. It's universal.
- 7.67 R: ...so do we engage it or do we step off it.
- 7.68 Ay: My question was do we just discuss it and find out more and throw opinions around or do we actually apply the theory to our group process. That's what I heard G say...
- 7.69 G: That's what, I understand, yes yes yes. That's how I understood your question, yes. And my answer to that is I think it can be valuable if we do apply the theory to the group.
- 7.70 J: I don't understand the theory enough. [?] you start to apply it [?] how that theory can...
- 7.71 P: The way I see it or from what I understand, the energy that you have, you sort of give off, almost. So if you've got this positive energy within you, then you give off positive energy whether you like it or not.
- 7.72 K: Yes.
- 7.73 P: So the energy that you are talking about is here already. It's not about bringing it in or applying it, it's here. So, uhm, applying the theory could only mean that, trying to get everybody to display positive energy rather than negative. But I haven't picked up negative energy so...
- 7.74 H: That's just what I meant. We shouldn't worry ourselves with what it should mean for us because...
- 7.75 P: Precisely, because...
- 7.76 K: It's anyway there.
- [10:08]**

- 7.77 R: We are looking at it, I mean, looking at it from the perspective of [?] here. I don't know if you remember that experiment you did in high school the [?] resonance, with the two tuning forks. Where you tap the one tuning fork and you left the other apart and as soon as you brought them together, uhm, the frequency in the one caused the other one to actually start going off as well because things resonate. And in a group dynamic like this, if we've now started to discuss that energy, what happens is there's a resonance that comes through when you bring your stuff in, you kinda [?] that affects somebody who has no proximity to you other than the fact that they're in the same wavelength, the same frequency and there's a resonance. And if you then bring in, I don't know, if you can see energy, the resonancy the other person ends up having, or similarly can be brought up. So, it does affect a group dynamic.
- 7.78 Ay: I thought about this yesterday, just in terms of our boundaries. If we had to draw each of our boundaries as a circle, we each come with our own circles and they sort of come together as concentric circles and end up forming a group boundary. So, it's a similar sort of thing where just with boundaries we have come together and have formed our own circle as a group and our individual boundaries affect what the group's boundaries are. If that makes sense at all.
- 7.79 P: It does.
- 7.80 R: It does but I don't know what it has to do with energy.
[Laughter]
- 7.81 Ay: No, it's just...nothing at all with energy I'm just saying that when you have the differences come together and that either levels out or steps up or steps down...
- 7.82 R: Some very interesting research is being done at the moment in, uhm, and strangely enough they are trying to do teleportation like in star trek using quantum theory cause a lot of, who, anybody here know "Beam me up Scottie"?
[General acknowledgement]
- 7.83 R: OK, [lifts hands while making sound]
- 7.84 R to K: You're not a Star Trek fan?
- 7.85 K: No.
- 7.86 R: OK, it's a science fiction literally where a person says, "Beam me up Scottie" and then they get beamed up into the spaceship and they disappear here [points down] and reappear here [points up]. Using some of that theory the whole quantum theory stuff, they are actually starting to see that if you, if two particles, OK you guys need to shut me up if I'm starting to go a little bit too wacky, where if two particles come in contact with each other at any time and then move away and they never see each other again. What you then end up doing on one particle over here, the other particle on the other side of the universe responds the same way
- 7.87 K: [?]
- 7.88 R: So if they're spinning clockwise and you spin this one anticlockwise, the one on the other side starts spinning anticlockwise as well. Even though they are no longer in [?]. And what they are doing is they are actually using that to start doing the thing so in other words if electrons are [?] you can actually disassemble something here and you can reassemble it over there by using things that are not

- in contact. So again, what's the theory there? From a group dynamic perspective, what happens in this room doesn't stay in this room. When [?]. . . now, we're going all wacko but when we walk out of here. . .
- [Laughter]
- 7.89 R: . . . what happens. . . For, with J, whatever J has invested this morning. What J invested in this group, when J goes out and things happen in another space in another place, there's resonance back into J's space. [?] and the whole energy thing. [?] no idea what it means.
- [Laughter]
- 7.90 Ay to J: J, can we swap chairs? The aircon's blowing on me is killing me. Thanks.
- [Ay and J swap chairs]
- 7.91 [?]
- 7.92 Ay: Well, he could have said no but he responded straight away.
- 7.93 N: They need to change.
- 7.94 J: I like cool air.
- 7.95 Ay: Sorry, I interrupted you.
- 7.96 R: No, [?]
- 7.97 K: [?] thank you.
- 7.98 S: I think one of the interesting things from a group and a facilitator's perspective is, you get some people who when you get in contact with them it's as if they just drain all your energy whereas you get other people that you find energizing. And I think to be aware of that sort of dynamic in a group is a good thing and even for yourself, if you facilitate something and you're one of these draining people you can actually suck the energy out of the group.
- 7.99 R: I recon a great author and this book on it, there's a book called "Leadership and the New Science" by a lady called Margaret Wheatley. What she's done is she's taken all of this type of conversation but actually put it into the context of organisations saying there's some companies like people where you walk in through the front door and you haven't spoken to anybody and you just feel there's something sick and wrong here. And you don't know why but you pick it up. And it's that field that you're in, that energy field.
- [14:56]
- 7.100 K: It's like this energy or whatever it is, they call it spiritual intelligence. If you are spiritually intelligent then ja, I'm not going to explain that. What I want to say about organisations, a spiritual culture in organisation has nothing to do with religion. Nothing at all. But they found that companies with spiritual cultures perform up to 7% better than companies without it. Uhm, in the sense of turnover or you know, less conflict and all of that. It's a reality that I believe we should really become more aware of.
- 7.101 J: I want to go back to what, R to what you said about the two particles that if they meet each other and the example of J came and he put, he came and he connected because of that there's some. . . [Gestures] it has to be fixed outside of this room as well, in my own spheres outside and then your life as well. Isn't it possible in a group like this to actually be here and not be affected?
- 7.102 R: I'd argue no. But that's me.
- 7.103 K: I agree, no. You can't.

- 7.104 N: You can't not be affected.
- 7.105 K: No, you can't not be affected. It's like communication. You cannot not communicate. You can sit here saying nothing, you're saying something.
- 7.106 R: [?]
- 7.107 J: [?] affected more. So is everyone in the same room then affected in exactly the same degree.
- 7.108 K: [?]
- 7.109 R: Let me use an example...sorry K...
- 7.110 K: No...
- 7.111 R: Again, an example from quantum theory. What quantum theory has identified is the fact that it is impossible to, for a scientist to conduct an object of experiment because as soon as the scientist engages in observation, they become part of the experiment. Uhm, so in that sense, even if you're sitting here in an observing capacity, you are part of the experiment [?] context. In that sense, although D and G don't have lunch with us, uhm, don't have tea with us, then we're still busy dealing through their group therapy trauma of that in the canteen. But you guys are an actual, they're not, they're not, they're a part of the group dynamic. They're not purely observers.
- 7.112 J: Ja, but what I mean is, it is possible to sit here and to think about work, rugby and everything else.
- 7.113 D: Do you do that as well?
[Laughter]
- 7.114 N: He's hinting what he's thinking. You do that as well.
- 7.115 K: The point is J, [?] answer your question?
- 7.116 J: No, no, no, what I said is, it is possible for me to sit in this room and to think about other things. Being present does not really [END TAPE6PART3][START TAPE6PART4] [?] being present. And for someone else to really take part and get into discussion, connecting, touching, figuratively speaking. And so what I'm asking is, is every particle in the same space affected to the exact same degree.
- 7.117 R: It's the chicken, the bacon and egg story for breakfast. The pig is a far more affected by being part of your breakfast than the chicken ever was. So they're both part of breakfast, but there's different degrees [?]
- 7.118 J: So the more affected you become the more likely you are to die?
- 7.119 R: No, I think...
[Laughter]
- 7.120 J: [?]
- 7.121 R: I think there are degrees of engagement if you're here and you're engaged...
- 7.122 G: Well, we have your theory also on [?] cause you say you have to open yourself to... [Gestures]
- 7.123 K: You have to open yourself and the point is every person has a, OK, I don't agree with this, but according to the theory, six dimensions. So in the sense of somebody participating with everything, it means he participates intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, physically, you know, all the dimensions. But with that person not participating because he's consciously thinking of his work then he's intelligence or his intellectual dimension is not aligned with what's going on so already there's a part, but the point is he will be affected because spirit is what

- connects us all. And if you are here and not participating with your conscious, with your intellectual dimension it doesn't mean that the connection doesn't exist. It is there. So, but you catch what I'm trying to say? The theory is that somebody participating with everything will be more affected than the one that is busy with a thought because his intellectual dimension is then not [?] with it.
- 7.124 S: Maybe the question is how does that disassociated person affect the group? How are the other people affected by this person being disconnected? Cause doesn't that bring a negative sort of energy to the thing or what?
- 7.125 K: Well there's less [?] then.
- 7.126 S: [?]
[Silence]
- 7.127 N: I think sometimes it's necessary to have that person who is intellectually not there cause I mean then if we all bring the same amount of energy there might not be, you know, if...I don't know if I'm making sense but if you're bringing the same level of input then it's all similar things so there's no different levels. So if I ask J about...uhm...I remember there was a time I asked you another question that was already said it was because I was sort of absent-minded and it could have helped him actually...say it again and reminded of himself so in a way I don't think it's a waste that that person is not there all the time. So everything works together for good. And we're all happy people.
- 7.128 G: Does it?
- 7.129 N: It does! I'm a firm believer...it works together for good.
[Silence]
- 7.130 N: [?]. S is looking at me like "Yeah right".
- 7.131 S: I'm looking to check the other people's reactions to that.
- 7.132 R: On an individual or a...or on a micro or macro?
- 7.133 N: I'm talking specifically group but also individual, as a person, as a...you as a person, somehow, even if you're in the group level, it will affect you. Well, at the end it will work out together for good for you.
- 7.134 R: How do you say that to a guy who has lived for 30 years on the street and is on his deathbed, on the street about to die in a gutter in the rain last night? How's all of his life experiences worked for good?
- 7.135 N: At that time I think he can choose to...
- 7.136 R: Die a doctor?
- 7.137 N: No.
[Laughter]
- 7.138 N: Well, that too.
- 7.139 R: Sorry, all I'm saying is I'm not sure it's that simple. I think...
- 7.140 N: No, no, no, not at all. It's a lot of things involved. But...
- 7.141 G: Basically he is differing from you. [?] he thinks in a different way and I think there are others as well.
- 7.142 N: I'm sorry, I didn't hear what you are saying now.
- 7.143 G: OK, that here is a difference of opinion.
- 7.144 N: Oh...you mean what we are saying now?
- 7.145 R: Here's the value though, cause I think that the [?] is that...it has far greater value for you in the way you live your life and the way you encounter

- circumstances in your life than it does for a hypothetical man on the street dying in the rain [?]. I think everybody has to make their decisions based on whatever pleasant or unpleasant circumstances they come through. Ultimately wanting to move to a good point.
- 7.146 N: Ja
- 7.147 R: Uhm, not everybody always gets there but I think that's, that optimistic approach in respect of a life is a far more beneficial way of approaching it than a negative person who [?]
- 7.148 N: I totally agree and I think because of that it is good for you as an individual and as a group because you come with that attitude into the group. So, if you don't feel like things are going your way or the way you want to in a proper situation or a group situation, but then just that decision to be positive about it, brings the energy.
- 7.149 K to R: To illustrate a point I first need to ask you permission to tell what you said to me in there.
- 7.150 R: You can say whatever you want.
- 7.151 K: Is it?
- 7.152 R: Absolutely.
- 7.153 K: OK. No, I picked up that he was, at the end of the previous conversation, "not here anymore". He was sort of absent. So I questioned him about it in there and he admitted it and he said ja, he got bored.
- 7.154 D: [?] to him? [nods towards R]
- 7.155 R: Ah no, it's cool. [?]. She's just bringing it back to the group now.
- 7.156 K: Uhm, and coming to think of it now, talking about this energy and stuff flowing, I was sitting there [points across room], J there [points] and everybody participated and but here on my side where he was sitting I could feel...it's like a gap in the circle or a... I could feel my energy was sort of not only aligned to observing J at that point in time, there was it was a, a distraction?
- 7.157 R: [?]. ...you both [?]
- 7.158 K: Ja, I just try to refine it now in the sense that, in the energy field sense of things. But ja...
- 7.159 R: But it was particularly after the 5 minute gap that we had before. So in the conversation with J I engaged. It was the conversation afterwards where we were talking about what do we talk about. Should we talk about how we talk about what we talk about when we...? We had started talking...by the time we did the third dart around the same topic I was bored.
[Laughs]
- 7.160 N: And you didn't even join the little tea session. [?]. Everybody was there.
- 7.161 R: Oh no, [?]
- 7.162 N: [?] it's like we're all here but you're not there.
- 7.163 G: [?]
[07:51]
- 7.164 A: Ja, I said to him [?] left the room
- 7.165 D: [?]
[Silence]

- 7.166 A: Probably, I senses R as someone to be [?] someone who is not afraid to let people know where you're at. So you'll be quite open to...so for example you said to me you were considering maybe just curling up and going to sleep but maybe that would be rude. And I could almost imagine you doing that. And I appreciate that because I think I would be very different in that I would want to keep appearances and make sure I was doing what the group expected of me in a sense. So as much as I, I mean I looked at you and I appreciated that you were quieter, felt that I was missing out because you weren't engaged. In the, in what was happening. Because I appreciate your input and I appreciate your energy when it's there. So watching you from over there kind of, I thought shame he's tired but at the same time I thought flip...
- [Laughter]
- 7.167 P: Waiting for you to talk.
- 7.168 A: ...why are you not engaging in what's happening here?
- 7.169 K: And that's the thing.
- 7.170 J to R: I also asked you at the coffee. I asked you...
- 7.171 R: [?]
- 7.172 J: ...I asked you what you get of value from this. Do you find this valuable? It was because of those last few minutes before break and I saw that you were not here.
- 7.173 K: What does it say to you?
- 7.174 J: Sorry?
- 7.175 D: What did it do to you when you saw him not...?
- 7.176 J: Well, two things. One thing that was, that I experienced was in the circle itself and the other one was the [?] when we spoke about it. The first was when I saw you not engaging I was almost wondering, is this what we're doing or am I participating in something that R now thinks is useless? Uhm, R shows that it's useless so, I'm not saying it but it was very visible to me. So I'm actually saying all of us are here busy with something that's useless. You don't do anything, you're not saying to us: "Listen people, you're boring me. Let's talk about something of significance." But afterwards at the coffee table, when I asked you you answered me that you were getting bored about this talking about talking about... [?] I mean cause it will also have an effect on me. It's almost as if I, uhm... so that discussion that we had had the same impact on me that kind of frustrated him [?] talking about nothing now. And how long can we talk about nothing? I'm kind of trying to participate and uhm, [?] understand why you [?] I also felt this frustration with talking about [Gestures]...
- 7.177 R: Let me ask a question in particular of the three of you who spoke. Did you pick me up as an absent presence or as a passive aggressive presence? Because some of what you're saying, it sounds more like you felt I was passive aggressive and that this is just my way of disrupting the process.
- 7.178 K: [Shakes head]
- 7.179 R: Uhm, not? Cause it wasn't. But it seems like...
- 7.180 A: I don't think you were intentional about it.
- 7.181 R: I was intentional about disengaging, but...
- 7.182 A: But not intentional about disrupting the process.

- 7.183 K: No, I see it more as an absence as...
- 7.184 D: But he did.
- 7.185 R: From an energy perspective.
- 7.186 A: It seems like a good...
- 7.187 J: I felt the [?], I felt the issue answered as part of that discussion as [?] of what are you thinking? And then I [?] myself. I thought "Well, if he doesn't want to say anything now it means he's probably [?]..."
- 7.188 G: ...doesn't want to be here?
- 7.189 J: Well ja, [?]. It did cross my mind to ask R what he was thinking about even though he was just sitting like that, to me it looks, I also see you are thinking. Normally I know you are someone who's critical of about, not someone who's just accepting things the way they go. So I know you are someone who thinks about things, questions it so while you were sitting there I was not sure whether you were just absent or you were there thinking [sighs loudly]. [?] What are we busy with here? Why are we here? [?] Wasting our time? So I wasn't sure what you were thinking so I had an urge to ask, what are you thinking? That's why later I also asked you, "Do you find this valuable?" So that's the impact that it had on me.
- 7.190 R: From my perspective guys, anyone of you could have asked me in the room. You don't need to feel that you need to take me aside and gently talk to me about it. [Laughter] So J, you could ask me my answer at that point and now thinking about it, it may have been a valuable contribution to the conversation. My answer at that point would have been: "Guys we just, we've spoken around the same non-topic and non-issue five times" and actually, so that's why I choose not to be involved in that because I was both bored and mildly irritated.
- 7.191 K: It's pointless and ...
- 7.192 R: So you're welcome to carry on talking about it but just count me out for now. And I was literally, I think I said to you guys, just waiting for the next topic. [?] But you guys are welcome really, please don't feel [?] [Laughs]
- 7.193 Ay: I mean yesterday we spoke about group dynamics. Being part, a member of the group and how when you engage we also spoke about honesty and [?] challenging you or asking a question about your participation. Is this actually us acting on that now? Where, if you notice someone isn't part of the group, present, we now feel a whole lot more enabled to pass permission on [?]
- 7.194 R: Are you asking me?
- 7.195 Ay: Well, no, I'm looking at you but not really expecting an answer.
- 7.196 D: [?]
- 7.197 Ay: Sorry?
- 7.198 D: You are saying something to him?
- 7.199 Ay: Well, because he's the subject of this conversation.
- 7.200 D: Yes. What are you saying to him? Maybe somebody can help?
- 7.201 Ay: I think I'm saying that, we're acting on what we spoke about yesterday.
- 7.202 D: [?]
- 7.203 A: Can you say that again?
- 7.204 Ay: We spoke about being part of the group. Becoming a member of the group. To what extent we've become a member. And that's about participation. We also

- spoke about honesty and addressing things honestly. I'm wondering now if, with R's absence so to speak, called in a certain part of our conversation. There was the participation from R and now we feel it's ok to be honest and I'm just saying we're addressing that.
- [Silence]
- 7.205 D: So you're saying to him, if you're part of the group please be part of the group?
- 7.206 Ay: No, no...because I wouldn't...
- 7.207 R: My response to that would be, if the group's going nowhere then you know [?]
- 7.208 Ay: [?] when we were talking about this metaphysical stuff I was switched off and thinking about [?]. Now I'm interested because this sort of thing gets me going. [Laughter] But that metaphysical stuff... [shrugs]
- 7.209 G: What's happening now that's different? What's this sort of thing?
- 7.210 Ay: Uhm...
- 7.211 G: [?]
- 7.212 Ay: I identify with R, for the reason why he switched off in his head. Because this topic about the metaphysical stuff, what was what I'm calling it, was boring to me.
- 7.213 G: OK.
- 7.214 Ay: So I switched off. And I think I'm the sort of person who's invigorated by, by...I suppose on the one hand topics that interest me but also when we get to [?] the level of conversation.
- 7.215 G: A challenge?
- 7.216 Ay: A challenge, ja.
- 7.217 G: So now you can...
- 7.218 Ay: Ja, ja, that sort of thing. It's probably the same reason why I challenged D yesterday about contributing to the discussion. Because in the first two hours we said D was the only one who didn't contribute.
- 7.219 J: What frustrates me is the fact that the group is going nowhere. It's all of our responsibility. If the group is, if it bores us, if something is boring or, it's not something to do to sit back and be bored. Then do something. Make it, work it out.
- 7.220 D: Are you saying that to R?
- 7.221 J: Ja, I'm saying that to R. And I felt that the boredom, why I felt the boredom...I tried to participate. I thought well, what can be done to make this valuable? We are here, sitting here, talking about stuff so if it's boring, don't sit back and disengage. But say, "Listen guys, this is boring" or ask somebody, listen to what people say to get energy... Otherwise we're wasting time.
- 7.222 P: Ja, but then what happens if eight people are interested and one is not? I mean, if you look at the "metaphysical" [laughter] topic we had just now, quite a few people were interested but Ay wasn't so if eight of us are talking about it and only Ay is bored, can he really change the topic then?
- 7.223 Ay: And should I?
- 7.224 P: And should he? Cause I, no offence to anybody, but there's been quite a few times when I've switched off. Just when the topic starts dragging for too long then I "phewww" [tilts head]. But it's [END TAPE6PART4][START TAPE6PART5]

- for about five, five minutes or so and then I'm back again. But I mean, it didn't affect the group in any way. Not that I know of. And it...
- 7.225 D: It did.
- 7.226 P: It did?
- 7.227 D: That's what a number of people said. That it affected them when they saw a member, which in this case was R, not you in particular...
- 7.228 R: Disengaging.
- 7.229 D: ...disengaging. So the disengagement of a member...
- 7.230 P: Does affect...
- 7.231 D: ...affected the group in this particular case.
- 7.232 Ay: But can I ask quickly, in R's case, did anyone who doesn't know R pick that up? Because the only people spoke who to him...
- 7.233 P: K.
- 7.234 Ay: K? OK. Anyone else? Cause I noticed that J and A know you pretty well.
- 7.235 J: [?]
- 7.236 Ay: Ja. I was just wondering if anyone who doesn't know R outside the group would have picked it up, besides K?
- 7.237 G: [?]
- 7.238 Ay: You didn't pick it up?
- 7.239 H: I didn't pick it up.
- 7.240 P: I didn't.
- 7.241 H: But I was just wondering...uhm, I don't want to get too personal. [Laughter] [?] for R to fix the attention on you. Listen, I'm bored. Please notice it. [?]
- 7.242 Ay: [?]
- 7.243 A: So are you thinking that now? It's not what you were thinking at the time?
- 7.244 H: Because now with all the attention's on R. I was just wondering...
- 7.245 R: [?] for me well, who was it? [?] D and Ay talking now talking...the ques...oh, D was saying now that this, that my disengagement just now did actually affect the group. My problem was to, my response was to think, to bring up the question of what we're discussing here [?]. So whose problem is it? And quite frankly, my perspective is as long as the conversation is boring, and as [gestures], I'm one of, the one person that really, you know, you guys can keep talking about what, you know. Eleven psychologists and stuff talking about the kind of stuff you want to talk about but I'm happy to disengage.
- 7.246 H: Just getting back to Ay and what he now said. Nobody or few people maybe also have noticed it. [?] I actually disengaged also. Nobody else noticed.
- 7.247 P: Yep.
[Laughter]
- 7.248 H: [?]
- 7.249 Ay: I did but I didn't say anything.
- 7.250 H: Ja, so...
- 7.251 D: But there's a difference in the sense that...F, sorry. [Gestures towards F]
- 7.252 F: I wanted to say maybe there's a difference in how...maybe the question is what is to disengage? Because, like Ay, I'm ready and it bores me sick, the metaphysical stuff bores me silly! It's something that I never ever ever delved into. In fact, if I have a philosophy and I, if I have any philosophy at all, my

- philosophy would be no philosophy. You know, just get a grip. So, but I do not think I disengaged in, in, because you know I was just listening but in my mind I kept saying: “When are we going to see the end of this?”. But at the same time, I wouldn’t consider myself to have disengaged because I mean, I can tell pretty much who said what. So I, my question is, what is ‘to disengage’? Is keeping quiet or being silent disengaging?
- [Silence]
- 7.253 P: [shakes head]
- 7.254 F: Because I was silent but I don’t consider myself to have disengaged.
- 7.255 P: I consider disengaged to be when you’re here physically, but you don’t hear the conversation around you or you hear very, very little of it. And you don’t pay attention...
- 7.256 F: Because...
- 7.257 Ay: So daydreaming...
- 7.258 P: Ja, daydream. Then you’re here but you’re thinking about everything else but here.
- 7.259 K: [?] consciousness. [?]
- 7.260 F: My argument will be, if we speak about metaphysical stuff and ten people are interested and I’m not, I don’t have to say anything because those that are interested are welcome to go on. But...
- 7.261 J: Or you could say that you don’t agree with this.
- 7.262 G: What if they pretend that they’re enjoying your party and they’re not?
- 7.263 F: What are you saying?
- 7.264 G: They pretend they’re enjoying your party so they create the impression that we’re really enjoying the conversation but...
- 7.265 R: Can we actually make this [?] conversation. Who really enjoyed talking about talking? The conversation that J was bored in.
- 7.266 P: I did.
- 7.267 R: And the conversation that H disengaged in.
- 7.268 K: Me as well.
[Multiple people talking at once]
- 7.269 G: [?] just before tea...
[Multiple people talking at once]
- 7.270 Ay: No no no, it’s because I’m battling to distinguish what happened after tea and what happened before.
- 7.271 P: Before tea. [giggles]
- 7.272 R: We’re no longer talking about J. We’re talking about how we, just talking about [?]. Is this a safe place to talk? Uhm...
- 7.273 Ay: Oh, we start off with the whole [?] experience?
- 7.274 R: Ja, that’s right. Did anybody actually enjoy that conversation?
- 7.275 P: Yes.
- 7.276 R: Or did nobody have the courage to step in and say: “This conversation is ridiculous. Let’s carry on.”
- 7.277 P: I enjoyed it.
- 7.278 D: What was absent from that, different to what J was [?]? What was absent?
- 7.279 G: Answer both questions because [?] valuable question.

- 7.280 P: Well, I'll admit that I didn't enjoy it at all. I zoned out so badly that I don't remember the conversation.
- 7.281 R: [Laughs]
- 7.282 P: No really, it took me a while to realize what part of it because I don't even remember people's responses, that's how badly I zoned out. And I don't know if you noticed it. I don't know if anybody noticed it but it's true.
- 7.283 G: A, you've already said that there was part of you that felt the same. [?]
- 7.284 A: No, I didn't say that, did I?
- 7.285 R: No, J said that. I don't think A said that. That you were also bored of the conversation at the point that you tried to engage it.
- 7.286 J: You see what frustrated me about that conversation and this one that we're having now is the fact that we are wasting, it feels to me that we are not adding value to anyone of us here. We are talking about crap. So whereas this morning I kind of took a stand to really make a productive decision out of this, I felt like [?] and you felt you got something out of me doing that. After that, we just never felt that we wanted to go anywhere.
- 7.287 Ay: Why must [?] about enjoyment and throughout all of our discussions?
- 7.288 A: I mean I just saw it as a transitional period. And it was, I mean for me it was just what needed to happen. It wasn't like I went [sighs] or like a passion [gestures]. It was just, this is transition kind of happening here.
- 7.289 S: For me that conversation wasn't, there were parts of it that weren't as interesting but I was engaged throughout the time in terms of listening to how people were responding. When we came back after tea and the metaphysical energy thing started. That's normally a discussion that I would find interesting, sort of sitting around a braai or whatever but, coming back from that session with J and going into a superficial discussion like that, I found frustrating because it was almost as if we managed to go to a certain level of depth and then we came back and it just got lifted up again. That's what I felt.
- 7.290 G: So, at least one distinction is this theoretical, superficial as opposed to personal engagement.
- 7.291 Ay: But I'm gonna ask the same question that A's asked. Isn't it needed?
- 7.292 S: Maybe.
[Multiple people talking at once]
- 7.293 Ay: Just tell me right now because, am I perceiving right that the expectation is that we need to have that depth most of the time?
- 7.294 S: But not necessarily on a personal level. But...I don't know.
- 7.295 Ay: But if...
- 7.296 S: But there's also a different, different people have different ways of disengaging. If I find something really, really boring I may disengage completely but otherwise like F, I'll keep listening and you keep eye contact even though it's not something that interests you. But as you for example, when you felt bored you sort of [leans forward and puts head on hands]. It was very obvious that you were bored.
- 7.297 Ay: When? Now?
- 7.298 S: With the metaphysical stuff.
[Laughter]

- 7.299 Ay: I was waiting for someone to ask that cause absolutely none of it was intentional as a communication for my boredom. It was just a case of comfort. I'm tired of leaning back so I lean forward.
- 7.300 S: It wasn't the actual turning the...
- 7.301 Ay: And I'm still doing it now.
- 7.302 S: ...it wasn't the turning of the chair necessarily. It was your leaning forward and looking down. You weren't looking at the group anymore. You didn't make eye contact anymore. So that is why I think it's easier to pick up when you disengage than it is for example when F or when H...
- 7.303 Ay: No, I disagree with you. Have you picked up when I've disengaged in the last hour and a half?
- 7.304 S: No, it was only that time.
- 7.305 Ay: OK, it's not the first time now. It's only because I turned the chair around.
- 7.306 F: I think we, I think we're still going around and round and I'm getting bored now.
[Laughter]
- 7.307 Ay: Change the topic.
- 7.308 F: Well, my first thing is where to from now? Where to from here?
- 7.309 G: Good question.
- 7.310 K: I want to try and answer it from my perspective. I don't think it is a problem at all when anyone at any time disengage. It's his right. The point is it does affect the rest whether it's good or bad is not the question. Meaning, is it bad that it affects us? Well, is that affect on us bad? I don't think there's a good and bad. It's not a question of validating it. It is affecting us, that's it. But it is that person's choice. None of us can be attentive and there all the time. It is impossible. Unless you are very fit, spiritually... **[10:13]** You must be very fit for that, but...
- 7.311 J: You didn't answer F's question. Where to from now?
- 7.312 K: Where to from now? Agree that it's OK to disengage. We're not...
- 7.313 D: Yes, that's exactly what you're saying to each other.
- 7.314 Ay: Well, I don't know if I'm too happy with that because right before tea we all said we don't mind if people put stuff out there. We're investing our time in all of that and now if we suddenly start speaking about a personal issue and I see the people disengage I start thinking: "Hey guys, you said you were investing".
- 7.315 D: So you're basically saying if you are a part, be a part.
- 7.316 Ay: Ja, and maybe if you are going to disengage, walk out.
- 7.317 D: That was the one option but J also had another option by saying I'm disengaging or not interested. But basically what you're saying is just, that you're saying is if you are a part, then be a part. [To group:] What do you think of that?
[Silence]
- 7.318 P: Well, I can understand Ay's point. If somebody starts talking and everybody goes [leans forward] [Laughter]. I'd probably burst into tears or something so I can understand that ja. It's a very valid point. But also, it's difficult for everybody to be engaged all of the time. So maybe you should just say: "Sorry guys, I need a breather." [?]
- 7.319 R: I think you're just doing the same thing you did before [?]
[Laughter]

- 7.320 Ay: So you're not finding this valuable?
- 7.321 R: No, I mean it's, it was valuable in the first round of conversation but we're now in the second or third of the same thing. Uhm, I'm with kind of F, I think we've spoken about this but the same, so what next? But at the same time, because there's not a next thing that's on the agenda, there is not a next thing to move to so just literally wait for the next topic.
- 7.322 D: Or disengage.
- 7.323 R: Wait for the next topic and ja...
- 7.324 D: Or disengage?
- 7.325 R: Or disengage. Uhm, but I hear, for me, I'm just responding to what Ay was saying just now. I don't think even the time when we were chatting, yesterday morning was, I mean yesterday afternoon or this morning. Uhm, I think everybody respected the person who was talking enough to not have done it. Uhm, and I think that would hold true for, I think it's actually just these types of space-filler conversations. [Problem with tape **[12:41]**] that give everyone permission or not. [?] if you get bored it's what happens.
- 7.326 Ay: Again my question is, I think, well not a question, just a statement. I think we need those times and where people disengage in those times. It's maybe an energy restoring time for the...
- 7.327 N: [?]
- 7.328 K: I agree with that.
- 7.329 Ay: So the people who didn't contribute to the discussion at that time are going to contribute and that's fine.
- 7.330 J: But let's say that time is now over then what next?
- 7.331 Ay: OK, then...
- 7.332 D: That's F's question.
- 7.333 Ay: Yes.
- 7.334 J: OK, so let's say that time is now over.
[Laughter followed by silence]
- 7.335 H: I want to be honest. Uhm, I don't, I feel frustrated and bored with whatever now. Because we are sitting here between four grey walls and there's not much happening. There's no adrenaline. No energy. So whatever we are going to discuss next, uhm... [laughs] I'll find it difficult to really get excited.
- 7.336 K: Can we talk about you?
[Laughter]
- 7.337 J: That's exactly what I wanted to ask.
- 7.338 G: Are you asking [?]?
- 7.339 K: [?]
- 7.340 Ay: No, she's just letting us know.
[Silence]
- 7.341 D: So that's now very difficult?
- 7.342 A: Ja it's [?] not talk about me then. It's gonna be awkward...
[Laughter]
- 7.343 D and Ay: [Inaudible. Too much laughter]
- 7.344 Ay: I suggest we break for lunch.
[Silence]

- 7.345 G: Then we decide to do, we decide what to do next when we get back? Cause that still remains a question.
- 7.346 Ay: Or ja, we never really decided what to do in the next session but ja...
- 7.347 D: What says the rest? We have a...
- 7.348 H: [?] there's not a facilitator [?]. Can we play a game or something?
- 7.349 P: Ja no. just something to...as a distraction maybe?
- 7.350 R: I'm concerned with the need to foresight. I think silence is a perfectly legitimate period in here where you guys [D and G] [?] by writing something down. But silence is just silence. And I know it will make you [P] feel better to talk about something but...
- 7.351 P: No, I'm actually getting used to it now. I mean it's not [?] [laughs]
- 7.352 R: But also not uncomfortable silence where everybody's sitting racking their brains thinking: "Flip, what next?". Just...
- 7.353 K: Just be.
- 7.354 D: OK, so we can go for lunch, we can have silence, we can play a game. What is it that you want? What says the group?
[Silence]
- 7.355 Ay: Can I [?]?
- 7.356 D: In fact, you were both questioned. Are you getting an answer about what's next?
- 7.357 F: Uhm, I think I'll go with Ay. Breaking.
- 7.358 D: Anybody else? What shall we do next?
- 7.359 R: [?]
- 7.360 A: [?] all three of those.
- 7.361 Ay: Play a silent game at lunch.
[Laughter]
- 7.362 K: Jy's skerp.
- 7.363 J: R will struggle to do that.
- 7.364 G: OK. Take a break.
- 7.365 N: Watch me.
- 7.366 D: What time is it?
- 7.367 R: 12:30
- 7.368 D: Good.
- 7.369 Ay: Can we get lunch this early?
- 7.370 D: Yea, you'll be able to get lunch. I'm quite sure. Otherwise we'll just wait till one and then come back 13:30.
- 7.371 G: Half past. Hour break.
- 7.372 R: OK.

Session 8

- 8.1 G: Right, we're back in the group.
[People grunting and sighing]
- 8.2 G: Yes, it is a bit of a struggle at the moment.
[Silence]

- 8.3 G: What have we, we've established so far that the group, when it's personal it does not bore or burden. When it's theoretical and philosophical it bores some people some of the time. We've also established that the group can have value. We've, what else have we established?
[Silence]
- 8.4 G: Another thing that we've established is that we need people to be part of the group ...
- 8.5 K: I disagree with that one.
- 8.6 G: As a prerequisite ... OK?
- 8.7 K: I can only talk for myself. What I try to say now now is that it is affecting everybody around, it is affecting the rest of the group, but it's not a rule that they must participate, or how did you put it?
- 8.8 G: To be in the group, to be part of it, not to disengage.
- 8.9 K: No, for me it's OK to disengage. In fact, necessary and normal.
- 8.10 G: If I'm not mistaken, but you can correct me, is that it's OK to disengage when we do the theoretical or philosophical stuff.
- 8.11 K: Ja.
- 8.12 G: When it's personal, it's not OK to disengage.
- 8.13 K: [Nods] Out of respect for that person that's busy with his own...
- 8.14 G: So I think that's what we've established. And that's it so far, OK? And we have, you have committed for 3 days. We're half way. So what now? Where to from here?
[2:42]
[Silence]
[3:21]
- 8.15 G: Okay, what's happening now in the group?
- 8.16 H: Taking R's suggestion. [R laughs] Maintaining silence.
- 8.17 G: But is it a calm and relaxing silence?
- 8.18 H: Mmm.
- 8.19 P: Mmm, a comfortable silence. I'm quite quiet, I think that's an indication that it's quite comfortable.
- 8.20 N: Comfortable silence.
- 8.21 G: Not true
- 8.22 N: Yo, brother.
[Laughter]
- 8.23 G: That goes for me as well.
- 8.24 N: It's like, don't squeeze juice out of biltong, you know.
- 8.25 H: Are you saying not true for everyone?
- 8.26 G: Those who said it's a relaxing silence.
[Silence]
- 8.27 Ay: I suppose the thing is, do I say it's relaxing or not.
- 8.28 G: Sorry, I didn't get that?
- 8.29 Ay: Do I say it was relaxing or not, cause I found it very relaxing.
- 8.30 G: Is it?
- 8.31 Ay: And that wasn't bluffing.
- 8.32 N: [mumbles something]

- 8.33 D to N: You said?
- 8.34 N: I said join our club. The ones who are comfortable in the silence.
[Silence]
- 8.35 D: What says the rest?
[Silence]
- 8.36 A: I wasn't very comfortable, but I almost feel like something's broken and I want to fix it. I don't know if silence is connected with that.
- 8.37 D: Something's broken and you want to fix it or you want to have it fixed. Fix it.
- 8.38 N: What's broken?
- 8.39 A: I don't know.
[Silence]
- 8.40 S: It's as if the dynamic has changed though. I think we can all feel it and a lot of the discussion over lunch was as if everyone is sort-of started getting frustrated and irritated at the same time. Not just with the discussions, but with just being here. So it's as if there was a general sort of a drop in positive energy in the group.
[06:08]
- 8.41 G: Yes. And with a bit of, well, quite a bit of frustration.
- 8.42 S: Everything is sort of happening to everybody at the same time. More of this [?]
- 8.43 H: I think that's the dynamic of the group. We are all so invested in the group by now that we all pick up on the [?]. So, it's kind of inevitable that we all feel that way now.
- 8.44 R: I don't think that we are invested in the group, cause there's no debate, there's no discussion, there's no place for conflict here. This is only a place for support and agreement. There hasn't been, for those of you who know the [?] - I'm an 8. So I mean, I was joking with my wife in the car. I said: "I'm an 8 and I need debate!" And there's no debate. This is not a place for debate and discussion and disagreement. The dynamic is one of support and I think part of the - so I disagree with you in saying that we're all invested, I don't think we are. Because I think it's, uhm, there's a place where we - I suppose you and me now, we're chatting about this and we we're saying - I think there's a fear that there are certain types of actions that aren't allowed. One type of action that's not allowed is to say that this is a whole lot of nonsense. There is no natural leadership rising in this group, there is no sense of direction, there are 10 - not 12 because I'm excluding you guys either side of me - there are 10 people and nobody's prepared to sit down and say: "This is where we're moving toward". Everybody is sitting around and rather than taking collective ownership, we're all collectively taking hands off the steering wheel. And so I think we're actually just watching the boat go around in circles, waiting for somebody to grab the thing and say: "But that's not what we're doing as a group". And so the boat is carrying on in circles. As we're watching the handle bar and saying: "Isn't it wonderful how circles spin and how the waves splash over the [?], you know when boats breach they sometimes..." That's kind of what we're doing.
- 8.45 D: There are two types of opinions about where the group is currently at. One, the way R portrayed it and the other way H portrayed it. Some say we're invested, others say we're not invested. What says the rest?

[9:08]

- 8.46 S: Didn't we intentionally... we take ourselves where we want to be. So, if we have been in this support mode up to now, we could just as easily probably move into the debate mode.
- 8.47 R: But I don't think we're taking ourselves anywhere. I think we're going around in circles, because we're not directing ourselves.
- 8.48 D: OK, what do you say about that? He says we're going nowhere. Maybe J can say whether he thinks we were going nowhere this morning. Some of the others that felt [?] around J maybe also just say whether they perceived it to be nowhere.
- 8.49 J: I felt this morning, I didn't think it was going nowhere. I think R's picture is correct, we are sitting in this boat and it's going around and around and no one is willing to just take the steering wheel for a while. The reason that I'm not taking the steering wheel now is because I've taken it this morning, so I am deliberately not going to take the steering wheel now. Although I know that I can talk about this or put something on the table again that will get us talking, I won't do that. I will sit here until tomorrow afternoon. I've got great value. I'm not going to take the steering wheel now if no one else is willing to take the steering wheel. So, I'm enjoying the spin.
- 8.50 N: I think that's why I also said that I'm comfortable in the silence, because I've been like J.
- 8.51 H: I also don't disagree with R. I just think that the group is dictating to every individual that we're all now sitting watching the steering wheel. I don't know if that makes sense. It's not like I have a different opinion.
- 8.52 D: But you said you're invested and he said you're not invested. That was what I thought was different.
- 8.53 H: Ja, maybe invested was too strong a word. We're all part of this group by choice.
- [Silence]
- 8.54 K: I'm sorry, but I have invested.
- 8.55 D: You?
- 8.56 K: I have invested. So, sorry R.
- 8.57 R: That's cool.
- 8.58 K: I mean, just measuring my own energy levels again right now. I'm exhausted again. But I know it's because I've given a lot of myself, even though it is to make the boat spin. I don't think that was my choice. It happened because there's a group of dynamic. But I definitely invested. I just didn't sit there and, ja, not participate or not invest in it.

[12:26]

[Silence]

- 8.59 A: Do you think it's such a bad thing that the boat's spinning around and around? Do you think it's such a bad thing that nobody is taking leadership?
- 8.60 R: No, but I think it's about calling a spade a spade. And seeing if we left before lunch and coming to lunch saying there's frustration because that's what happened, well then the frustration is of our choice. We've chosen this state and we need to acknowledge that. Which means that the frustration is of our own

- making. And if this is where we want to be, then this is where we want to be. But then this is where we want to be. And what does that mean?
- 8.61 K: But to me that's the irony. I agree with you 100% but I think this is not exactly where we want to be. So that is the interesting situation that we're in. We created this, but yet this is not where we want to be and nobody is taking the lead to take us out of there. For me that would be the summary of where we are now.
- 8.62 G: That answers your question?
- 8.63 A: I don't know.
[14:00]
[Silence]
- 8.64 A: I just see so much of this as being a process and a part of... and I don't know, but just a part of what kinda needs to happen in a sense. So I don't think anyone should really take on leadership. I don't know if J took the leadership, I mean he was willing to present himself and be vulnerable. I guess what I think is that maybe some people need more structure, need like a goal to feel like they're accomplishing something and other people are maybe more relaxed and happy to just work within the process of what's happening and if they come out of it just having enjoyed the journey and possibly grasped that little pieces of gold everywhere and take that home with them, they might be happy with that. But other people need this goal to be striving for possibly and then they just don't see it getting closer to depending on what the goal is. Maybe that's what's difficult, I don't know.
[Silence]
- 8.65 A: So for me, I don't know of it was uncomfortable for people not having a topic to start off the day, but I quite like that.
- 8.66 Ay: I don't feel safe anymore.
- 8.67 K: Why?
- 8.68 Ay: Because of this conversation and the difference in opinion. So if I were to put something out there, would it be enough? I don't trust you with it.
- 8.69 S: I also felt the level of safety dropped. It wasn't because of not trusting. It was more, if I were to put something out there now it would seem artificial, just to get the things started again. So, it's as if now it's no longer a natural progression. It would now be...
- 8.70 K: Forced?
- 8.71 P: Forced.
- 8.72 S: Yes.
- 8.73 J: Hold on, Ay, you say you don't trust us, what don't you trust? Us? Do you trust me? I'm part of us.
[Ay shifts chair inwards]
- 8.74 Ay: It wasn't a personal attack or an individual attacking an individual. It was saying, that if I now put out something that I wanted your advice on, or just contribute to a personal level discussion, I'm not confident that it would be...something along the lines of what S was saying...that it would be a slightly manufactured and the respect for when I'm speaking and putting my opinion in will be strained. So, something like that.

- 8.75 P: I think maybe also, and please don't ask me to say exactly what I mean, cause I can't remember, but there have been certain comments that lead you to believe that if you were to discuss something now, a few people wouldn't be listening. A few people wouldn't be interested and a few people would just be totally frustrated with it. So [?] **[END TAPE7PART1][START TAPE7PART2]** Because now you really feel like you'd be burdening, you know, as opposed to, that energy isn't there, the enthusiasm and things like that aren't there. So you feel like you're just going to bore people or you're just going to burden them with what you have to say. And I don't know if anybody else feels that way, but that's the impression I'm getting. You know, just from some of the side comments that have been said in the last couple of hours. Now I mean I know that a lot of people at some stage have said: "Well thanks for the heads up. Now I know to keep quiet." If I'm not mistaken A said that at one point. You know, ja. There was somebody else as well that said: "Look, at least now I know." You know I mean and it's those comments that get you thinking: "Well, it's not worth it."
[0:48]
- 8.76 K: Why am I called a spade a spade? I agree with what you say [pointing to P] and I agree with what you say [pointing to Ay] and with what you say [pointing to S or A]. But to be really honest, if I have to go now through the room and think to myself, well if I have to put something out there, will it be OK with him [pointing to Ay] and I think yes, [points to F] yes, [points to J] yes, [points to P] yes, [points to G] yes, [points to R] no. [R shrugs]. I don't know why I experience you as a judge or as a ... so for me that's where my energy circle is broken. Yes, yes, yes, yes [pointing to remaining people in group].
- 8.77 F: Perhaps in that case can... in... the matter of the fact that Ay does not trust the group. You [K] have put whatever...
- 8.78 R: Just to, guys I'm comfortable with what with what ...
- 8.79 F: Ja, no, no...
- 8.80 R: ...with what's just been said, so it's not an issue.
- 8.81 F: But you have the energy, you said the energy what? [to K] It breaks when it gets there...
- 8.82 K: ...breaks...judge.
- 8.83 F: And please hear my heart here. I just want to answer J's question. The question that J posed in the morning. Is there a correlation between the way your father raises you and what, I don't know anymore the question?
- 8.84 J: Your willingness to be authentic?
- 8.85 F: OK. I just want to answer that, giving a personal example and I don't know why I want to do that. I don't know if I need help from you. I don't think I need help from you, but you're welcome to just comment if you've got any. And you don't have to be interested really.
[Laughter]
[2:48]
- 8.86 F: Honestly, because ja, for me it does not matter. Is that OK? Is it OK? You really don't have to be interested. I mean, those that are tired. So I'd like to answer your question, J, because I think I've sort-of walked that journey and I've looked at the impact that my father has had on me throughout my life. If I can just

give you a bit of a personal history. I'm the 3rd born in a family of 4 kids. I've got an elder sister, an elder brother and then I'm the 3rd born and I've got a younger sister. And in my culture what happens is: if you are the youngest born you sort-of become the heir of, you know you are going to inherit everything that your dad has. Not that I care about inheriting, he has nothing so there's nothing to inherit. So you sort-of get protected from that perspective because you are the king of that family. And so I remember the 1st few years of my life, it was more like that, very exciting. I was, I'm 5 years older than my younger sister, so for 5 years I was the man. And you know I was very much protected and I was convinced, and I know even today, that my parents really love me, deeply. But you know something happened, because my mother was unemployed and when I was about 5, no I think I was 6/7 my mother got a job. So, my older brother and my sister were at a boarding school at the time, so I was the only child. Now my mother gets employed and I suppose they were not in a good financial position to have someone full time to look after me, so what they did - like any normal black family would, is they took me to my grandmother. My grandmother lived about 200km away. And that had a huge impact on me, because all of a sudden I felt like, oh there I am... and remember I had not known my grandmother that much, I mean I'd seen her before, but I had not really known her. I was young to even comprehend the fact that she was my grandmother. [05:48] And so there I was with this complete stranger and 200km away in a rural place, no telephone, no nothing and I felt like I was dumped. But at that time it did not make sense to me, I mean I did not feel like I was dumped at the time, but now that I think about it, it felt that way. I felt like I was abandoned, you know. And I think from that time I started having this thing that mmm, you know, I'm not really loved in this family. Here are my parents that meant so much to me and now they dump me at this total stranger's place. OK, and when I go to my grandmother's place there were 3 older cousins and 3 older male cousins and 3 younger female cousins. So I was somewhere in the middle. I was not too old to be given tasks, to be sent to the shops, to do stuff. Yet, I was not too young to get the privileges that my younger cousins got. So I was somewhere in the middle, I mean, you know. It took about, it was about 100km to town and what would happen is, the biggest reward was going to town and I never went to town because I did nothing, you know. It was the younger ones who were spoilt, you know, they would spoil them by taking them on a trip to town and the older ones worked hard to earn the right to go to town. I had nothing to do, so I was there. And right there I started feeling that, you know, I'm not loved. And I think that's when my insecurities started seeping in, because I just felt like, you know, maybe I'm insignificant here. And from I mean, I'd never been a brilliant student at that time at school and from that time I invested my time and energy in school projects. I mean I started doing so well and that was my life. And in high school, I mean I'm not sporty, but I started playing sports and I played tennis. And I played very well, I mean I played tennis very well and I won a few competitions. I started doing well at school and that became my identity. My identity was invested in work and attaining good marks and doing this and that. And then, then, ja... that's how I grew up and I went to boarding school. Boarding school was great. But I got there, you know and at the

time I think, I think, my father had sort of relinquished the responsibility to first to my grandparents and second now to the boarding master in boarding school. [9:00] And you know that just compounded how I felt already. And at the time I just felt like, OK this guy does not care about me and it's fine. But at the same time I was so insecure and the way I dealt with my insecurity was through achievement. It was through school. I made sure that I performed well at school. I was well behaved. I mean I was never really... nobody complained about me. I was not the sort of kid that the teacher would complain about. I sat well in class, did not make noise, I did not run around. Maybe cause I wanted, I just felt like the way I'm going to get through in life is being a good boy, being an achiever. And I never fought with anybody, I never did anything strange really. There were a few times that I absconded from school and each time I got caught, I would be the one that would apologize. Other kids would say: No, we were here, we were here the whole time because they used to take roll call. We were here the whole time, or we were studying in the library. I was always the one coming and saying: "Yes, I made a mistake, I apologize." And this and that. And so teachers liked that, the fact that I could, you know, own my wrongdoings and I could apologize. And so that became my identity really. And then my father started drinking and all that and we just sort of drifted apart. And I think...you know, I, I... well I went to university and I just got tired of achieving. I just got tired of working hard and I just felt like it was time for me to be more spontaneous, not to calculate all the time, not to... ja, just to be and if I make a mistake, that's a mistake. If I step on somebody else's toe, so be it. And I started making a lot of mistakes. I attempted drinking just to know when, attempted smoking just to know when again. But you know, where I'm at today, I'm I'm I'm yeah I'm, I can't say I'm at peace, but I'm walking the path and I'm not as insecure as I used to feel, I feel better about myself, a lot better than I ever did in my life. And you know, my dad and I, I mean just this weekend I was saying to J, I went home and for the 1st time we were just talking about, well he asked me, well I was talking to him about my plans you know what was happening, and he asked me, so when are you getting married? You know? And this was the 1st time that my father and I sat for more than an hour talking about me. And initially my reaction was: "You know, it's none of your business." But later I just thought to myself, you know, let me tell you the truth. I just said to him: "Well, whether or not I get married I mean, I do not feel I'll be complete when I get married, I feel complete as it is right now." We had such a great talk and basically what I said to him is that whether I get married or not, I still feel good about who I am and my feeling good is not going to depend on whether I stay single or married. And ja, and he was giving me advice, this and that. It feels great but even before that, there's been times when I really told him what hurt me about what he did. I remember at boarding school when he'd forget me on the last day of school and I'll be there at 4 'o clock when other boys had left at 10. Things like those, and I mean it was humiliating to just stay there and there were times that the boarding master would come specifically to me and ask me: "Will your father fetch you at 10 or at 4?" You know things like those because it was a known fact that chances of me leaving late or even sleeping over and being fetched the following day were very, very high. So, you

know, I've had some time to speak to my dad about all these things. And where I'm at today, I really don't feel angry towards him and at the same time I can't justify what he's done. But at the same time, I don't have any grudge towards him. Where I'm at is, like R said this morning, I can't hold my father accountable for the things that I don't achieve or the things that go wrong in my life. I lead my life and I'm pretty much happy.

8.87 [K or S]: Ja, that's it.

8.88 F: That's it.

[14:13]

[Silence]

8.89 F: You can ask me questions if you've got any.

8.90 P: It's a bit of a wow moment.

8.91 K: Ja, thank you for the story.

8.92 N: I'm glad you guys said that cause I was thinking: "Do you want a hug?"

8.93 F: No, I don't want a hug, no...

8.94 J: But F how does that answer my question from this morning?

8.95 F: I think my answer would be, there's a great correlation. Because for me I think what I wanted was, for my... I mean I know that my dad has always been part of me, part of my achievements, but I think I would have loved... my father is a church minister by the way. And although I don't go to his church anymore, but he, when he preaches he talks about, he loves talking about his kids. And I know he mentions my name quite a bit, because my mother tells me. So, I wish he had come to me and told me how proud he was of me. I wish he had just, you know I just wanted to spend time with my dad, but he just was too busy doing other stuff. So I feel if my dad had said to me something to the effect that you're my son and I love you, I would not have been insecure. I don't think anybody's opinion would have matter, because for me being, being important to my dad, I think would have been enough. I think I would have achieved a lot more than I have right now. Because I think my insecurity stopped me from taking risks and it's only now that I've started taking risks. And I get validation from that, you know? Venturing on my own [?] All these things are sort of validated me. The more risks I take, the more validated I feel, because I'm only now starting to realize what I can do. And now I'm not shy about what I'm good at, you know. If it fails, it fails. It's not, it fails because F, you're bad. I feel that if my dad had said all these good and nice things about me. If I'd heard from him then I would have been a much more confident person than I am today. Ja, so I think there is a correlation.

[17:00]

8.96 D: J?

8.97 J: You do come over as a very confident person. I can't really imagine... you more confident.

8.98 F: [Laughs] Thank you.

8.99 J: [Well, I think you can always become more confident.?] You come across as: you're in control of yourself and almost at peace with your dark side...

[Laughter]

8.100 J: ...if you have one. As you say that I'm wondering: "How can one prevent doing the same things to your children?"

[END TAPE7PART2][START TAPE7PART3]

- 8.101 F: Obviously, J, I think there's a whole lot of things that fathers can do. But also, I think I looked at my world. I mean, some of the things were not intentionally done. I understand perfectly why I was taken to be with my grandparents. But you know the way I internalized it was, and especially because it was not communicated to me, but at the same time I forgive my parents because they thought: "He's just way too young". And I see it being done in black families, so that's the norm, it's not something that they're going to get permission from you so to speak. Kids are being raised by their grandparents, you know and ah... but I wish they'd communicated that to me. I did not understand why I went from being *the* man to being nobody. I was the centre of attention there. It was only me, my dad, my mum and the dogs. And there I was with what, 6 other kids and yet I was in the middle and a nobody. And also there, I mean I understand my grandmother was taking care of the younger ones because I looked a bit more independent at that stage. But the way I internalized it at that point was: "Mmm, I'm being ignored, I'm not important, nobody gives me attention, or whatever." And I think the way parents could, dads could do value, I suppose just reminding their kids, especially their boys. Because I feel my dad could have given me that identity. You know there was a time that, I'm 31 this year and I think only last year or 2 years ago, I did consider myself a man. Not that I considered myself a woman, but it felt all the time that I was this little boy and if somebody would have walked in here and said: "All the men stand up." I would have had so much difficulty standing up and saying: "I'm a man." But now I mean I really feel like a man. I don't have any doubt about that. I feel it was my dad's duty to say: "You're the man. You're my boy."
- 8.102 R: F, can I ask a question? Feel free to say that you don't want to answer it. So it's one of those things that we spoke about yesterday. In talking to your dad about the way you felt and raising these issues like getting left behind at school late and all those things. What were you hoping to achieve in bringing those up with your dad? Did you want an apology, did you want him to change, did you want to just have a conversation, did you want, was that your way of hurting him back?
- 8.103 F: No.
[03:06]
- 8.104 R: What did you want to achieve? The reason I say that is because there are, I mean I know there are conversations that I need to have, which I'm choosing not to have. And so first of all I would have thought the courage [?]. I just want to find out what it was that you wanted to achieve in doing it?
- 8.105 F: I think for me, R, at that time I'd concluded to myself that, this is my dad, I love my dad and my dad has always been my hero and he still is regardless of the fact that you know, he's an alcoholic and all that, he's still, he's my hero. And there are certain things that I want to do exactly the way he does them. But at that time I was not expecting anything really. I was not expecting an apology. Perhaps on a subconscious level, I don't know. But at that time it was like, I'm just going to tell him. If he apologizes he would have, if he doesn't, he doesn't. I don't care but I just want him to know how he's impacted on me throughout the years. And

fortunately he apologized and it looked very genuine to me. But I don't think I wanted to hurt him back and I don't think I was expecting an apology. It was like hey you know just tell him and see what he does with it. But at the same time I made a conscious decision that, regardless of how he reacts, I'll still consider him my hero, you know because, well some of the things I did not tell you is, when I was young I used to sit in the front seat in church and I used to admire this man speak and I wanted to be exactly like him. And this is the picture that is always with me. And he used to tell me when I was young, before I moved, he used to tell me that I can't wait for the day that you become a minister as well, so I'll sit in the front seat where you always sit and you'll preach to me. And ja, and and and, that's the only thing that came close to my dad telling me that he was proud of me. The next time that he did was when I told him that, when I said to him you know this is what happened and this is how it impacted on me and he just apologized and said to me "I'm proud of you." [Pause] Enough of me [?]

8.106 J: How did you start that conversation?

8.107 F: Well, I just started reading books and they did not help. You know it was self-help. Because somehow...

[laughter]

[5:55]

8.108 F: Although I'm a clinical psychologist, well rated as a clinical psychologist, it was hard for me to consult another psychologist and sit on the other side and say you know this is my struggle. And so I thought you know, let me take self-help books and that's when I got into philosophy and I got very disillusioned with the energy and stuff. [Laughter] Until I saw a friend of mine at church and he was very clever and strategic in the way that he, he's a psychologist, and the way I did it is, I took him out, because I did not want us to sit and have this [?] conversation. And what he did is, well, he just took it up on himself that he would have regular coffee with me, you know, once a week. And those were sessions. And before I knew it he was just, we were just, ja, having this session, but in a coffee bar or something. And he helped me a great deal with a whole lot of stuff. I mean, there was a time that I decided, let me just come and see you at your office and let's stop this coffee thing. So that's how it all started. But he was not like writing notes and...

8.109 J: But that conversation with your dad where you told him how you felt. How did that ...

8.110 F: You know at that time I think my dad was also feeling the pinch because he'd, it was hard for me to be in the same room with him. And I could see he was reaching out to me but you know he'd come to watch TV with me and I'd stand up and make myself coffee and he would walk out and I'd come back watch TV. We would never be together. If, for example, his car broke down and he wanted me to take him somewhere, I'd rather lend him the car than take him there, you know things like that. But I avoided every opportunity to be with him. Until one day I just, it was no plan, I just, we were just sitting and I just said 'Dad, do you remember what happened when I was', you know, I started with the school stuff. Do you remember this and this and that's how it started. But it was not planned, because I think, I still had the good boy image at that time and if I'd planned it, I

think I felt, you know I was fearful of the fact that I think it's gonna hurt him and therefore he's not going to think that I'm a good person. You know I had to just say [?] going to it and get over and done with it and that's how it happened. But I think at that time he was ready, he just did not know how to speak to me as well, because I could see his movements. He was always chasing after me and I was always running away.

[09:05]

- 8.111 P: F, I think that it takes an amazing strong person to get from where you were to where you are now. Cause I would never say, insecurity is just something I don't associate with you at all. But what helped to banish the insecurity? Was it the conversations with your dad or ...
- 8.112 F: I think one of the things that, I mean right now J has just said something very positive about me. In the past I would never have taken that, I would have... everything, if somebody said to me thanks, I felt like I could just say: "No, thanks to you." I just felt so unworthy and then somebody said something good about me I just felt like OK that's flattery. I just felt I was unworthy of any positive stuff and although I tried to convince myself that OK, yes I'm good, there was a loud voice inside my head that would keep saying, no, no, no, no they're just saying this to make you feel good. And I think I started just making a conscious decision that if somebody says something positive about me, even if I do not believe it, that I would try to act on it until it became a reality for me.
- 8.113 K: So it's much about changing you self-thought?
- 8.114 P: Ja.
- 8.115 F: Yeah definitely. Definitely.
[Silence]
- 8.116 K: Sjoe.
- 8.117 F: And guys I am not say I feel confident all the time. There's a lot of time that I really feel insecure about this and that. But I think what I find myself doing more these days is, I don't let that paralyze me like I use to do in the past, you know? I still feel I'm not gonna do this or you know I can't do this but you know I'm just going to go ahead and do it anyway.
- 8.118 N: So you're saying it's a process?
- 8.119 F: It is a process, yes.
- 8.120 G: Have done that? In the past day and a half?
- 8.121 F: Sorry?
- 8.122 G: Well, let me ask you: what you have given us now, how did that affect your engagement in the group?
- 8.123 F: That's a very hard question. Uhm, I suppose to some extent it has, well that does affect the way I relate to the group. Uhm, but G, I do not calculate as much, I do not calculate what I say as much as I used to. In the past it would be, it would take proper planning in my head: Will that come across the way I want it to? Will they love what I say? Will it make sense to them? But I don't find myself doing that a lot more. Ja, I think in the last few months I've hurt a lot of people more than I've ever done in my life because I just sometimes say stop. I mean for me even small things like Christmas messages, you know, best wishes... they irritate me. I really don't like those SMSes. They really, really irritate me but in the past

you know, I would respond back. I mean, this year I got about 18 and I didn't respond to any. Nothing. And I just thought, I don't care if it offends anybody. So be it but, I'm not going to do it for the sake of doing it. You know I'm not going to respond because [they're upset at?] me and for me it was such a liberating experience to know that I can choose to send them SMSes or not to and I still feel great. So it's, ja it's, I mean having a lot more spontaneous [?] more and more and more.

[13:19]

8.124 J: What's interesting for me is that, of course, while you speak I am listening to different kind of [fear?] also relating back to what we spoke about this morning but it's almost as if, whatever happens to you when you are a child, the way in which, of course when you are a child, it's your father's responsibility, that relationship and what happens there and it's very out of your control when you are very small and whatever happens there, you can't choose, whatever insecurities flow from that, you can't choose, but you won't be at a place where you can feel so grounded or connected or...well, connected is the wrong word but, confident if you don't take control of whatever insecurities arose there. Uhm, ja...

8.125 F: I mean J, I wish I can tell you about you know, the great time that we had with my dad. You know, the time my dad came to pick me up in a limo... this and that, all those rules and stories but I've got none, I've got none and for me that's just part of my history. The same way that some of you tell me about the great things that they've had with their dad, the same way that I'll tell you the not so great things I've had with my dad. For me I've really made peace with that [?] but it is my story, it is my history and I'm... [?] I'm proud of it. I'm proud of it because otherwise I will not be sitting here telling you what I'm telling you. I really wish I could tell you know about the car that my dad bought me when I turned 18, you know, the great time [?] and for me that's just my inheritance.

[Silence]

8.126 A: Going back to your question, what did, cause you also said maybe for a girl it would be their mum, but maybe not. I mean, maybe a part of it really does play a very significant role in your... self-esteem.

[16:03]

8.127 J: I was wondering about that this morning actually as I drove here. I was thinking about this father-son thing whether there is... and then to test it I thought well, is it the same thing with a girl and her mother or... I don't know but it just feels to me as if there's some [gestures] magical thing to a boy and his dad. And perhaps it's just because I'm an example of one and an example too of the friend I talked to yesterday and [?] so that's the way I refer to it, I'm not sure... If I think about my relationship with my mum, it's just not too complicated at all. It's much, it's easy, it's, it's ja...

8.128 P: I think the father-daughter relationship is pretty much the same cause thinking about it now, when I was younger I'd do things for my dad's approval, not necessarily my mom's. It almost felt like I always had my mom's approval. It's my father I had to impress. [Laughs] You know, that sort of thing, I mean... So I think that the father-daughter thing is the same. I mean ja, guys?

- 8.129 N: There could only be one king in the castle, so the mother does not [?] ever, with the guy or the girl. The king should. She's always the queen, the princess, the supporter. She has that role, that affectionate role to the child. So even with the daughters the dad still plays that, so you al...you always want the nod from the king. You want the nod from the dad.
[Group agrees]
- 8.130 K: It's a good metaphor.
[Silence]
- 8.131 H: I don't know, uhm... if I would have had bad marks at school I would always **[END TAPE7PART3][START TAPE7PART4]** go to my dad first. Cause I knew he would support me.
- 8.132 N: So you got a nod from the king?
- 8.133 H: But if it was bad marks he would kind of step in between me and my mom uhm, and kind of...
- 8.134 K: So your mom was the king? Is that what you're saying?
[Laughter]
- 8.135 H: My moms, like I said yesterday, my moms a control freak so you could never impress her in any way. So my dad was more the supporter, to me. I always had his support. And I was never able to impress my mother. [?]
- 8.136 P: See, this is a bit of a... now I'm confused. [Laughs] Cause thinking about it now if I needed anything, if I wanted anything I'd go to my dad, not my mom. If I wanted to sleep over at a friend's place, I'd go to my dad, not my mom cause she'd probably say no. But it's also my dad's approval that I looked for. So it's a bit of a weird thing. [Mumbles something]
[Silence]
- 8.137 Ay: I didn't share that experience with the king. My mom was the king, not the queen.
- 8.138 K: But your dad is not the king?
[Laughter]
- 8.139 Ay: I don't know how to say it. [?]
[Silence]
- 8.140 F: You know what, I read a book, what the author says is that you know, when you are an infant, you know, your mum gives you all these things, you know, the love... Well it starts in her womb right? And you know, she takes care of you and the first contact that you have is with your mum. But there comes a time in your life when your mum sort of releases you. Not literally but sort of releases you to the dad. And sometimes when you'll want your dad, you find nobody there. And you sort of, that's when you internalize and sort of start picking things from your environment and those things sort of own your identity.
- 8.141 Ay: You're looking at me so I'm assuming your saying that it's applicable to me, the theory?
- 8.142 F: Well, I'm saying consider it. Yes, because uhm, sometimes dads are not as active as they're supposed to be. Uhm, ja... and it goes either way. Sometimes mums are not able to love their kids for whatever reasons. The way they could or the way they're supposed to.
- 8.143 Ay: Can I qualify? Alright.

[3:02]

- 8.144 Ay: I think, in my experience, that relationships with my dad and my mom is dependent on their relationship. Why I say that is cause there's been a monumental shift in our parents' relationship, through my lifetime. Up until I was the age of 10, my dad was the king. He was the breadwinner, my mom was the nurturer. My mom was the one that I went to if I was crying. My dad was the one I went to if I was proud or something like that. Uhm, my dad was the one that I waited for to come home. And I knew five o'clock was that time. And I'd know he'd have a sweet. My mom was not an affective disciplinarian but when my dad was home, heaven help me. [Laughter] And when my dad was about to get home then... And then, that was round about the time that my younger sister was born and my mom was just basically a full-time mom. I think she realized very early on that she wasn't the sort of woman who could dedicate herself to childbearing and not stimulate her mind and she had a passion from early on in her life to become a psychologist. So she started part-time studying through UNISA while raising myself and my two sisters. And then through the course of that she found some part-time work as well, once we were old enough to walk home from school and make ourselves lunch and that sort of thing. And, even though I wasn't aware of it at the time, I think it's when the shift started to happen in my, in my parents. Because I knew my dad didn't finish matric. He got up to standard eight and then went into the trade and became a tradesman. And my mum started becoming intellectually liberated and she discovered that she was quite bright, very bright. And that the psychology thing was like really what she wanted to do. But because it was part-time studies and she didn't want to go full-time it took her six years to get her BA and then like another three to get her honours. In that nine years, ja, it was nine years, there was a monumental shift in my parents' relationship. My dad all of the sudden, he never got the words out of him but I could see that he felt undermined, as the head of the house. Intellectually. And my mom just had this liberation. And it wasn't a strange occurrence to have my mom talking circles around my dad around an issue. And he got very intimidated by the psychology side and I think that was the label he put in that bit of the [relation?] and why he was feeling uncomfortable. He said the psychology thing was just not good. [pause] It wasn't, I wasn't acutely aware of it but not... so then, then my mom finished her Honours and there was a lot of strain around the house because my dad was actually paying for her studies. My dad's company at that time actually gave my mom the bursary for her studies. It was just part of the education fund at that point. And things sort of ticked over while these changes were happening and my parents were building a nice house, like a nice home with a [?] and a garden and it really gave us a nice space to play but until my mom enrolled for her Masters and decided that she was going to give it a shot, that she was going to become a psychologist like she dreamed of. And that's when the shit hit the fan. But it took a few years, you know. It took my mom four years to be accepted into her Masters class. And she [?] and that's when like I just wondered what the hell they were doing at varsity every day with my mom cause she'd come back a different person. And she'd probably [speak?] in groups like this. [Laughter] [?] And, uhm...

[7:51]

8.145 A: Sorry Ay, how old were you now?

8.146 Ay: Okay. My mom graduated with Masters when I was in matric.

8.147 A: Okay.

8.148 Ay: So these were my high school years.

8.149 K: Sensitive times.

8.150 Ay: Ja. And then also adding into that, just personally from my side, as a kid we had very skew buck teeth. I was very insecure at that time [?]. And then I suppose all through that time, even though I didn't notice it I was relating to my parents differently because they were relating to each other differently. The arguments between my mom and dad were vicious. Not physically abusive but vicious in the sense that I saw a powerful, strong, read woman become a submissive, uhm... ja, submissive. Who reckoned because he didn't get through standard nine and ten he had no ability to win an argument on an intellectual. That's when my mom started arguing a lot more on an intellectual level and the emotional stuff got left behind. My dad, my dad as I now see it, he's a very emotional guy. Very, very emotional. And when I say that I don't mean he'll burst into tears like that [snaps fingers] but he operates life on an emotional level. He's in touch with how people are feeling, what people are wanting and wanting to look after, to care for. And my mom became this academic. She knew that. And [pause] the writing was on the wall, I suppose, that my parents were gonna get divorced at that stage. Tried to ignore it but the strange thing that happened at that time is that I wanted to become a civil engineer. I was passionate about it, bridges, roads, that kind of stuff. My maths was shocking, terribly shocking. My science was shocking but I wanted to go into civil engineering. Until my mom got [forwards?] by [?] and I read it in standard nine, the whole thing. [Laughs while talking. Words inaudible] That was stupid. But, that's when I discovered that the psychology route was something significant for me. And in verbalising that in standard nine, to my parents that I didn't want to enrol at varsity [?] for civil engineering for a whole bunch of rational reasons but then there's a lot of emotional things, that I wanted to become a psychologist. That for my dad even though I don't know, I suspect was a bit of a betrayal. A son that he was proud of, very proud of cause he just operates like that, you know he's proud of his kids, now siding with his mom in terms of career profession.

[10:55] And I think also at that time I realised that I could also talk circles around my dad, if I wanted to. Uhm, I went and studied psychology at varsity. I probably, three years later... three to four years later that's when, in that time my dad was retrenched, my mom had started her own practise already. Practise was thriving, my dad didn't really earn money. My dad was no longer the breadwinner. So you can almost imagine like, you know, he's got a few strikes against him. He was pretty down and out. So, he started his own business, doing what he was passionate about so that was quite liberating for him but then got caught up in family, sort of family business and then [?] didn't help him at all. It got to a point where my folks were just fighting non-stop. And I was avoiding it. I really was. I could sense, you know you sort of sense the weather, you know on a certain morning, and I'd know to steer clear of the house. They bought me a car so I could do that. I stayed very distant from the house. I stayed very distant. [Pause]

But uhm, parents got divorced... came to the agreement, my mom was really [?] , my dad wasn't the sort of partner she wanted: supporting, [?]. My dad decided that he didn't want to be with this intellectual monster, literally. And it put me in a difficult position that my dad would try and like, try and reconcile with me in a sense and say: "What is happening with your mom?" And meanwhile I was actually... and my mom would come to me and say: "What's happening with your dad?" but I was actually stuck in the middle. So I was the son you know, I was like the next person to become [?] "Hello [TA?]!" and I'm the parent trying to moderate the relationship between the kids. And I, jis, I broke it out and told them to fuck off. Go and stitch themselves, literally. I was so fed up with them. And...

8.151 A: How old were you?

[13:21]

8.152 Ay: That was... I was 22, 23 so fairly recently in my [?] 26 years. Uhm, and then the strangest thing happened. My dad moved down to Durban cause he was forced to go find business somewhere else and he stayed down there for a year and then actually moved back into the same house with my mom.

8.153 Ay to P: [?] check you..,

8.154 P: [Laughs] I didn't expect it, I'm sorry.

[Laughter]

8.155 Ay: Ah no, it's okay.

8.156 P: It's just, it caught me off guard.

8.157 Ay: And then for the last couple of years they've been living together. Still divorced, separate rooms. Getting on better than they have got on in their entire lives as a ma... as a couple. They still call each other "Dear". They still go to the theatre together. Whether they shag or not I don't know. [Laughter] I don't wanna know.

8.158 P: Neither do we.

[Laughter]

8.159 K: And how do you feel about them living together again?

8.160 N: [Covers head with jacket and says something inaudible]

[Laughter]

8.161 Ay: Is that too much? Uhm, about your question, I'm quite happy with it cause when they... through the whole process of them getting divorced I got very, very proactively aggressive with them in terms of what I wanted to hear about what their relationship was about, what I didn't want to hear, what they had to sort out themselves and what they had to keep away from me and my sisters. My sisters were in an unfortunate position cause they couldn't leave the house. [?] age where they needed transport. They were stuck at home. I said to them: "Look, whatever works the best. If your gonna get on better living together, not being married, I'm all for that." And it worked out that way. But just to go back to what your saying about the king and queen. My mom is the one that I still look to for approval. It's her approval that matters most to me out of my mom and my dad. [Pause] My dad is in a very similar situation to like J with the [technology?] thing when I say to him, when I say to him, when I tell him what I do now, he just doesn't like connect, you can see the connection doesn't happen, you know. Uhm... but my

mom is a critical psychologist and she treats all her relationships that way. So much so that my youngest sister, [sister's name], who is now at varsity has vowed never to become a psychologist, out of this experience. But she'd be the best psychologist on the planet! Just by her nature I can see it. She's like fighting this thing. She enrolled in first year of [?] and actually thoroughly enjoyed it but dropped it just to prove the point to my mom. That she's [?].

[16:23]

- 8.162 N: What does she do?
- 8.163 Ay: She's now doing BSc in microbiology.
- 8.164 N: Ooph...
- 8.165 [?]: Interesting.
- 8.166 Ay: But ja, like my mom is the king. And my dad...
- 8.167 K: I'm just wondering, obviously, well what I hear is we identify sometimes with the queen, sometimes with the king. But you had a king and then a queen and then a king and then, you know so...
- 8.168 Ay: To cut a long story short, why I've taken so much of your invested time, thanks, is to tell you there's been that role reversal in my life.
- 8.169 K: And did you find that you first identified with your dad and then with your mom? [Pause] I assume you identified with your mom first?
- 8.170 Ay: In like choosing a favourite parent? Or...?
- 8.171 K: [?]
- 8.172 [S?]: Seeking approval.
- 8.173 N: Getting a nod.
- 8.174 K: Ja, which doesn't really, necessarily, mean identify... Let's just leave it [?]
- 8.175 Ay: [?] was my dad.
- 8.176 K: First your dad...
- 8.177 Ay: Yeah...
- 8.178 K: ... and then your mom.
[Silence]
- 8.179 N: And I think all I was saying and your agreeing with it is that there can only be one king.
- 8.180 Ay: At a time...
- 8.181 N: Ja, in a castle. Sometimes the woman happens to be the king or the, you know, acting in a dad's role. So all I'm saying, the masculine or the dad's role **[END TAPE7PART4][START TAPE7PART5]** the [?]. You always want a nod from that. The king. [Silence] Sometimes the mom takes that [?]
- 8.182 Ay: I think I look for approval for different reasons. [Pause] And I don't even know [?] uhm... well maybe that's a question I can put to the group is, what are we looking for when we look for approval? From the parents? [To F] You used the word 'validation'. [Pause] I think I resonate with that word, in terms of what I look for for approval. What does everyone else think?
[Silence]
- 8.183 Ay: And I don't ask this question to take the light off of me now. I'm just, I want to validate what I look for in approval, to sound [?].
- 8.184 S: I also resonate with the validation. It's as if being, or having it validated that you are good enough, I think.

- 8.185 J: Ja...
- 8.186 S: Acceptance type of thing...
- 8.187 J: ...or that you're okay. It's okay. Not that you're good or bad. You're just okay.
- 8.188 S: Or it may also be something about unconditional love. You know like, cause what I in my experience with my father. I grew up in a very traditional home. My father was definitely the king and my mother referred everything to him. And he was very performance driven. You know, as I said yesterday, if I got five distinctions, why wasn't it six? If it was 90%, why wasn't it 95. So he was always sort of moving the goalpost. And I think that is, you tend to get that sense that you're never going to be good enough and that carries through in your life. So I think that sort of, that even if you don't get the six distinctions, that it's still okay. So there's, it's almost as if there's a condition on his love. You know as long as you meet his expectations he will love you, otherwise he won't which is irrational but I think where... it's almost as if you want to know that even if you don't meet the expectations it's still okay.
- 8.189 G: [?]
- 8.190 R: I also think that that parental approval is your first experience of safety. Because when you're a toddler, you want to jump off the table and you say: "Daddy look at me jump!" and dad says: "Come on go, you can do it!" and you jump and you get caught and you go... and next time you come running you don't even say "Daddy, catch me". You jump and dad's got to be there becau... but that approval was just a safety thing that gave you the safety to know that the decision you're about to take is going to be okay. And that's... but I think, I don't know, I'm just guessing that maybe part of asking for that approval, even later on in life is not just looking for the affirmation in that but also relying on the safety factor component of it as well that is a person who's approval provides a safety net. Uhm, who, that other people's approval doesn't necessarily provide.
- [03:40]**
- 8.191 G: Uhm, I want to ask you: after what you've presented, do you feel validated?
- 8.192 Ay: Now in the group?
- 8.193 G: Ja.
[Silence]
- 8.194 G: Or approved or accepted or different...?
[Silence]
- 8.195 Ay: [?] internal. I'm glad I've done it.
- 8.196 D: Glad like in? You said you're glad that you've done it. Like in?
[Silence]
- 8.197 Ay: Well, I mean, I've been asking myself when my turn is, you know. So yeah.
[Silence]
- 8.198 Ay to D: You've still got that consternation look on your face. [Laughter] Like "I don't quite believe you."
- 8.199 K: Half an hour or so ago you said you don't trust us and all of the sudden you go on making [?]...
- 8.200 Ay: Ja, you sneaky buggers.
[Laughter]

- 8.201 Ay: No, I think what changed it is someone else venturing out first. Then also, but not only venturing out to test the waters but also venturing out, hearing something that ah, resonate...
- 8.202 G: Resonated.
- 8.203 Ay: ...resonated with me. Either I learnt from it, I mean even now, hearing S speak there's stuff, there's something I've learned from.
- 8.204 G: Yes.
- 8.205 Ay: Just in terms of my own relationships with my folks and significant ones. You're just a whole bunch of sneaky buggers. I trust you now.
- 8.206 J: I have a question. Uhm...
- 8.207 Ay: Please ask me more questions cause I think...
- 8.208 J: Yes, what I want to know, how did this relationship between you're your mom and dad and you with them, these relationships, this triangle of relationships, how did that impact on you? In F's case we heard how it impacted on him feeling insecure, uhm... how did that impact on you?
- [06:09]**
- 8.209 Ay: Something significant because I've chosen a partner who's successful already. So a potential wife who's successful already. Who won't necessarily go through a liberation like my mom went through.
- 8.210 N: Sho...
- 8.211 Ay: And I've done my honest best to ensure that I'm gonna remain successful for my life, for the rest of my life so I don't, now looking at it, rely on myself to make my success. I don't wait for a company to retrench me.
- 8.212 N: Wow.
- 8.213 Ay: Does that make sense?
- 8.214 N: Basically life choices.
- 8.215 Ay: Look, I don't know if they're the choices I'm the happiest with uhm, because I don't know to what extent I made them consciously. But I've been realizing now the things behind the decisions. And I love [girlfriend/fiancée/wife's name] to bits, but one of the things I loved about her in the beginning was her success and her own business. Now I see a correlation between the success of her own business and my own desire to have her successful side and not have to go through what my dad went through. So that I don't have that undercurrent in our relationship once we're married.
- 8.216 N: So what if the roles, her the role changes? If she decides she wants to stay at home?
- 8.217 Ay: We've discussed that. I'm more than happy to be the breadwinner. And for her to be a mom.
- 8.218 N: So you won't lose that initial attraction in her? It's like: "I got attracted to the successful go-getter"...
- 8.219 Ay: No, that wasn't the significant thing. That was just a bonus, in the attraction.
- 8.220 N: Okay, just as long as you know that...
- 8.221 Ay: Yes, yes...
- 8.222 N: ...it's an extra thrill not...
- 8.223 K: I want to ask you a very...

- 8.224 Ay: ...and I, I mean, you know what the irony is, is she actually earns a shit-load more than I do right now.
- 8.225 N: [?]
- 8.226 Ay: [Laughs]
- 8.227 N: And very [?]
[Silence]
- 8.228 Ay: Ja, and of course I'm very fine with that. And I think it's because we're not actually that married entity with kids. Actually I don't know [mumbles something]. I mean, what we have decided is she is going to be a stay at home mom one day who will work part-time. And the need is then significantly for me to be a breadwinner which is fine.
- 8.229 K: You're not scared of the commitment, of the marriage thing?
- 8.230 Ay: In case it ends up in divorce?
- 8.231 K: Ja.
[Silence]
- 8.232 Ay: Scared enough to stop me from doing it?
[09:01]
- 8.233 K: Ja.
- 8.234 Ay: Or scared enough to be sceptical going in?
- 8.235 K: [Nods]
- 8.236 N: Answer it.
- 8.237 K: Answer it. [Laughs]
- 8.238 Ay: I'm not scared enough to go into marriage if I don't want to. But I'm scared enough to make sure that I'm realistic about the potential that my experience with my parents has to impact on us. So one of the significant things for me is to speak, or to do what couples don't often do when they go into marriage and that is to speak of the divorce honestly, before you go in. Not as a, hopefully not as a self-fulfilling prophecy but just to acknowledge that there is something that can happen. And what are we going to do to make sure that we're both okay, if that happens. And I, ja, I don't know if that sounds like a bit too negative and cynical going into marriage but it's important for me to do that.
- 8.239 K: Any anxiety?
- 8.240 Ay: Any anxiety?
- 8.241 K: About this whole story, subject?
- 8.242 Ay: What, in the group?
- 8.243 K: No, no, what you told us now. Do you experience any anxiety while telling us this?
- 8.244 G: Or in the group now?
- 8.245 K: Or in the group.
[Silence]
- 8.246 Ay: [Shakes his head]
- 8.247 K: Are you sure?
- 8.248 Ay: Does it look like I...
- 8.249 K: I sense anxiety but I might be wrong.
- 8.250 Ay: Does anyone else sense that?
- 8.251 N: I think I'm with her, on that. If I can explain further...

- 8.252 Ay: Well, look I [?]
[Laughter]
- 8.253 N: ...I'm like fearing for you in a sense that, you're taking your dad's, unintentionally or maybe unconsciously, your dad's position again. You know, mom was more than dad... you know what I mean?
- 8.254 Ay: What with [name] earning more than me [?]
- 8.255 N: Unintentionally continuing that, still wanting the nod from...
- 8.256 Ay: I don't know. If [?] okay cause I think I'm confident enough in myself to know that I'll be okay.
- 8.257 N: Ja I'm just, ja...
- 8.258 Ay: I think my dad's confidence was conditional on his ability to be a breadwinner, to be the head of the house, that sort of thing. And when that disappeared, he was left this very brittle shell of a man which still exists to today.
- 8.259 N: So you'd say it forced you to look more deeper into yourself? Than what are you all about and all this breadwinning? Even if it doesn't [?]
[12:00]
- 8.260 Ay: I'm reaching the boundary here though. Maybe that's where the anxiety is coming from. I'm happy to discuss what we have so far but the more that we go along with this topic... uhm, it's reaching a boundary. Maybe that's where the anxiety is coming from.
- 8.261 D: Did you sense it as well S? Did you also sense the anxieties that...?
- 8.262 S: Hmm. I sense the change in body language.
- 8.263 G: Not when he was telling the story? It's only now a little bit, yes?
- 8.264 S: Hmm.
[Silence]
- 8.265 Ay: I think it's because of that boundary we are now getting on to a side of the topic that I'm not okay with, in the group. But I'd prefer, actually I don't know what I prefer to do. Uhm... ja, the boundary [is just there?].
- 8.266 D: Are there correlations with J's experience?
[Silence]
- 8.267 Ay: A little on the rebellion side, because I felt the need to grow up as quickly as possible. And one of the things I hear often that people tell me is that I don't come across as 26. I come across as older. And I thought long and hard about that because I think that's come out of...
- 8.268 K: Being the parent.
- 8.269 Ay: Ja.
- 8.270 K: With [?].
- 8.271 Ay: Ja.
- 8.272 K: Taking responsibility of the little sisters and, I don't know.
- 8.273 ?: Is it?
- 8.274 Ay: Ja. Look, I mean, just thinking about my sisters, it probably sounds I was the protector, the big brother. I don't know if they would say that. I think we fended for ourselves. I was probably more the occasionally protective brother who made sure he was never around. [Long pause] So what I think I did is I, I made sure I was out of home enough to establish social circles of my own where I felt safe and secure. So I didn't have to get home and be the parent. Okay?

- 8.275 K: Uhm...
- 8.276 Ay: But then ja, in terms of correlation, uhm, I'm probably feeling the reverse. That I'm needing to establish more of a relationship with my parents. That those years chucked out. So like in terms of sharing a holiday house with my folks, that's something that sounds nice. Not for as long as you have, I don't think but...
[15:00]
- 8.277 D: But you [bid?] into a responsibility similar to his, to want to take up a conversation and to be successful. That's what I pick up as the correlation.
- 8.278 Ay: [Nods]
[Silence]
- 8.279 J: [?]
- 8.280 G: Let's close...
- 8.281 D: Ja, just I want to know where you are F before we close.
- 8.282 F: Okay, I'm okay.
[Laughter]
- 8.283 F: I am okay.
- 8.284 N: Can I say something after it's closed?
- 8.285 G: No, you can say it now.
- 8.286 N: But it's out of context but like [?]
- 8.287 Ay: So it's...
- 8.288 G: Then, then, then afterwards ja. Okay. But only afterwards [?]
- 8.289 N: No, no, no. It's something to do with this but it's just... [searches for words] interesting observation that I've been...
- 8.290 Ay: You've dressed us up now you have to take us out.
- 8.291 G: Ja, now you have to.
- 8.292 N: Okay, [?]. You know, just to come back to R's question or statement that we need now sort of leadership or whatever. Something made me going and I made an observation during all of this. Could it be that everybody has a story to tell and everybody is just waiting for that opportunity where they're comfortable enough to tell their story. Where the waters have been tested. And according to them it will be a different definition because F told his story totally unexpected where you would have felt "Flippen no!" And then when I didn't expect it at all, you tell your story. And everybody's level of comfortability differ, due to whatever. But then, I believe everybody has a story and that's really where we're going.
- 8.293 Ay: Can I say two things on that just quickly? The story I told wasn't a story that had been sitting there waiting to come out, that I planned. It was just context driven.
- 8.294 N: [?]
- 8.295 Ay: And secondly, I'm okay if people walk away from me and not having gone through that. So I don't want to create the expectation that...
- 8.296 G: That this has to become now what...
- 8.297 Ay: What we're here for.
- 8.298 P: Ja.
- 8.299 G: Okay, that is...Ja?

- 8.300 H: I can just say, I, I'm experiencing feelings of anxiousness or whatever listening to Ay's story cause it's really struck a nerve with me. I don't know if I'm prepared to share
- 8.301 Ay: Then I know you're in the same boat as K who said: "There's something but I'm not ready."
- 8.302 H: Ja, but I've been sitting here and [makes nervous gestures]
[Laughter]
- 8.303 H: It's like urging me to talk but I...
- 8.304 G: Yes, yes...
- 8.305 H: ... I kind of resist. [?]
- 8.306 G: So a very good observation.
- 8.307 N: So that's actually what I'm saying, that we need a [?], some people will have the five days and they'll go and they would never have said anything because there was not that level of comfortability to be able to share a story. But I'm just saying, even in general, in life, everywhere, everybody has a story to tell.
- 8.308 G: Can we, can we stop here?
- 8.309 D: With a bit of luck there will be [tea?]
[Laughter]
- 8.310 G: Yes, right! Good! Thank you very much.

Session 9

- 10.1 G: Our last day of the group.
- 10.2 N: Finally.
- 10.3 G: That bad?
- 10.4 N: I'm an extrovert and I'm going out on a limb here.
- 10.5 K: No.
- 10.6 G: Okay, we can, we don't need an introduction. We can just start, anybody can start...uh... with what happened yesterday or what you thought about last night or if it's...anything? It can just be anything.
[Silence]
- 10.7 N: I was thinking of K and R all the time. Like a soapy you know?
[Laughter] It's like [claps hands]: "Scenes to come for tomorrow!"
- 10.8 H: To add on to that, I did a little mind map yesterday on my computer of what my experiences was and R kept bugging me.
[Laughter]
- 10.9 K: I think there's just more between her and R now so [moves backwards].
[Laughter]
- 10.10 R: Just a quick observation, K and Ay didn't go one and two this morning. [Shows thumbs up]
- 10.11 N: They didn't?
- 10.12 R: K start and Ay go second this morning.
- 10.13 G: Yes.
- 10.14 Ay: I feel like [?]
[K and Ay high-five each other]

- [Laughter]
- 10.15 N: Was that intentional?
- 10.16 K and Ay: No.
- 10.17 N: Cool.
- 10.18 D: Lost responsibility?
- 10.19 Ay: I don't have to [?]
- 10.20 G: Okay, but we can start there. We don't need to start there but it is something that's on the table.
- 10.21 K: I would like to clarify what happened yesterday. Because I was also thinking of it last night and in fact the feedback afterwards yesterday, the reflection, hearing the reflection... I realise part of the reason why I attacked him [laughs]. And uhm, for me it was on a subconscious level. So ja, it was really subconsciously happening. Uhm, what I experienced with him...
- 10.22 G: With R?
- 10.23 K: Ja, with him withdrawing.
- 10.24 G: With you [points to R] withdrawing?
- 10.25 K: With him withdrawing. [?] Uhm, was okay in that that we weren't anywhere with our conversation so it was not busy with J anymore or... So that was okay, given the topic. And then we came back and we addressed that and there were a couple of times where you said again: "Change the subject" or "Waiting for the next topic", you know. I experienced that, you sitting there [folds hands on lap and looks bored], "we can carry on now". You know and I didn't experience a commitment from your side, to participate. And I felt angry at you. Because I feel there's a responsibility from all of us. You know, if we want to be a group, then we are all a group. And then, where's the commitment that we want to be here or you know...my English is bad [?]
[03:15]
- 10.26 R: [?]
- 10.27 K: Ja but if you follow me and you catch the point then that's okay.
- 10.28 G: The others can help that we understand you.
- 10.29 K: Goed, so ek het net gevind dat daar's nie 'n commitment op daai stadium nie en deel van die groep se struggle was but something is broken en ons moet dit fix. En jy het nie 'n saak nie. Jy sit net terug en jy sê: "Well, find the next topic." You know. Uhm, en ek dink dis waar my anger begin het. En dis hoekom ek toe nie meer veilig gevoel het om whatever ek ook tafel toe wil bring nou tafel toe te bring nie. Uhm, maar, die tweede deel hiervan is, die heel eerste dag was die eerste gesprek wat ek met enige iemand gehad het met jou. En jy't my ontsettend beindruk en ek het besef daar is baie common interests, tussen my en jou, en ja, toe's dit vir my sleg dat dit juis jy is wat my 'drop'. Verstaan jy?
- 10.30 R: Yep. [Nods]
[Silence]
- 10.31 D: Well, did you?
- 10.32 R: Uhm, it gives me a bit of understanding from K's perspective and there's some empathy that [?] me. But at the same time I don't feel challenged to particularly change my role in the group. Uhm, I believe that's the role that I play, it's just the way I introduce myself, I'm quite... uhm, my introduction was saying that I'm

here, I work with J, F, Ay. Those are the guys I'm here to see how to use them and how to work with them more effectively. So for me that is a role that I introduced myself in and that's all I

[?] So, coming back to the metaphysical conversation yesterday, uhm...and this is the interesting thing about the whole conversation of the group coming back to itself again cause, part of that conversation that came through was the role of the observer. And that the observer can still be an observer but he can be part of the experience. So essentially that's what I feel that I'm still an observer but I, in that observer role doesn't make me any less part of the group. It's just a different role. Uhm, and I believe that's the role that I play and what essentially gives me understanding of your experience of it but it doesn't cause me to believe I need to change my role or that my role is inappropriate or incorrect. [Silence]
[06:00]

10.33 D and K: [?]

10.34 K to D: Hmm?

10.35 D: [?]

10.36 K: Ja. But it's good for me now that I know he understands me now, what happened there, that I don't have a problem with him per se...

10.37 R: We spoke briefly about it as well that I, out of a personal level there was, that no, it wasn't a big personal issue. [K agrees] So, I'm quite comfortable with that [mumbles]

10.38 K: I want to add that thing because he [points at R] is what he is and because I sum him up the way he is. It was easy for me to tell him straight in his face. If he was a sensi... more sensitive, he's very sensitive. [R laughs] That's not the right word.

10.39 R: [?]

10.40 K: No, if your self-esteem wasn't good, I would not have said that to you. [Silence]

10.41 Ay: How did you know his self-esteem was good? [Silence]

10.42 K: Maybe in [?] [Laughter] but which he's... the way he portrayed himself the whole time, even outside the group. At lunch, the conversations we have, the way he looked me in the eye, ja it's... but I don't know him at all as I said it might be [?] but usually I'm not wrong. But I was wrong before, have been...

10.43 Ay: He's pretty authentic to himself. In the time that you've known him.

10.44 K: Let's ask the group. [Silence]

10.45 K: H?

10.46 H: Uhm, I find it annoying. Uhm, and I know I'm actually exposing myself more than I'm doing you [points to R] at this stage and if you're going to say "I'm okay with that" I'm going to throw you with something. [Laughter] Because, you're so okay with everything I don't feel that I want to share stuff that deeply, profoundly affects me. If you are so unaffected by everything everyone throws at you. Uhm, you said yesterday you like conflict yet you're okay with everything. So where will the conflict come for you? You know if you're okay with everything. Uhm, I just...

10.47 R: [?]

- 10.48 H: That's why I find it kind of annoying that you come across so sorted. You know, you are so sorted there is no deep stuff that affects you. You are totally in control. So ja, but that's just to me. I don't feel comfortable sharing my profound stuff, with you. Yet I do agree with a lot of things that you have said. It's not that I, probably because you're okay with it I feel [laughs] that I can do this with you and not with anyone else so it's kind of a paradox. So I've even written this in a letter last night to you [R]. But ja, I've said everything that I've written down.
[09:03]
- 10.49 G: But [?] serious
- 10.50 H: Hmm.
- 10.51 G: You've given it a lot of thought and you wrote about it?
- 10.52 H: Ja. Because I was upset.
- 10.53 G: It was bugging you.
- 10.54 H: I found the whole thing of [?] yesterday and R just kept bugging me.
- 10.55 J: It was bugging me as well. An awful lot last night. I was, [?] one thing was, and he also said it now, the way you position yourself in this group. It almost feels unfair to me, that you owe yourself the right to position yourself a little bit above what's going on here. So you're...
- 10.56 K: The observer. 10.57 J: You're the observer. So, and by observing you actually miss what's going on here. That's what I think. If you were willing to take part, that's the only way you'll really know what's going on here. So, you're coming here to observe me and F and Ay and how you can use us. It's almost as if you're not willing to submit yourself to the process like we have done. Uhm, so, so that's on the one side and then the other thing as well. I want to echo what H said. You said it's almost as if by being so upfront with, in the first day you spoke, I mean K was even blushing when she referred to an affair and you were so upfront with that. [?] it's almost as if being so upfront with something so sensitive makes me basically want to [falls back in chair with hands held up]. It's like a safe way to keep distance. Because now you've thrown me with a ball this big [indicates size with hands] against the forehead so [exhales loudly] okay. There's nothing else to find out about this guy because the big thing is here in your face.
- 10.58 K: Ja. Ja, that's well said.
[Silence]
- 10.59 Ay: Can I also add to what you've said J? Maybe just in a different way so, I feel you're the only one with an agenda in this group. Outside of what this group is. And that is what J's spoken about in terms of observing myself, S, F and J for purposes that extend beyond the end of this group. And that bugs me because I don't know what you're observing. Because I'm just Ay in this group. I'm not a facilitator, I'm not showing anything to secure anything after the group or just in the group. But then also to have two points myself, to a [forward?] extent you're a blank slate that we're projecting stuff onto. Uhm, just a question I have to myself is why do I have a problem with that?
[12:06]
- 10.60 J: It's the same thing with me as well. I also thought but why am I, why is it a problem then? Why am I thinking about this? But it's the same thing that H said,

- that perhaps it's now going to show more about her so it's almost as if there's an impact that you're having on me feeling...
- 10.61 D: What is the physical impact?
- 10.62 J: ...am I okay? Is this what I'm saying now okay? Am I okay? So if I have a problem with you, is it because I'm not okay? Uhm...ja.
- 10.63 D: Like the physical impact that you just demonstrated. [?]
- 10.64 K: [?]
- 10.65 D to R: I don't know if that's what you intend?
- 10.66 R: Should I respond to...?
- 10.67 Ay: Please.
- 10.68 R: Essentially for me, you've got to see the context that I'm here with. The... before the affair that I had, so again sorry if [?] before the affair that I had I was a minister so there was a, my life and my work were entwined and there was no real distinction between the two. One of the decisions that I made after the affair happened and as part of the restoration, the rebuilding of my life, was to say that life and work are now two separate spaces and they don't overlap. So for me this is a work experience. For many of you I get the impression and from what you're saying, this is a life group. For me this is a work group. And so... and saying in short, uhm and H this isn't saying that this just bounces off me. But it's saying that my response to part of what you guys are saying about my [role or?] placement in this group is, well, it's just one of the things you guys have to deal with. And if it means that you would rather have me excuse myself, I'm comfortable with that. But that's the role that I'm not prepared to compromise. My role, my place, this seat for me is a work seat. Uhm, when I walk out of here, so then, it's a different R that kicks in but my life is separate between my work and my R life.
- 10.69 K: I want to challenge you on that one. You said that it's a work seat for you I mean, even though I don't think it would be a problem for one of us, it's not that that it's bothering us. I remember now that yesterday I referred to you as the judge and listening to him [points to J] and to him [points to Ay] and to H it's basically what they experience as well. The observer is your word for it. Uhm, but you also said observing J and observing him [Ay] and S and so forth meaning judging... Judging. In a very subtle implicit way you're judging. And uhm, ja I'm going to be frank with you, is it your right to sit here and judge us? I don't like thinking that anyone here, are sitting here judging me. Yes they may analyse, yes they may... but judging is [a fault?]. I'm a strong believer of being unjudgemental here, in life. So ja.
[15:34]
- 10.70 Ay: It's not my... sorry K, you've spoken on behalf of me but my experience isn't like that.
- 10.71 K: Okay.
- 10.72 Ay: I just wanted to...
- 10.73 R: Cause it really isn't my, either my intention or, either subconscious or consciously.
So...

- 10.74 K: Now I understand then I misheard you. You said you're observing and that you'll have an agenda of where can you use J and where...
- 10.75 R: No it's our understanding that [?]. So J's spoken a lot about this process and this space. Uhm, but I feel it's a [?] part of understanding that. So it is not judging, it isn't making a judgement call on is this right is this wrong...
- 10.76 K: You're exploring.
- 10.77 R: ... is this good, is this bad? Let me understand this. So... in the same way that J flew down to Cape Town to say that I need to understand R's world a bit more. And we sat down and we had that lunch. This is me understanding J's space.
- 10.78 Ay: What's the difference between you being here and asking for the tapes and not being here? Viewing the tapes afterwards.
- 10.79 R: Very little. Except for the fact that I obviously have an effect on this group which I won't have if I watch the tape.
- 10.80 J: [?]
- 10.81 Ay: So then you want to have an effect on the group. You want to contribute. You want to be here.
- 10.82 R: Uhm... now look, honestly I can go either way. It wouldn't be a huge thing if J had said to me [?] But again, after the space was opened up and it was a good place to, or as good place as any, probably a better place to sit down to understand [?]
- 10.83 J: See, I don't think you're completely honest with yourself...
- 10.84 R: Okay.
- 10.85 J: ... because this is not just something that I do, it is something that you do as well. In work, in business, facilitating workshops is part of what you do. So what you're saying is you as a facilitator, you don't need this. You don't need to grow this. You're only here to see how the poor other facilitators who also do this, how they do this. You don't need to ...
- 10.86 R: [?]
- 10.87 J: You're only here to check the process out but you're not here... So your facilitation skills don't need any improvement.
- 10.88 R: J, in a session like this, I would, I would, in this type of context I would never ever do this myself. You'd be the person I call on. For me, Thursday and Friday becomes a place where I would [?] my facilitation skills. I'm picking up the kind of stuff that was kind of put up on the board yesterday as something that, that theory and stuff behind it so for me this type of context uhm, was never ever [?], you [J] would be the person I'd call.
[18:13]
- 10.89 J: Me neither.
- 10.90 R: Okay.
- 10.91 J: I'll also not do this but this is being used to create an understanding of what's happening when you do a swat analysis [representation?]. Cause that's the same dynamics that's here, is there as well. So it's not, so this is not a, this is just an experience. We could do another experience. But still it's about understanding a

- group and you also need to understand how a group works if you do a mind gap workshop with them.
- 10.92 R: But you guys see that by not kicking back, in you guys addressing me now, that I am actually part of the group. Maybe it's like a different way to the way you were yesterday morning. But I am no less allowing myself to become the object or the subject of the group's conversation and discussion.
- 10.93 Ay: I think the problem I have is this distinction you made between the life and work...
- 10.94 H: Ja.
- 10.95 Ay: ...in sitting here. Because I think, I think, uhm...
- 10.96 R: Dude you've got to deal with it.
- 10.97 Ay: No, no, for sure. But I want to ask you questions about it and find out more about it.
- 10.98 R: [?]
- 10.99 Ay: Is... for me, I came in expecting a work experience. That's why I paid the money I did, this is why I've opened up [?] but it's very quickly become a work and life experience. Learning stuff about myself, learning stuff about the individuals here, learning stuff about the people here. And I'm challenged by the fact that you can still classify it as just a work experience. That sounds as if there's no personal impact in terms of the way you see your relationships, the way you want to deal with your relationships. And I think I've heard you say that before that, for example when you're speaking about the father thing you say that they were conversations you needed to have. So there has been a life impact. So I don't know if that distinction is really there. And I think what I'm reacting to is, is what I'm hearing, a desire to enforce that work distinction. And I think from the people who have spoken is we actually want you to have a life experience as well, with us. And maybe that's our own thing where we're feeling insecure because someone can easily not be affected by what is happening here, that may be part of our insecurity but I also just generally want to, want you to have a life experience. You know,
I want to share in it, uhm... but without mandating what should happen. It's just a desire I have. But the main point of what I'm saying is that I don't know if this distinction you've spoken about is really there. In your experience.
- 10.100 J: Is it possible that because you had such a bad experience with work and life being merged that you may have swung the pendulum too far to the other side?
- 10.101 R: It's possible.
- 10.102 J: And by saying it's our problem, you don't have to deal with it? It's not necessarily true, it might be part of your problem as well? Because you are having an impact on
people here that's also working with you. So it's not only, it's not totally separate?
- 10.103 R: At this point, so ja, I mean it may have very well [?] but at this point it would be [?]
And the pendulum would transpose itself from here to here instantaneously
[gestures]

- there's a swing. So wherever the pendulum is now, that's what, that's the group's problem. So using [?]
- 10.104 J: Only the group's problem?
- 10.105 R: No, I'm saying that's the thing that, if you guys are feeling that, well this is the R that you got over these last few days. The pendulum is there [gestures], this is what I bring in, this is what I am, whether the distinction is forced, whether it's real, whether it's internal or external, that distinction is there. And it's [?] it's not something I'm prepared to compromise on. So I'm firmly in that space. If this is next year the pendulum may have moved. It may have moved further out, it may have moved further in. Depending on where it moved there will be a different R in this group next year. But for now guys, this is who you've got. And I do apologise if it means you feel uncomfortable sharing something but unfortunately that's something that you have to deal with. It's not something I'm prepared to shift in myself in order to make it more comfortable for you to open up. So I'm not prepared to compromise myself in order to make you more comfortable in this space.
[22:25]
- 10.106 H: But just bringing it back into the context of us being a group of facilitators. If you are a facilitator you have to realise that the people you are going to work with are going to carry personal baggage with them into the context. And you have to be... being effective means that you will have to practise what you preach. So you don't believe that being in whatever context you should, or you think that you should have that distinction between the work and the personal. And if that's the case, uhm...
- 10.107 R: I wouldn't make it a dictate for anybody else. I'm saying that this is part of my life experience that has brought me to this point.
- 10.108 H: And it's going to rub off on any other group as well.
- 10.109 R: That's something that will happen in time. We will deal with it as the situation arises.
- 10.110 H: But they are not going to have the opportunity to, to know this about you. But you're gonna affect them on a subconscious level and I have a question about that. How are you going to deal with that and are you even going to be aware of it?
- 10.111 D to H: How did it affect you here? How did it affect the group? Just to make it more here than there. Just tell, what did it do to you and how did it affect you? What is the lesson that you get from the group here on how R's behaviour affects groups because we are now at the end of one? Just maybe share that with him.
- 10.112 H: Just like I said, I feel uncomfortable and uhm...
- 10.113 D: Stuck?
- 10.114 H: Ja, stuck and not really wanting to share profound stuff.
- 10.115 G: Inhibited?
- 10.116 H: Ja, inhibited.
- 10.117 D: Are you angry? Anyone frustrated? Even [gestures] need to go away? That's this group [?]
- 10.118 K: I want to add sad.
- 10.119 G: [?] sad?

- 10.120 K: Ja because someone said to me once uhm, if you're in a situation and you do have more knowledge than the others, then you have a responsibility, you have more responsibility than if not. Think about it, you have more knowledge so you have more responsibility as well. Now some of that for me is true with him. I know he can offer so much to us all. I know I can benefit from his, his uhm, knowledge, I know I can learn from him, I know I can, but he's not prepared to share. [To R:] It is just that you're the observer so you're a bit higher up like J put it, not participating as much as we all do. And that's a pity, that makes me sad because now I realise you're missing a lot of stuff and you're not giving of yourself much and there I miss the opportunity of learning from you.
[25:17]
- 10.121 A: R and I talked about this on our way over in the car yesterday, everything, and that's what I said to him. Because I've seen him, maybe not in tense environments but I've seen him in environments where he's always very [?]. I've seen you [points to R] [?] [told him?]
- 10.122 G: [?] for our benefit...
[Laughter]
- 10.123 A to R: Okay then. I've seen you in environments where you've been possibly the most verbal person in that environment and I've drawn from that and I've learnt from that. And that's why I feel the same as K and I feel sad and I feel disappointed that you haven't felt like you can share that much in this group and that's been frustrating.
- 10.124 G: So you think he's also a little bit inhibited? He's not being himself?
- 10.125 A: No, he's been very different to us [?]
- 10.126 R: I made a conscious choice.
- 10.127 A: And this is what I said to him cause on the first day after we left here, I said to him: "So are you finding value in this?" and he said: "I feel like I'm more of an observer than a participant." And so yesterday when we got in the car I said, I wanted to know how much that statement had affected the way he's been in this group because from the very first day he arrived he had decided, right, I'm an observer in this group and I'm not a participant. So that's how all this came out because I also left feeling all of those feelings of something's broken and I can't... I needed to fix it.
- 10.128 G: And you need him to fix it?
- 10.129 A: No, I felt I needed to fix it and he quite promptly told me it wasn't my responsibility. [G gestures towards group]
[Silence]
[27:00]
- 10.130 K: Sies vir jou!
[Laughter]
- 10.131 A: So it's almost selfish for me. It's selfish because I, I wanna hear from that side [gestures towards R] and that part of the room. I wanna hear from you [R].
- 10.132 G: But the funny thing is R hasn't been silent. If we can roll back the tapes, he's talked a lot.
- 10.133 K: Ja but it was...
- 10.134 P: I think, not only that, I think the...

10.135 R: [?]

10.136 P: I think the, what you say is more theoretical or not so much theoretical but more

textbook and article based than real feelings. You haven't shared your opinion or the way you feel about something. You shared what somebody else has said, that you believe in, fair enough, but something that's almost higher up. I have to admit on one or two of his responses I was like: "Huh?". [Laughter] You know, I'm sorry but like total confusion like what the hell did he just say? Simply because either I wasn't listening attentively enough or else it was just so high out of the context of it that I was lost on it. So I think that's it, you do answer, you do participate, but on a different level. [K agrees] You know your responses aren't as relaxed and as easy flowing as some of the other people. Does that make sense? I mean, has anybody else picked it up or am I alone on this.

10.137 K: I think that's spot on.

10.138 P: Sometimes I'm like, phew, that was just breathtaking [gestures]. I don't know what just happened because I'm, that's how I feel. Flabbergasted obviously[?].

10.139 G: So instead of eliciting a response it's almost as if it's silencing you?

10.140 P: Ja, because then I don't know how to respond cause I'm like, I'm not fully aware of what was just said.

10.141 G: Cannot tune into it?

10.142 P: Ja, ja, that's just it. It's simply because the level is here [indicates with hands] and everybody is talking and responding here but when R answers he's and his input is excellent, but it's here [indicates higher] so you've almost got to realign and that's what I've been doing. You know, as soon as R starts talking I realign and I go more into a...

10.143 K: Intellectual?

10.144 P: ...ja, into a more intellectual sort of capacity so I can actually understand what's being said. And I think that's why we feel like he hasn't participated, cause I know you have. I know that there has been many times when I've sat and listened to you but that's because I had to make the switch. And I know how often I've made the switch. So ja. And I find your contributions very valuable as well, just by the way.

10.145 Ay: Personally I think the group is trying to make you vulnerable. Uhm, I'm including myself in it. Trying to...

10.146 K: Break the wall.

10.147 Ay: Ja [?]

10.148 N: It's interesting, I never thought of this, I never felt this, consciously I never felt R is doing this to me or this. I don't know maybe on the first day I felt [?] but subconsciously it could have been because if the opportunity I get to spend with him, I ask him stuff, I

ask him things and I remember he said and I apologise and say: "Sorry I'm asking you all these things" and he says: "No, it's okay that's how I know you" but then...ja, it's quite interesting that I actually try to find the real R outside the group cause I didn't get that in the group. But I wasn't aware of it cause I thought he's contributing so I didn't make a conscious mental note this is what's happening. But now that everybody's been saying that I thought, ha, is that why I come sit

here and so I'm just rolling the tape back to... talk to me, come sit here, come here [gestures]. So ja, it's interesting.

[30:54]

10.149 D: To try to find the real R, is that what this has been all about?

10.150 H to R: Ja, I would like to know what the hell are you about?

10.151 N: How about heaven? [gestures]

[Laughter] [?] that's something. I wouldn't say it's not an odd thing.

10.152 K[to h?]: But uhm, it is quite ironic because you, you also said he's very much sorted. And now I'm ...

10.153 F?: [?]

10.154 K: Yes, he's very much sorted, but now it sounds like he's not. [Laughs]

10.155 H: No, that's what he's, what he's portraying. He is sorted. Okay. I'm okay with that.

10.156 Ay: K, you spoke about the judge and I said it didn't really resonate with me, the reason being is that [?] and I'm not, if he was a judge I'd be wondering what is his judgement on what I'm saying and that's not it for me. It's more a case of I want to hear his insight.

10.157 K: I do realise that it might be my issue that I project, the judgement issue. You must have picked it up earlier, that I have an issue with judging.

10.158 G: Uhm yes F?

10.159 F: I've been with R in other contexts as well you know, I've sort of had the privilege to know the softer side of him. I've seen him help me in many occasions, I've seen him help me in many occasions and the day we walked to the [?] and we spoke about a few personal stuff and uhm... I find you a highly intelligent person and I really enjoy your contribution. On the other hand, you know it's, I've got this feeling that if I've got to buy R a present, what would I buy you? Because he's been there for me, he's been helpful to me in many ways but how do I pay him back? If I walk into a store, what will I pick for him? Because he's got everything that's in the store and yes, it's as if the relationship that I have with you is that of taking all the time. And I feel I don't want that, but at the same time, if I have to give, I don't know what to give. And I think that frustrates me. Because I just don't want to suck from you, because I drew what I get from you. But at the same time I would like to say: "Hey, happy birthday. Here's a watch. But you've got the watch. Here's a shirt, but you've got better shirts. You know, here's a pair of shoes. You've got a hundred pairs of shoes." And that frustrates me. For how long am I going to suffer with this.

[34:10]

10.160 J: I think it's the same thing with me as well. I've told you before that I enjoy to get your inputs, your ideas and the frustration is that it... see for me I get the inputs, I also get from you feedback regarding how you see me and what you think about me but it's almost as if it's impossible for me to know what to give you. You won't come to me for business advice necessarily or feedback regarding how I exp... it's almost as if it's impossible to give you back because R is okay. Everything with R is almost perfect so what can I add? What can I ...? [To F:] I don't know if that's exactly what you said but I think that's something that makes it difficult to feel like there's a relationship. It feels like a one-way thing, it's

- difficult to feel like a two-way because I don't know where's the gap that I can also put something of value into your life.
- 10.161 F: Yes, that's my problem because my reaction is that of I don't want to bother this guy any more because each time I go to him it's me getting something. You know, I've got nothing to offer so to speak.
- 10.162 D: So you feel you need to actually [?] in a way?
- 10.163 F: Ja, so to speak, ja.
- 10.164 Ay: F, can I ask you a question?
- 10.165 F: Yes.
- 10.166 Ay: Because I'm just sort of wanting to find if I feel the same. Is it not you offer, you offering R something or is it about R learning something from you? [Silence]
- 10.167 D to Ay: What's it for you?
- 10.168 Ay: For me I think the desire is that R would learn something from me and that part of the frustration is I don't know if he will. And I think I have a lot to offer. [36:05]
- 10.169 R: Because I choose not to or because why?
- 10.170 Ay: You tell me.
- 10.171 R: I'm asking what you're experiencing. This is stuff that I'm hearing so you know, give me time to ruminate and to...
- 10.172 Ay: Sure.
- 10.173 R: Uhm.
- 10.174 Ay: Ask me your question again. Do I feel like you don't learn anything from me because...
- 10.175 R: [?]
- 10.176 D: What happened just now? Just now to illustrate your [Ay] point I would think.
- 10.177 Ay: He's asked me a question.
- 10.178 D: What happened first?
- 10.179 A: You asked him.
- 10.180 D: You asked him.
- 10.181 A: He just threw it right back.
- 10.182 D: Threw it right back. To illustrate the point. You ask him a question, he responded by throwing it back to you so I mean...
- 10.183 K: With a perfect rational explanation of he'd do that.
- 10.184 Ay: Okay. [Nods]
- 10.185 K: So he's untouchable.
[Silence]
- 10.186 D: I don't know whether that's your intent, to get this distance and to elicit sadness, frustration and I miss out and diminishing [?] or minimising whatever or... I can't give it to you if that's your intent, but that's what's happening in the workplace because you define it as work. And that's I think what the group is trying at this stage to struggle with, to save, whatever. That's maybe the opportunity that the group brings to you and to us so to speak.
- 10.187 R: But let's also go onion layers you guys. This group is under [?] different, J is much closer to the centre of the onion than K is. Ay is a little bit further removed but you know, still...

- 10.188 K: To the what?
- 10.189 R: The centre of the anagram. We were talking about just the different layers of relationships...
- 10.190 Ay: [?]
- 10.191 R: If I'm the core of the onion, there are, this group is quite fond of the periphery of the onion. Now for me the, coming out of this conversation it becomes, my response is that it's more important for me to think, to go through and think about J and F with respect, less important for me to think about why does F feel that way? And a little bit more important for me to think about why does Ay feel that way because of where you sit on the layers of my onion. [Some laughter] But so for me that becomes the thing that I take out of you so me asking you a question isn't [?] back at you so I'm not picking it up. But it is about me saying let me understand this better so that when I reflect on it, cause I'm not gonna make a decision here, but it's about ruminating so about stuff that I've come through, okay, these are the shifts [?]
- 10.192 Ay: I'm glad that you've said that, really glad cause there's a question I was going to ask you is, are you going to think about what we're saying, after this? Or are you going to write it off? Because you're incomparable. Is that the right word? You're not going to compromise on who you are in this group in the role that you've taken. My next question was going to be then, fine, but are you at least going to consider what we've said and the effects of this conversation and you've just said that so I'm really glad.
[39:13]
- 10.193 S: Maybe from my side as somebody not as far removed as the others but sort of trying to get closer in terms of the onion in the work relationship is, it's very difficult to get close to you because it's almost as if I feel intimidated by you. So it makes it difficult to... I don't know, maybe it's also this feeling, am I really okay? Is what I'm saying intelligent enough or...? But once again, maybe that reflects back on judgement. Uhm, but it's just, it just makes it difficult to know where you stand more or less and it's an intimidating thing.
- 10.194 H: Ja, I just wanna add to that. I'm not in a working relationship with you [R] but we have a meeting outside of, we had a business meeting and even then I felt, I mean I know I'm okay, but even then, meeting you for the first time I felt, not intimidated but, not able to, to be myself. And that also surfaced last night when I was wondering about this. I felt ja, gee I remember when I first met him and even then... So if this group is a kind of a mini society of the larger society, how is that gonna affect you and the people you meet with in a business setting taking all the personal stuff out because we didn't share any personal stuff, right? How does that affect you knowing that you had that effect on me, that...?
- 10.195 R: Well it makes me go away and think about the, the context of that whole day. I'll go away and think about it cause it's also, the role that I play [?] is the bit of an intellectual as well. So as part of, not what is expected but as part of [?] So my very composition of the business is that's part of who I am and it's part of what I bring. The fact that you felt intimidated by it, or I mean I'm just using that is something for me to think about.

- 10.196 D: What is it that you [?]
10.197 R: It just makes me think.
10.198 D: [?]
10.199 R: Sorry?
10.200 D: [?]
10.201 R: A
little.
10.202 D: Still, it's the problem that everybody's been struggling with. You, allow [?]
What is it that's been illustrated, that the minute when I asked you what does it
do to you, it makes you think. What does it do beyond thinking? Nothing. That's
what I think a lot of people has been trying to... [42:16]
10.203 R: You've got to put a timeline on that though. It makes it right now, it makes me
think and then I'll think about it and... but the con... what may then come out of
those thoughts, well there'll probably be some actions and some changes which
will shift, in fact shift is a better word rather than change. There will be a shift
coming in [?] but I'm not prepared to make a shift or a commitment to a shift now
until I've thought about it. So then my immediate response to what H says is, it
makes me think but in saying it makes me think I'm not saying it doesn't make
me change, but I'm saying right now my response is...
10.204 J: But how does it make you feel?
10.205 R: Right now...
10.206 J: Not talking about shifts and changes and stuff just, how do you feel in here?
[Gestures to heart]
10.207 R: Right now not particularly.
10.208 J: Okay that's it and I think that's what...
10.209 Ay: You've taken a lot of flack this morning. I want to change the tone of it. And
personally I want to invite you to feel with us.
10.210 R: Thank you for the invitation but let me give the braai invitation back. For me
this isn't a feeling space, it's a bit of a thinking space.
10.211 Ay: You've given me the answer.
10.212 R: I'm being honest with the braai invitation.
10.213 D: The what invitation?
10.214 R: The braai invitation. Invite you to the braai and you say am I gonna come and
"Ja, I'll be there of course" so...
10.215 Ay: Okay then respect that the response to that acknowledgement with an honest
answer is that, is going to be, I'm going to be participating by creating the
distance and you have to play in my feeling space.
10.216 R: And I accept.
10.217 G: This is then, so let me now understand what's happening...
10.218 Ay: I mean after he...
10.219 G: Yes, yes.
10.220 Ay: ... [?] feeling space, he said that's not gonna happen. Then because of that I
want to acknowledge that there's a distance created and I'm gonna say "Well
okay, then there's also a distance from my side." Then acknowledging it and
saying I'm only going to let R in so far into my feeling space.
10.221 J: To me...

- 10.222 Ay: In this group.
- 10.223 J: To me that's a pity uhm, because you're having an effect on this group...
- 10.224 R: I understand that.
- 10.225 J: ... and that takes value away from everyone here. And I think there's people here in this group, cause after yesterday's uhm... after we ended the in-group session there were other people who also wanted to bring something to the table. And by not, by putting a line there, saying either deal with it or exclude me from the group and I'm okay with it, uhm, it almost makes it impossible for the group to continue unless we just continue talking about the weather or the traffic.
[45:04]
- 10.226 K: Ja, I think...
- 10.227 G: So we agree upon this [?]
- 10.228 H: That's what I couldn't get as well, you want to get, saying, you said we are not going deep, we are going around in circles. Yet you don't want to go deep yourself.
- 10.229 R: Look the most intellectually stimulating conversation for me over the last two days has been the Ay, F, J, N conversations. There have been conversations that I've found very simulative.
- 10.230 H: So you're parasiting on other people's...
[Laughter]
- 10.231 R: Well no, there's, for me that's, for me those are great conversations.
[45:41]
- 10.232 D: Were they intellectual?
- 10.233 Ay: [Shakes his head]
- 10.234 D: Were they intellectually stimulating?
- 10.235 N: [?]
- 10.236 D: Did you find it intellectually stimulating?
- 10.237 K: [?]
[Laughter]
- 10.238 H: I'm feeling feelings of frustration and annoyance now, because we are spending all this time on you [R] and you are not part of the group.
- 10.239 D: It makes you angry?
- 10.240 H: Ja. Let's move on now then. And you can come and sit here [points behind her outside the group] if you want.
- 10.241 Ay: Let's make a decision cause J has said and H has said that it has a very real impact on us. I want to [?], we need to make a decision, if, I don't know, that's what I'm hearing, do we ask R to leave or do we ask him to stay? It's what I hear the choice is.
- 10.242 N: [?]
- 10.243 H: You just love everyone.
[Some laughter]
- 10.244 N: No, but I'm thinking, but think about this, if he leaves then you'll all [?], then you'll all sit on your conscience that he's gone and now what? And it's going to be that effect that, what do you say that, [gestures in air with both hands] whatever and whatever, what do you say to, that thing, what's the experiment? Even when they leave they'll have an eternal effect on each other. There's going

- to be an eternal negative effect. I'm just trying to make the group aware that, don't go with that choice.
- 10.245 J: No, I think you're right. It may even have a very little effect on R, he'll leave and contemplate about it but I, if he leaves, it will have a funny, very funny effect on us.
- 10.246 N: More a deep impact than you're thinking it would now. So, but then again I don't think we should say R, stay and therefore share yourself. I think we could, I don't know, try to do something and then maybe he can think about stuff and go on. I don't know, hey.
- 10.247 G: Yes, okay.
- 10.248 Ay: The reason why I would be, I'm neither here nor there on whether we ask R to stay is because if we ask him to go, I'm pretty confident he'd be okay with it.
- 10.249 N: But you won't be.
- 10.250 Ay: I'm okay with it because he's okay with it.
- 10.251 N: No...
- 10.252 P: If it was gonna hurt his feelings and he was gonna cry outside I guess... [?]
[Laughter]
- 10.253 K: [?]
- 10.254 P: No, I'm sure he... [inaudible due to laughter]
- 10.255 Ay: The only question on my mind about asking R to leave is what impact there is after this group.
- 10.256 R: Let me give a bit of a [?] response to that as well and that is the, that one of the impacts on the group of you guys asking me to go would be that the thought would then be [?] so what happens if I say something that offends the group? Will I be kicked out as well? And all I'm just saying is that that may be one of the other thoughts that may or may not influence that decision.
- 10.257 D: But I don't think it's about saying something that offends. It's about being here as an emotional being or being here as somebody similar to a computer, that bothers the group. That's what I hear.
- 10.258 P: I personally... oh, sorry...
- 10.259 G: I... yes?
- 10.260 P: No, I was just gonna say I personally think that if R has to leave the group, it's not the group anymore. [K agrees] I'm sorry but like it or not, there's dynamics standing here and there's relationships even if they are superficial to some of you but the fact of the matter is if R leaves, something leaves with him. And we end off the end of the day...
- 10.261 J: A different group.
- 10.262 P: I'm sorry but sitting here without R here is like saying, okay, something's missing so... Yes we can go on! But you know it's taking out an essential element and I...
- 10.263 G: If you did not need R in the group then why did we just spend an hour trying to get him into the group, so I for one think that you need him here. But then it's in a specific, in a, in a, in a way. In a different way than yesterday so let's see if we can work a little bit with that. I think you started with that one. Now, so follow a

- little bit up on that. Is it a personal revelation that you require or what is it that you... what do you want from him? [Silence]
- 10.264 Ay: Can you ask that question again?
- 10.265 H: What do you want from him?
- 10.266 G: Yes, what is it that you want from him?
- 10.267 H: I think Ay...
- 10.268 Ay: I've expressed that, ja.
- 10.269 G: [?]
- 10.270 Ay: The invitation. That's what I want from you, is the invitation I gave you.
- 10.271 R: For me to come into the feeling space with you?
- 10.272 Ay: To feel in our space, ja.
- 10.273 K: And I will just want to hear again that you won't judge. If you are gonna stay here, I'm not going to share... like he put it now now, there's now this [gestures], you said you're not going to participate with feelings so now from his side he's also not going to share that much. Now I sit here, well I want to tell my story because I need the input of the group. Now I have a choice. You are going to stay here because I really want you here, but am I going to share? And I have to decide about it now. And my, uhm, voorwaarde? what's that?
- 10.274 R: Condition.
- 10.275 K: My condition would be, I will share, I feel safe enough still with you here, but I want to know, are you going to judge or...?
- 10.276 ?: How are you going to know?
- 10.277 R: Well let me respond, can I respond to that? [?] As, and I know it's come up about three or four times but you can hear it's been a very big part of my life, but as a man who's had an affair, who was a pastor and who lost that vocation and calling as a consequence, who spent a very, very tough year rebuilding a relation... a marriage relationship and made a number of very, very critical decisions that are difficult to other people around, so difficult for people in this group based on those decisions. So a person who has had all of that gone through because of one very, very poor decision that he made, is in no position to judge anyone else.
- 10.278 J: I think you just came into the feeling space.
- 10.279 K: Ja.
- 10.280 D: Share that with him J...
- 10.281 J: I think you just came into the feeling space.
- 10.282 K: Ja, absolutely.
- 10.283 Ay: I think you just went where Ay wanted.
- 10.284 K: It was wonderful. [Laughter] That's all we need!
- 10.285 R: You're welcome. I mean for me I'm in no position to judge.
- 10.286 G: What was different? Did you experience the difference? [J nods] It was different.
- 10.287 K: Immediately.
- 10.288 G: Immediately.
- 10.289 Ay: Well, I saw the door open a bit. I wouldn't say that that was like a "Wow! R's just laying everything out!" But it was just...

- 10.290 G: But the question is how many people have done that? So why do we single out R and two or three maybe has opened the door a little bit? So we want, that is not what the group requires from him. What you want from him maybe is what, what I think a little of what he's just given. Cause everybody said [?]
- 10.291 R: What did I just give?
[52:56]
- 10.292 G: That is the question. Let's find the answer. [?]
[Inaudible. Multiple people talking at the same time]
- 10.293 P: It was an answer from your life rather than from a textbook. That's the best way I can say it.
- 10.294 K: From a... Yes, it was not an intellectual answer, it was a...
- 10.295 A: From your heart and not from your head.
- 10.296 P: Yeah, there we go. From your heart, not from your head...
- 10.297 Ay: An experience.
- 10.298 D: How was it different, to you? How did you experience it different? To help him out...
- 10.299 K: I like him now even more.
[Laughter]
- 10.300 N: You wanna hug.
- 10.301 G: What's the effect on the group? Right now?
- 10.302 K: Relief. I feel relief. [Group agrees]
- 10.303 P: Everybody's smiling all of the sudden instead of...
- 10.304 D: Are you confused still?
- 10.305 R: For me there's no difference between what I just said now compared to anything else I've said before...
- 10.306 N: You're doing it again.
[Laughter]
- 10.307 Ay: [Inaudible due to laughter]
- 10.308 D: Are you admitting that you're confused?
- 10.309 R: No, I'm not...
- 10.310 D: Because they experience it completely different and maybe it's an opportunity to check on what did they experience differently? Maybe that can assist you because it was a great relief that everybody felt. You're here, you're present for the first time but the next time around you were gone again. And maybe there's something to get out of that from what the experience of us all...
- 10.311 S: I think it sort of pierced this wall of perfection. Sort of admitting a mistake and a weakness that you seem less intimidating.
- 10.312 R: Guys, here's the thing. That's your perception of me. That's not a conscious projection I'm putting out there, that's your perception of me.
- 10.313 D: Exactly, but that's the thing. If the, that's what I said before. The intent, I hope, is not to make sad and to frustrate and to drive away and to physically remove and do all of the other things. I hope that's not your intent...
- 10.314 R: No, not at all.

- 10.315 D: ...but that's the effect. Now, it is maybe our problem but it is an unintended effect which stops this group and might also stop work relationships as we have a number of experiences, also unintended. And maybe it's got an effect on you as well. We don't know that. All we know is that there's something behind there that makes it... puts you in a position that you say I can't judge but that is the space, the opportunity that these people tell you that we want to share with you. We don't want the, I don't, I haven't heard anybody here say that we want to gut-spill all the gory detail, personal revelation, I've never heard that from anybody. They just want, from what I hear, for you to be here present, emotionally as well. Because that pierced the [?]. That's a summary, I don't know maybe you can [55:53]
- 10.316 K: Hmm, well said.
- 10.317 G: Can I ask you R, the response that you gave now, was that, do you have any problem with that? The kind of, not the content, but the kind of response that you, when you spoke to K about the judgement thing. That you don't have any intention to judge.
- 10.318 R: No.
- 10.319 G: Okay. But the effect on the group was completely different. Can we get your permission to make you aware of when that happens?
- 10.320 R: Absolutely. I'm very comfortable with that.
- 10.321 G: Okay. [?]
- 10.322 R: Just one...
- 10.323 Ay: So what your saying, when for example in my case, if I feel R is judging me, just say
"R it feels like your judging me".
- 10.324 G: Yes.
- 10.325 J: And the other way around.
- 10.326 G: And the other way around?
- 10.327 J: So if I feel your having a nice impact on me, to say I like that.
- 10.328 G: That's different yes.
- 10.329 J: [?] for him to learn from that.
- 10.330 G: So would that be okay with you? [R nods]
- 10.331 Ay: I don't know if R wants that.
- 10.332 R: I'm okay with that.
- 10.333 G: That's what I'm, that's what we're asking.
- 10.334 Ay: My concern is...
- 10.335 R: My response is, my only response would be that uhm, you need to have a balanced expectation about my response to that prompting would be. So my response to that prompting would be, I take that but I'm not, you know, this is a rumin... it's a... that's the only thing I just want to qualify that I just need to know that I receive it when you give it to me so both positive or negative feedback but, just to qualify that you just need to also understand that my response may not be immediate to what you give at that point. So I'm just saying that you have that...
[Inaudible. Multiple responses at once]
- 10.336 D: How did you experience him? Distant? Aloof? Judging?

- 10.337 K: Honest and true but what I do realise is just like what happened now-now. We threw him with a lot of stuff and he came back intellectually and until some stage, then he could share. And he did that just now again. He said I will not respond immediately, but maybe later. And I think we should respect that. He uhm... needs time to...
- 10.338 G: To, to, to maybe to reflect on it a little bit yes.
- 10.339 K: Yes. Before he [?]
- 10.340 G: But also we do not want to take away the choice of how, if, with what will you respond. It is just we are making him aware of the effect. That is the only...
- 10.341 Ay: Maybe a good thing that you don't respond immediately because if I'm sharing and I think you're very distant or I feel like something's happening now, I want to just acknowledge and say it and then move on. Not wait for a response.
- 10.342 R: Also the danger in that happening, with me responding immediately is that I'll be hi-jacking [?] so...
- 10.343 Ay: All about what is R feeling about that?!
- 10.344 R: I think that that would be unfair to everybody else. [K nods]
- 10.345 H: Are you enjoying the attention on you? [?]
- 10.346 R: I was prepared for it. I was thinking last night that I will wear a white shirt so it can show the blood spatters. [some laughter]
- 10.347 D: What's that about?
- 10.348 N: He's here.
- 10.349 R: But uhm, sorry, to answer your question H, uhm...
- 10.350 Ay: He avoided the question.
- 10.351 R: To answer your question is, saying I was expecting it basically yesterday and it's something I'm comfortable with and I do believe as well that it's part of the group dynamic so...
- 10.352 H: You're still not answering my question.
- 10.353 Ay: Are you enjoying it or not enjoying it? That is the question.
- 10.354 R: Uhm...
- 10.355 Ay: Sorry, [indicates that he is backing away] sorry. [laughs]
- 10.356 R: It's okay. Uhm... I'm neither enjoying it nor not enjoying it. So it's just...
- 10.357 H: OH BOY!
- 10.358 R: It's, if, I'll tell you what, I know tomorrow is out of group but talk, ask me tomorrow.
Ask that tomorrow. Ask me again tomorrow and I'll give you an honest response.
- 10.359 K: Ja, ja, give him time.
- 10.360 H: Okay.
- 10.361 G: Can we...
- 10.362 D: Can I...?
- 10.363 G: Yes, D.
- 10.364 D: I realise you've [?] because that was a direct emotional question regarding a specific emotion but I want to make it even more general. I just want to say, what did it do to you or how does it make you feel or how do you feel at the moment?
[1:00:10]
- 10.365 R: Uhm, I feel comfortable and I feel uhm, stimulated is a pretty good word. So it's something that, it doesn't leave me untouched, but I think it touches me on a

- level that may not be on a level that you're hoping it will touch me or that you're intending for it to touch me.
- 10.366 D to group: Are you okay with that? Is it a clear, is it a pleasant enough answer? For the moment? A?
- 10.367 A: I feel like shaking him.
[Laughter]
- 10.368 K: I feel like there's a mothering feeling in me. I feel like hugging him and...
[Laughter]
- 10.369 G: That's...
- 10.370 Ay: Why don't you hug him?
- 10.371 G: ... that's very different from what you came in with.
- 10.372 K: Ja.
- 10.373 G: Yes.
- 10.374 K: No I have a better understanding of what's going on.
- 10.375 G: And now you wanted to fight and now you want to draw closer. Okay.
- 10.376 N: I just planned all my teas and lunches to spend with you [R].
- 10.377 D: And the shake? Was out of?
[Silence]
- 10.378 A: I guess I want to shake you because I feel like you don't, this decision that you've made is just so strong that I, and I feel like maybe you've... you, you're stopping yourself from experiencing life, a bit. Or part of life maybe. [R nods]
And it's all been a conscious decision and I respect that and I would, I mean because of the experience and all of that and a lot of it has come out of that like you've said. But I, I almost think, there's a def... you do have feelings and it comes out every now and then and they're like little gems and I guess I want to shake you because I want to just shake away that head space that's made this kind of spin around you and kind of loosen it up a bit and let you feel.
[Silence]
- 10.379 R: It's a very conscious decision to block out that part of life. Uhm, and I understand that that's frustrating as someone who embraces that part of life both when you're out of this group, it's a part of life that you embrace. For me it's a part of life that's a, both as a defence mechanism and also as a very hard life lesson, I've had to block out. And it's, you've also got to hear it in the context of, not in R the person but as R the husband, R the father.
[1:03:00]
-] 10.380 A:
Absolutely.
- 10.381 R: So for me that decision is not just about me. That decision is about my wife. That decision is about my son. That decision is about my home. And that means that there, ja, there are very, very clear distinctions or borders and boundaries that we put up. And in time, who knows, as I become a more whole person those boundaries may be chipped away.
- 10.382 A: [?]
- 10.383 R: But at this point they are very much in place.
- 10.384 K: When was the incident with the...
- 10.385 G: Could we, could we...

- 10.386 K: Quick answer.
- 10.387 G: Could we maybe not go there?
- 10.388 K: I just want to know how many years ago.
- 10.389 R: Seven years ago. We can talk about it over lunch if you really want to.
- 10.390 H: I just want to say for the first time now you've revealed, you've acknowledged the fact that you are building defence mechanisms to protect yourself...
- 10.391 K: And still [?]
- 10.392 H: ... and that's what I needed to hear.
- 10.393 R: Okay.
- 10.394 H: That it may not be the real R showing himself because he's defending himself. Now I'm okay and we can move on.
- 10.395 G: There's a lot more in what he said. That he's battling with it. And he answered your [K] question. Seven years is a long time.
- 10.396 J: There's something that I'm learning...
- 10.397 G: Yes?
- 10.398 J: ...and, I'm married as well and to see this man, to hear this from R, is to me, and he's such a great almost like a hekweg of iets, because you can see what an affair can do to a person. It just makes it so... to see that pain that someone can go through uhm, and that's not even the person on the receiving side. He was the person doing the act. Is to me a lesson for marriage. Just personally knowing, guard this, defend this. If you are, so for me, I mean you always get into situations where you feel tempted. That temptation is there. And this to me is such a, a... it's almost like a lesson that I learn without having to learn it. And...
- 10.399 G: Because of what R has shown you...
- 10.400 J: Because of what he's going through. I mean he's not
- 10.401 G: ... treatment and stuff...
- 10.402 J: ...not what he's going through but also has been going through for a number of years and if it can have such a strong effect on him then it just teaches me how sacred or almost magical [N leaves room] or intense that marriage relationship can be and [?] That's something that I've learned from you. Thanks for that.
- 10.403 R: You're welcome. Any time [?] it's all yours.
[1:06:03]
[Silence]
- 10.404 D: It's also made me take a lesson from his book. To hear from what the group says that you shared a little bit about who you are as a person to us all here, without spilling the guts or the beans or whatever. And maybe that is something to take back from, to say that after seven years, it is maybe an experimental space to try and see if I cannot regain some of that life by trying to share snippets of allowing the emotions. Beyond just the terrible ones that I've left behind and that I'm dealing with every day. But what I hear is for them trying to, even if it's some small little ventures into that space. That it might allow you an opportunity to realise that you can regain that through them but also through other relationships. And I think that's basically what the group is trying to say to you. To say that try that, venture there. Even if it's still hard. Because it's a long, long time to deliberately build the fences, [panic?], has the effect of chasing people away but when realising what you're going through, it actually draws them closer

to you. Where that's so different from the intended effect of actually taking it away. And in a way that's very similar, that's J's book about him and his father, it's just about something about that that's a little bit the same. Where the opportunity lies in either to comfort or to loosen it a little bit or to replace it. A different content, but probably a similar opportunity that the group gave him that they also probably wanted to give you. My summary and preaching and lecturing and...

10.405 G: Closing.

10.406 D:

...closing.

[Laughter] 10.407

K: Smoking.

10.408 Ay: Can I say two things? R, I feel like you've taught me something about the marriage vow, forsaking all others. Just that. And I also feel like you've given me a tentative acceptance to my invitation.

10.409 D: Did you like it?

10.410 Ay: Both of them, yes. I mean, just a bit more on the forsaking all others with the marriage vow now. I've always struggled with that a bit. [N returns] I think I want to have great relationships across the board and I want to be pleasant across the board and

I'm hearing that R has made a choice to prioritise his wife and his son in his emotional space. And I can say that because I've heard R speak to his son on the phone and it's a very different R to what we see here. And I respect that and it just makes me realise how much energy he's dedicating to his family. So it's not a worry that R is not an emotional being, I know he is, it's just in this context.

[1:09:10]

10.411 D: Of course, but that's what the group is telling him.

10.412 Ay: And making that choice is admirable, for me, because that's what forsaking all others in a marriage means. What I'm learning about it obviously.

10.413 D: H, you [?]. You were very involved initially. Where are you now on this issue?

10.414 H: I now, I feel better. I'm not angry at you anymore. Because I just wanted you to say that you are, you have put up boundaries and it is a defence mechanism. Just by admitting that I feel better.

[Silence]

10.415 R: May I just respond to that? I would have been very aware that that is a defence mechanism. I think the dynamic for the group has just been verbalising it for you guys.

So it hasn't been, that hasn't been a particular learning for me. It's been a conscious thing in my defence. And so I've known that but I think it's been good for you hear it.

10.416 H: Ja.

10.417 D: And maybe you probably didn't realise up to now how distancing...

10.418 R: Ja, that has been an interesting insight.

10.419 D: ...in a work relationship.

10.420 G: From the effect.

10.421 D: Ja, the effect. You probably didn't realise what the effect was, of that conscious decision, on him [Ay] in a business situation.

10.422 R: [?]

[Silence]

10.423 G: Okay? Right. It's not break. Yes, let's make, it's not tea. No? The tea probably wouldn't be here...

10.424 N: There is tea outside.

10.425 D: Is it?

10.426 G: Tea time.

10.427 Ay: [?]

[Laughter]