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Transitions of Women Counsellors-in-Training: Self-Defining Memories,
Narratives, and Possible Selves

by

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

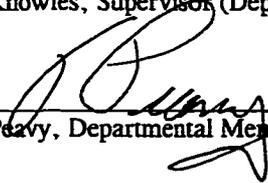
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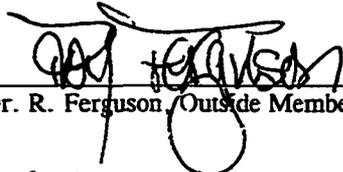
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ABSTRACT

A descriptive case study approach was used to learn more about the transitions experienced by women counsellor trainees. The transitions that counsellors-in-training face are multi-faceted and challenging. Information was sought about the ways counsellor trainees adapted to these challenges, particularly any methods that helped them be resilient or to grow during the transitions.

Three women graduate students in the Masters program were interviewed in depth at three points in their counsellor training: program entry, after pre-practicum, and end of practicum. The interviews used the “lenses” of narratives, self-defining memories (SDMs), and possible selves to understand the influence of the past, present and anticipated future on the women’s transition process. Using inductive analytic techniques, transcripts of the interviews were analyzed on a case-by-case basis, cumulating in a detailed narrative account of each woman’s unique experience in the transition over time. The bulk of the study is a description of the three very different journeys of the women participants. In addition, common themes and patterns across the cases were briefly noted and described.

The case studies revealed a complex interaction between the women’s SDMs, current experiences, and possible selves. Their unique personal histories, strengths, and unresolved issues from the past were found to influence the types of challenges they faced or chose within the transition. The women’s possible selves and projected SDMs often reflected their current concerns, and foretold upcoming developments in their lives. Overly strong feared selves (imbalanced possible selves), which were associated with a feeling of threat and low self-confidence, interfered with one woman’s readiness to respond to the challenges presented by the transition.

SDMs generated richly detailed narratives, were responsive to change and could, themselves, facilitate change. The research interview unintentionally also facilitated change. Participants welcomed the opportunity to discuss their experiences in greater detail than they had elsewhere; they felt supported during the interview, and found it helpful to create a context that they could use to make meaning of their experiences.

Overall, participants found counsellor training more overwhelming, intense, and time-consuming than they had anticipated. At the start of training, these strongly motivated women, accustomed to independence and feeling competent, suddenly found themselves in a new environment being watched and assessed as they tried to acquire new skills. Their self-confidence dropped dramatically and they became uncomfortably focused on external direction and feedback. Initially, perseverance, determination and the strength of their dream to become a counsellor kept them pushing onwards with their graduate work. Gradually, as they began to accumulate successes in their training environment, and they reached out to peers for support (or their peers approached them for help), their fear of not belonging and their unreasonably high expectations for performance began to abate. The women's confidence rebuilt as they came to realize they did belong, and could acquire the basic skills to be a counsellor.

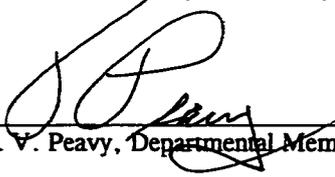
Once the women became more assured that they could handle the academic and counselling skills of the program, their efforts tended to shift from perseverance, survival, and meeting external demands to developing a more internal focus. They began to integrate the material in more personally meaningful ways and to sculpt more personal visions of their counselling goals. There was also a shift towards integrating the academic material with their practical counselling experiences, their values and their lifestyle choices.

Although general patterns were observed across the case studies, the individual variations in the women's experiences were far more striking than their commonalities. The unique personal histories, strengths, preferences, values, life circumstances, and perspectives of the women significantly influenced the type of transition they experienced.

Examiners:



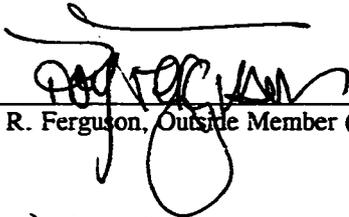
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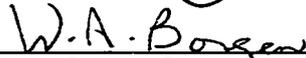
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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents, Joan and Tom Jardine who have loved and supported me throughout the transitions in my life. They have always believed in me and encouraged me to have the courage and strength to follow my dreams. This dissertation is also dedicated to my son, Michael, who has been a loving and energetic reminder of the important things in the world beyond research, writing, counselling and academics.

Introduction

The transition to become a counsellor is a multifaceted one. Women who enter into counsellor training programs bring many past experiences, present strengths, abilities and values, as well as a dream, and sense of purpose, to the transition. When they step into the training, many strands interweave to create the type of transition they will experience. The women's image of themselves during training is the result of a complex interweaving of significant memories from the past, current experiences and the anticipated future. The transition is a tapestry of past, present and future experiences that shifts and reshapes as the women move through their training. A researcher who wishes to understand this transition needs to examine the shifting patterns of the women's experiences as they progress through the transition.

The patterns of the women's experiences are dynamic. The threads from their past experiences are repeatedly re-examined, re-connected, and re-woven to create new patterns. Previous patterns are re-examined in the context of the new experiences, patterns and possibilities they encounter. Likewise, their current experiences are examined through the frameworks of meaning they have created from past experiences. The women's past and present experiences and imagined future are like a multi-dimensional layering of tapestries. Some of the patterns in these tapestries are more sharply defined, richly textured and predominant. Other patterns in the tapestries are more shadowy, fading, or wraith-like. Some patterns may be stark, somber, or bleak. In contrast, some patterns although soft and pale, burgeon with the potential of vibrant hues. Within this shifting interplay of layered patterns, textures, and colours, the women attempt to bring shape, dimension and structure to their experiences by constructing narratives to describe their lives.

A considerable amount can be learned about the transition to become a counsellor from the study of their narratives over time. The woman's voice as the narrator of her story, and the way she describes her experience can provide insight into her conceptualization of the world and the choices she perceives available within the transition. Her narratives illustrate her goals, unresolved conflicts, and the skills she uses to resolve tensions or conflicts during the transition. The narratives can also highlight her sources of strength and resilience as well as areas of growth and development.

The transition to counsellor training can be difficult, it can challenge students on many fronts, and call on them to access many strengths. Sawatzky, Jevne and Clark (1994), for example, described a cyclic process of counsellor development where students experience dissonance and try to find ways to respond to that dissonance, try to relate to supervision and to find ways to feel empowered again. Students experience dissonance as they recognize gaps in their skills, knowledge and experience. They then go through the emotional turmoil of facing their weaknesses, struggling to discover new strengths, experimenting with their abilities, changing their attitudes, redefining their capabilities and limits, and taking risks. Students also face the challenge of responding to clients and to supervision. In addition,

they need to: develop trust in themselves, clarify and integrate their personal and professional selves, access resources, become self-reflective, develop autonomy, and establish collegial relationships.

Sawatzky, Jevne and Clark observed that during the training process both the professional and personal selves of the students were “deeply touched and challenged” (p. 183).

Stewart (1995) also described a variety of challenges that students face during their transition to become counsellors. Some of these challenges include “maintaining motivation, meeting academic demands and developing a clear sense of purpose” (p. 21), and learning how to deal with “increased isolation, decreased independence and intense scrutiny” (p. 21). Students try to respond to these challenges at a time when they may be feeling alienated from outside supports who do not understand their difficulties in the program. Counsellors-in-training may not be comfortable or ready to reach out to other students for support because they feel insecure, fearful, or in competition with these students. Stewart suggested that trainees may find the challenges so threatening that they become fearful of the risks associated with their new learning opportunities, and focus on self-preservation rather than growth and change.

Although the transition to train as a counsellor is chosen (rather than normative, random or unexpected) and students have a variety of personally meaningful reasons for making the choice, it can, nevertheless, be extremely challenging. The transition is multifaceted and involves a variety of changes in a relatively short time period: e.g., identity, meaning making, skills and perspectives, time management, self-care, priorities, home life, as well as peer groups and professional relationships. The many changes associated with the transition can be overwhelming to the students who undertake it (Marshall & Andersen, 1995; Sawatzky, Jevne & Clark, 1994; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992). The students who choose this transition may find it more threatening or difficult than they had anticipated.

Some students will be ready to respond to the invitations for growth that are inherent in counsellor training, whereas others may not be ready to take on the risks and challenges associated with the training and may, instead, need to focus on self-preservation. Counsellor training can be very demanding and difficult, even overwhelming, but many of the women who choose this transition make it a rewarding and fulfilling experience for themselves. It would be helpful to obtain more detailed information about the ways women not only manage to negotiate this challenging transition, but to also grow and develop through the process.

Definition of Transition

The term transition, itself, has been used in the literature in a variety of ways. Some researchers have used transition interchangeably with change. Hopson (1981) has argued firmly against such a liberal use of the word. In his opinion, transition should not be used synonymous with change, and he has criticized researchers who either explicitly or implicitly use it in that manner. Hopson’s position has

been that there is some similarity between the two terms because they both involve a kind of discontinuity, but that transitions involve more than just discontinuity. He emphasized the "phenomenological nature" of transitions and suggested they be defined "as requiring new behavioral responses in addition to personal awarenesses (p. 37)". Schlossberg (1981) advocated a similar definition to Hopson's. She defined a transition as occurring "if an event or nonevent results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one's behavior and relationships" (p. 5). Mercer, Nichols and Doyle (1989) adopted an even more encompassing definition:

transitions are defined as turning points, a point of reference from which a person's life course takes a new direction requiring adaptation or change in restructuring behaviors and roles appropriate to the new direction. In addition to a change in behavioral response and new roles this new direction in the life course also requires change in responsibilities, goals, identity, and feelings about one's self in general. (p. 2)

These definitions are consistent with the way transition has been conceptualized for this research. A transition will be defined as an experience where the person is faced with (or, in the case of this research, has chosen to undertake) the challenge of having to develop new self-perceptions, goals, changes in behavior and/or another way of relating to others.

Schlossberg (1981) concluded after extensive research on transitions that it was not the transition, itself, that was of primary importance "but rather how that transition fits with an individual's stage, situation, and style at the time of transition" (p. 5). This is consistent with the emphasis that Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson and McKee (1978) placed on the individual's role in the transition:

the primary tasks of a transitional period are to question and reappraise the existing structure, to explore various possibilities for change in self and world, and to move toward commitment to the crucial choices that form the basis for the new life structure. (p. 49).

Other authors (e.g., Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Hermans & Kempen, 1993; Mishler, 1986; Polkinghorne, 1991; Sarbin, 1986) have emphasized, however, that the researcher must study more than the individual alone, that the context of the individual's history, narrative structure, and way of making meaning out of experience, need also to be included.

The present study was based on the premise that it would be important to study women within the context of their experiences. The women were viewed as probably having a dynamic and interactional relationship with their environments, and that they would likely both be affected by, and have an effect on, their experiences. It was believed that it would be helpful to learn more about the women's history, self-image, and how they made meaning of their experiences. It was also thought that the context that surrounded a particular woman's transition would have some influence how she would choose to handle the transition. In the face of discontinuity, when old self-perceptions needed to shift or change, that she would likely struggle to create meaning and coherence out of her experience. It was hoped that the

women's narratives would provide useful clues about the way that their history, current experiences and anticipated future influence their transition.

Narrative

The transition of training to become a professional counsellor is so multi-faceted and can involve such a variety of changes that any attempt to understand it needs to be sensitive to many intrapersonal factors which interact over time. This, however, can be a difficult process to assess, as Bullough and Stokes (1994) state:

no set of images is more slippery, nor perhaps more abstract, yet of greater importance educationally than those associated with conceptions of the self, the kind of person we imagine ourself to be and how that person is supposed to relate to the world...Coherence of self, the sameness that we take as proof of having a core identity, has become increasingly difficult to achieve and maintain (Gergen, 1991). Nevertheless, all situations demand a degree of coherence that allows a measure of predictability and stability in interaction and in relationships. The need for coherence is a practical matter of having to cope with reality. (p. 199)

They suggested that a useful way to articulate these slippery and abstract images of the self is through the telling of a story, a self-narrative; "to tell a story is to create a purposeful coherence of meanings, to impose a pattern (Olney, 1972, p. 326) that, despite inevitable ambiguity, enables consistency of interpretation and action" (p. 199). The study of an individual's narratives over the course of the transition is a way to learn more about the way that person creates a thread of purpose and meaning during a time of upheaval and change.

Sarbin (1986) argued that the narrative "is the organizing principle for human action" (p. 9) and that it is "a fruitful metaphor for examining and interpreting human action" (p. 19). In a similar vein, Connelly and Clandinin (1986) suggested that narratives can render "life experience meaningful through the unity they achieve for the person" (p. 297). Hermans and Kempen (1993) also emphasized the importance of narratives because people are "continually ordering and reordering the events that they consider relevant in their own lives" (p. 15). Experiences were not seen as fixed events that happen to people, but rather as something that is "reinterpreted and re-created" through self-reflection (Hermans, 1989). Similarly, Polkinghorne (1991) believed that narratives could yield important information about people because their narratives configure and give coherence to temporal experience. These narratives included future as well as past and present experiences. For instance, if an anticipated outcome did not occur, then he believed the event that actually did occur would cause the person to back and alter his or her narrative into a form that would better fit what had happened (p. 140). Singer (1995) stated that although narratives are most often associated with memories "we should recognize that we engage in the narration of our experience in the present ... and in the possible future" (p. 448).

Cohler (1991) suggested that the life story is an important way to understand psychological resilience. He described the narrative as a way people integrate "the presently remembered past, experienced present, and anticipated future, into an account that makes sense of lived time" (p. 185). He believed there was an important relationship between someone's personal narrative and resilience:

psychological resilience is reflected in the ability to maintain coherence and integration of the life story throughout times of unexpected personal misfortune and adverse life changes ... as well as "canonical" or expectable life transitions (e.g., graduation or retirement). (p. 185)

Cohler suggested that the detailed study of a person's life story could help illustrate factors which permit certain individuals to remain "relatively resilient." Similarly, Clandinin and Connelly (1994) pointed out that the kind of narrative an individual tells could influence his or her growth; "difficult as it may be to tell a story, the more difficult but important task in narrative is the retelling of stories that allow for growth and change" (p. 418). Therefore, the study of the personal narratives of counsellors in training may help to identify sources of their resilience during transition.

Two other concepts, self-defining memories and possible selves, are also likely to help understand the transition process. If the study of personal narratives can help to articulate important images of the self in the present, then self-defining memories (a link with important aspects of the self in the past) and possible selves (the selves that are envisioned for the future) can also potentially provide a context to better understand the self. Both of these concepts are sensitive to, and can help to develop a clearer picture of, areas such as personal meaning, identity, personal goals and strivings, that a person struggles with during a challenging transition. These concepts are dynamic, interactive, sensitive to changes within the individual and to fluctuations over time, and they are able to address questions of meaning, identity, goals and process. In the sections which follow, these two concepts and the way they can potentially contribute to our understanding of this transition will be briefly discussed.

Self-Defining Memories

Singer and Solovey (1993) suggested that the study of narrative memory, via self-defining memories, is an effective way to learn more about individuals because it is a "beginning step toward capturing the complex interactions of affect, cognition, and motivation in personality" (p. 210). They believed that individuals' definitions of who they are will strongly influence their current behavior, what they imagine possible for themselves in the future, and what they will strive to achieve. They proposed that an important part of personality comes from "the story we construct of our lives" (p. 80) and that self-defining memories and personal strivings are the "raw material" of this story. The study of the narratives of these self-defining memories makes it possible to develop a greater awareness of how individuals come to act the way they do, the goals they are focused on, and important areas that remain unresolved.

Singer and Solovey (1993) described self-defining memories (SDMs) as a "unique collection of autobiographical memories" (p. 12); "representative images [which] crystalize characteristic interests,

motives, or concerns of an individual into a shorthand moment...an intra-individual archetype" (p. 12). They believed these SDMs are often organized around the unique goals of the individual, and can help to identify the personal strivings and long-term goals of the individual. Singer and Solovey defined SDMs as "vivid, affectively charged, repetitive, linked to other similar memories, and related to an important unresolved theme or enduring concern in an individual's life" (p. 13). They suggested that these memories only remain emotionally intense or vivid to the degree the individual perceives them to be linked to something presently important, or something he or she anticipates will matter in the future. Thus, self-defining memories can help identify important recurring themes and representative images, as well as the person's goals and strivings.

Singer and Solovey suggested that SDMs and goals influence each other: memories can motivate behavior, particular goals may shape how memories are recollected, and the memories can influence the person's goals. Self-defining memories are, therefore, dynamic and interactive, they can be sensitive to change, and can over time influence the individual to change. Singer and Solovey (1993) proposed that it would be particularly useful to follow SDMs over time:

Longitudinal research would allow us in the most ideal circumstances to learn of an important experience in an individual's life as it is happening or shortly after it has occurred. We could then trace how this experience becomes part of personal history, evolving over six months, a year, five years, a decade, and so on. (p. 200)

Although they have not yet collected experimental data on SDMs over time, Singer indicated (J. A. Singer, personal communication, July 23, 1996) that he has found "some wonderful clinical examples of changes in patients' memories over time" through his practice. Self-defining memories may, thus provide potentially useful information about an individual's experience through transition.

It is also possible that the process, itself, of developing SDMs may influence the quality of an individual's life. These memories have the potential to help individuals "construct a coherent narrative that unifies and offers purpose to the life they have lived, are living, and hope to live" (p. 118). The memories may also enable individuals to find meaning and coherence locating their "memories, goals, and scripts in the larger context of a life story of identity" (p. 68). The importance of meaning, purpose, goals and identity within the transition can be followed over time to develop a greater understanding of their contributions to a sense of well-being.

SDMs are well suited to a longitudinal study, they are responsive to change, and can provide richly textured descriptive narratives. SDMs have the potential to provide information about the person's identity, meaning making, personal strivings, and goals. SDMs provide a lens through which it is possible to get a clearer view of what is currently important to that person, and the future that he or she has been trying to achieve.

Possible Selves

Possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) are another potentially useful way to learn more about the transitions of counsellors-in-training. Self-defining memories use the lens of the past to learn more about the person's perspective, whereas possible selves use the lens of the future to learn more about the person. Markus and Nurius (1986), described the concept of possible selves as:

individuals' ideas of what they might become, what they would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming ... a conceptual link between cognition and motivation. Possible selves are the cognitive components of hopes, fears, goals, and threats, and they give the specific self-relevant form, meaning, organization, and direction to these dynamics. Possible selves are important, first, because they function as incentives for future behavior (i.e., they are selves to be approached or avoided) and second, because they provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of the self. (p. 954)

Possible selves can illustrate the framework an individual develops to make sense of past behaviors, provide a context to understand and evaluate present behaviors, and create goals or incentives for future behaviors. Possible selves can provide an evaluative context in the future analogous to the evaluative context that self-defining memories can provide of the past.

Possible selves can be useful to help understand transitions because they are dynamic, "specifying systemic elements that direct, facilitate, and constrain self-concept changes, both momentary shifts and more enduring revisions, and thereby link much of one's instrumental behavior to the self-concept" (Nurius, 1989; p. 289). Markus and Nurius (1986) found possible selves to be very sensitive to change:

they comprise the self knowledge that is the most vulnerable and responsive to changes in the environment. They are the first elements of the self-concept to absorb and reveal such change. As representations of potential, possible selves will thus be particularly sensitive to those situations that communicate new or inconsistent information about the self. (p. 956)

When an individual responds to change, his or her first reaction is often alarm over the imagined or hoped for futures that might be lost. Similarly, a transition is often initiated when an individual wants to move closer to an imagined possible self. Possible selves are, therefore, likely to provide insights into changes within the self that have been evoked by an individual's struggle with a challenging transition.

Nurius (1989) briefly cited a study which did investigate a number of women undergoing a life transition. It was found that these women (who were struggling with a developmental life change) demonstrated:

- (1) discrepant and seemingly contradictory self-views simultaneously salient under certain conditions,
- (2) an unsuccessful tendency to impose a me/not me framework in an attempt to 'decide' what self conceptions were 'actually true,' and
- (3) a pattern of chronically feeling conflicted, confused, and dissatisfied with her time and energy decisions regarding the life domains that the self-conceptions represented. (p. 291-292)

Research generated by Markus and Nurius suggested that the investigation of possible selves may be particularly relevant in the study of individuals in transition. Other research, on delinquent behavior

(Oyserman & Markus, 1990a; Oyserman & Markus, 1990b) demonstrated that nondelinquent youths were more likely to demonstrate balanced possible selves (i.e., both their expected and feared selves covered similar domains) than the most delinquent youths. Taken together, these two studies suggested that consistency (or a lack of contradiction) within various possible selves may be associated with higher levels of functioning. Similarly, contradictory selves may be associated with feelings of conflict and confusion. Further information on how possible selves change, or remain constant, could provide a better understanding of the transition process. For example, although contradictory selves may be associated with conflict and confusion, it would unlikely be functional for possible selves to remain completely static during significant upheaval.

Markus and Nurius (1986) asked students in their research how often they thought about how they were in the past, and approximately one third of the students indicated either a great deal of the time, or all of the time. They found that close to two thirds thought about themselves in the future a great deal of the time, or all of the time. The amount of time these students spent thinking about the past and the future suggest that it may be helpful to examine both self-defining memories and possible selves.

Individuals can use possible selves to provide themselves with a context to view themselves. These possible selves can help them to project themselves in the future, and give them an evaluative framework they can use to judge themselves. A greater understanding of possible selves could yield a wealth of information about individuals' hoped-for and feared selves, their identity, what they find meaningful, and how they evaluate themselves relative to their goals. Self-defining memories and the richness of the narrative can hopefully provide information regarding their recurring themes, their unresolved issues, as well as their personal identity and goals. These memories can also provide a better understanding of how they evaluate themselves in relationship to their past. Finally, individuals' personal narratives of their present experience, and their attempt to create a coherence of meaning and self within their current struggles, can also provide useful information about their transition process.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to develop a better understanding of how individual women manage the transition of training to become a counsellor. The women were studied via the lenses of narrative, possible selves, and self-defining memories using a descriptive case study approach.

Unfortunately relatively little is known about how normal women manage under difficult circumstances. Historically, more attention has been addressed to pathology than to normal functioning. Josselson (1990) called women a "modern sphinx" (Chapter 1), because so little is known about their normal adult development:

psychology at present has no theory of normal development in women. We have statistical studies that examine how one variable goes with another, and survey studies filled with percentages rather than with people. We have life-history studies of patients. But we do not have the intensive data on normal women on which any theory must be based. Most often, psychological writers who wish to

consider phenomena among normal women turn to novels for characters to illustrate their points. (p. xii)

She has suggested that “clinical psychologists are much more accustomed to understanding the roots of troubles; we know less about the ingredients that make for harmonious adjustment” (p. 9). Although there have been some exceptions (e.g., Bateson, 1989; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Josselson, 1990; Mercer, Nichols, & Doyle, 1989; Roberts & Newton, 1987), there is still a dearth of in-depth information available about women’s “normal” adjustment over time. Even less is known about how some women manage to do well during difficult transitions.

Josselson (1990) concluded after her in-depth interviews of women over time, that they came to be happy in different ways because “different choices bring different gratifications, challenges, and struggles” (p. 9). The intent of this study was to learn more about the individual struggles, challenges and strategies of several women as they made choices in their transitions, and how this fit within the context of their lives. The focus of this research was to find out more about the complicated processes that enable individuals to not only undertake and manage something difficult, but to sometimes grow and develop through the process.

The purpose of this research was to examine the transition as the women went through it, rather than to investigate transitions from a retrospective perspective. The focus was to discover how the women experienced the transition while it was unfolding. There is a lack of longitudinal research regarding changes in self-defining memories and possible selves over time. Singer and Solovey (1993) provided anecdotal accounts that self-defining memories changed over time, but no systematic research. They do, however, state that:

perhaps the most interesting and ultimately most revealing test of self-defining memories as a useful measure in personality research will be to examine both subtle changes and steadfast consistencies in the same memory over a period of decades in an individual’s life. Longitudinal research would allow us in the most ideal circumstances to learn of an important experience in an individual’s life as it is happening or shortly after it has occurred. (p. 200)

While the study of self-defining memories over decades was clearly beyond the scope of this research, it was possible to study how a self-defining memories changed over a briefer time period, for a particular transition.

There has been a similar lack of longitudinal research on possible selves. Most of the studies investigating possible selves have compared the possible selves of different groups (e.g., delinquent vs. nondelinquent youths, good vs. poor recovery following a crisis, younger vs. older age groups) rather than following one group over time. Two researchers did, however, assess the variation in possible selves over short time spans. Oyserman and Markus (1990a) asked psychology students to identify 3 expected and 3 feared possible selves and then asked them to do the same task three weeks later. In their sample of 63 students they found:

90% of respondents generated at least two of the expected selves generated 3 weeks earlier, and 45% of respondents generated all three of the expected selves generated earlier. There were no respondents that did not generate at least one expected self that was the same as that generated earlier. With respect to feared selves, 74% of respondents generated at least two of the feared selves generated 3 weeks earlier, and 25% of respondents generated all three. Only two respondents did not generate any of the feared selves generated in response to the first questionnaire. (p. 115)

Thus, while the majority of possible selves remained the same over the three week span, there was considerable individual variation. The majority of students showed some change in possible selves (e.g., change in at least one possible self) over the three weeks. Feared selves, in particular, appeared to be less similar over time; it is interesting to speculate if perhaps, they are more situationally responsive than expected selves (there is not yet sufficient evidence to support that). The second study comparing selves over time was conducted by Ryff (1991). She found test-retest reliabilities ranging from 0.81 to 0.88 over a six week period on a 20 item scale where she asked people to rate present, ideal, past and future selves. None of the other studies reviewed have studied possible selves over longer periods of time, so the exact variability of possible selves remains somewhat unknown. Possible selves are, however, with the exception of "core" selves, expected to be dynamic and responsive to change. Further information about how, or whether, they vary during a transition could have some theoretical utility.

The information from this study could potentially be of practical use. Many clients come to counselling because they are struggling with difficult transitions. Research that contributes further to our knowledge of how women manage to do well, rather than break down or develop pathology, when they are faced with the challenge of a difficult transition would be useful. In addition, research in this area could contribute to our understanding of the transition process in general. Information about how counsellors experience and manage the transitions they go through in training could also potentially help the counsellors-in-training as well as their instructors and supervisors.

Method

Procedure

The instructors of the pre-practicum class were approached for permission to contact the incoming class of Masters level counselling students at the University of Victoria (see Table 1 for an overview of the steps taken during the research). After permission had been granted, the researcher went into the class, explained the nature of the research, discussed issues around confidentiality, and answered any of the student's questions about the research. The women in the class then received a form, and were asked to fill in the first box on the form if they did not want to be contacted to participate in the research. The women who did wish to be contacted were asked to fill in the second box on the form and to indicate their name and phone number. The women were then asked to fold their forms so their response would not be visible to their classmates, and the researcher collected the forms.

Four of the incoming women Masters students ($n = 12$) volunteered to be contacted regarding participation in the study. These volunteers were contacted by phone, and the study was described in greater detail. No deceptions were involved. The researcher then answered any of their questions, and appointments were then set up for the first research interviews.

At the first interview the women were verbally informed of the researcher's identity; the nature of confidentiality; the likely time commitment; the voluntary nature of participation, and its lack of effect on grades or standing in the program; their right to refuse to answer questions or withdraw from the study at any time; and the security of the research materials. They were then asked to read and complete the consent form (see Appendix A).

The women were interviewed at three points different points in their program: (a) in September, at the beginning of the Master's program; (b) at the end of the first semester, as they were completing their pre-practicum; and (c) in the second semester, at the end of their practicum. The timing of these interviews was chosen to correspond with different stages of their graduate training, significant change points in the program. The first interview corresponded with the formal start of their graduate training. The second interview took place after the women had completed their first semester, it marked approximately the half-way point for the women who would be completing their program in one year, the end of their pre-practicum, and the advent of practicum. The final interview was at the end of their practicum, their first opportunity to use their counselling skills in a community setting.

The interviews generally lasted between one and a half and two and a half hours, with the last interview taking the most time. The interviews were tape recorded. The interviews took place in a quiet business office close to the campus. There were no outside interruptions during the interviews. Approximately half way through the interview a break was offered for tea. The women reported finding the environment of the office comfortable, quiet and secure.

Table 1. Overview of Steps Taken During the Research Process

Research Stage	Steps
pilot work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -open ended questionnaire administered to class of fourth year graduating students in Child and Youth Care regarding their transitions -developed transition tree using Child and Youth Care questionnaire responses, feedback from former counselling students and the researcher's own experience -developed and tested transition interview, transition questionnaire, and transition tree with 2 Child and Youth Care students -modified interview, retained transition tree, and dropped transition questionnaire, and interviewed 5 first year students approaching the end of their practicum -final modifications to interview guide were made
data collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the incoming class of counselling students (approximately 12 were female) was approached, the purpose of study and confidentiality were explained, and their questions about the research were answered. Four female students volunteered to participate in the research (via a confidential written consent form given to all female students in the class). -the 4 women volunteers were contacted by phone, details about the study and confidentiality were explained, and any of their questions were answered. An appointment was set up for the interview. -the women were individually interviewed at Time 1 (at the start of their program), Time 2 (the end of their first semester), and Time 3 (end of their practicum). The interviews were audiotaped.
data analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the interview tapes were transcribed verbatim by a confidential secretary from outside the university. -the transcripts were read by the researcher while listening to the interview tapes. Corrections were made, and additional observations re: voice tone, etc. were added to the transcript. -the set of transcripts for one woman was read, notes were made in the margins regarding observations, patterns, or strong themes. -the transcripts were then re-read and different coloured highlighting pens were used to highlight quotes pertaining to transitions, possible selves (hoped-for and feared selves were separately identified), SDMs and feedback about the research process and interviews. -summary tables of quotes were constructed for transitions, helpers who had influenced their model of what a helper should or shouldn't be, hoped-for and feared selves. These summary tables and the transcripts were then shared with the woman, and she was asked to comment on their accuracy. -individual descriptive case studies were then constructed using inductive analytic techniques. Patterns and themes within the woman's interviews were noted and quotes were selected from the transcripts to illustrate these themes. Quotes were edited to omit repetitions, circumlocutions, slurrings and colloquialisms. -the first case study used verbal descriptions to report the themes. The succeeding case studies also used a conceptual factoring technique to organize the quotes into thematic categories within tables. -after the research supervisor read and gave his feedback to the case studies, the case studies were shared with the other committee members who also gave their feedback. In addition, a former student of the program who is now a practicing counsellor in the community read and gave feedback about one of the case studies. Changes were then made in the case studies on the basis of the feedback.

The interview tapes were then transcribed by a confidential secretary. When the set of interviews for one of the women had been transcribed, the researcher listened to the tapes and compared them to the transcript, making corrections as necessary. After reading and studying the transcripts the researcher compiled tables listing quotes from the sections of the transcript where the woman described her transitions, her hoped-for and feared selves, and her models of what a counsellor should or should not be. The woman was then given a copy of the transcripts from the three interviews and the tables of quotes, and asked to check how accurately they reflected what had been said in the interview. She was explicitly asked to consider the transcripts and tables from the perspective of her experience at the time of the interview, rather than from her current perspective. The woman was asked to review her transcripts after the third interview had been completed in the hope that it would minimize the influence of previous interviews and reduce the likelihood of researcher-induced response biases. The woman was asked to briefly write her impressions of the accuracy of the transcripts and tables. Once the researcher received the woman's feedback, she proceeded to analyze the transcript and to write up that woman's case study. When a case study was completed, the researcher went on to validate the next transcript, get feedback from the next woman and to produce her case study.

All four of the students who volunteered for the study were interviewed. They were given research code names corresponding to the first four letters of the alphabet, Ann, Bonnie, Clara, and Diane. After the first two case studies were completed, it became apparent that there would not be sufficient room for four case studies at the same depth as the first two. A choice had to be made between depth and breadth. The choice was made to retain the richness of detail across the case studies, and to reduce the total number of case studies to three. The case studies of the first three women interviewed (i.e., Ann, Bonnie, and Clara) were included in this research.

Questions

An interview guide was used for the research rather than a pre-formatted and heavily-structured interview schedule (see Appendix B for the interview guide). The list of questions served as a guide for the research interview, the exact wording and ordering of questions varied across interviews. As Mishler (1986b) cited Lazarsfeld (1935) as saying "it seems to us much more important that the question be fixed in its meaning, than in the wording (p. 4)" (p. 22). Preference was given to adapting the wording and approach to suit each individual woman's style and personality. This format allowed the researcher to pursue the natural lines of inquiry in the women's narratives in a manner that was less intrusive or distracting than a heavily structured format.

At the start of each interview, the women were reminded about the nature of confidentiality, that their participation was strictly voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time. After that reminder, the women

were asked questions about their experience of training to be a counsellor, their self-defining memories and their possible selves. Additional questions were also asked about the women's other influences, such as other transitions, helper models, and supports.

Ryff's (1991) research indicated that her subjects found it difficult to engage in temporal comparisons (about past or future selves) if they had not first assessed their present selves. She also stated it would be helpful to ask an open-ended question orienting the participant to the time frame being assessed, before the interview launched into more structured questions. Although pilot research did not reveal any apparent difficulties when the women were asked to generate self-defining memories at the beginning of the interview, a question that asked them about their experiences training to become a counsellor was chosen to start the interview. This question was placed at the beginning, before any other questions were asked, in order to minimize the effect the interview might have had on their initial narratives. A brief description of the various sections of the interview will follow.

Narratives.

Researchers using narrative techniques have emphasized the importance of eliciting fresh, in the moment responses rather than pre-analyzed, cognitively processed, rational explanations of their experience. Kvale (1996), for example, stated that the first step in the interview is to get subjects to "describe their lived world" (p. 189) and to "spontaneously tell what they experience, feel, and do in relation to a topic" (p. 189). The first criterion Kvale listed for a quality interview was "the extent of spontaneous, rich, specific, and relevant answers from the interviewee" (p. 145). Polkinghorne (1989) suggested that a good way to get experiential data was to elicit "reports of the experience as it actually appears in a person's consciousness" (p. 46). He stated that the way the researcher's questions were posed could help participants to "report their experiences rather than give worldly depictions" (p. 46). Polkinghorne found the questions most likely to elicit experiential information were "What did you experience? or, what was it like for you? instead of, What happened?" (p. 46). The question that began this research was a request to "tell me about your experience of training to be a counsellor" (see interview guide Appendix B).

Self-defining memories.

The protocol for eliciting self-defining memories (SDMs) was similar to that used by Singer and Solovey (1993) (see interview guide in Appendix B). Singer and Solovey experimented with various formats of asking for narrative memories in order to find the one which yielded highly significant memories for the individual that were rich in complexity and detail. The SDMs are "long-standing memories (at least one year old) that are especially vivid, important, affectively intense, repetitive, and that convey crucial information about one's personal identity (p. 63)." When Singer and Solovey asked for SDMs, they did not specify the type of memory that the person was to share. In this research the

women were first asked to describe an unspecified SDM, and then a helper SDM. This request for a helper SDM was asked to elicit more detailed information about the way the women defined themselves as helpers. The helper SDM revealed important aspects of the women's helping identities, and the frameworks they used to assess themselves as helpers.

Possible selves.

Possible selves were assessed using open ended-questions (see Appendix B) about the women's hoped-for and feared selves. The original research by Markus and Nurius (1986) used a questionnaire listing 150 possibilities for the self, which they administered to students. Cross and Markus (1991), on the other hand, approached the assessment of possible selves using a somewhat different format. In this later study they introduced the concept of possible selves to the participants and then asked them to list their hoped-for and feared possible selves (as well as how capable the person felt to accomplish/prevent this possible self and how likely this possible self was to come true). The advantage to an open-ended format was that it allowed individuals to use their own words. It could also convey more of the unique texture and richness of their personal experiences.

Oyserman and Markus (1990a) found that different possible selves could be obtained using open ended vs. closed questions. These authors concluded that "endorsing selves from a checklist and generating selves using open-ended probes—are not identical in the selves they reveal" (p. 116). They found the delinquent youths in their study were more willing to indicate negative possible selves when 'open-ended probes' were used than when they used a checklist containing similar items. Open-ended probes were also chosen as a way to assess possible selves in the present study.

Projected self-defining memories.

In addition to the questions about possible selves and SDMs, the women were also asked to imagine themselves in the future, looking back at the time of the interview, and to have that projected future self create a SDM from the time of the interview. This question was a method to obtain information about their possible selves and their present experience incorporating the richness of a memory narrative. The projected SDM provided information about the current experiences they believed would be salient to them in their imagined futures. The projected SDM was a creative attempt to hybridize the advantages of SDMs and possible selves. Although the technique had not been reported in the literature on either SDMs or possible selves, it had been shown to have good potential in the pilot interviews.

Transition tree.

The transition tree (see Appendix C) is a drawn outline of a tree with various transitions located in its branches, and empty branches available for additional transitions. The transitions listed in the tree had

been generated from a transition questionnaire that had previously been administered to a graduating class of an undergraduate group of helpers ($n = 25$) from the School of Child and Youth Care at the University of Victoria. This transition tree was then administered to the pilot group of Masters counselling students, where it was found to be relevant, comprehensive and easy to fill out.

The women were asked to fill in the transition tree by circling the transitions they were experiencing at the time of the interview. They were asked to add to the tree branches any transitions they were experiencing that had not already been included in the tree. Afterwards, they were asked to use a line to connect the transitions they thought were linked together, and then to describe the link. In the third interview the women were asked to compare their current transition trees with their memories of the earlier trees. They were given their previous trees and asked to compare them to their current trees.

The Interviewer

The interviewer plays a critical role in descriptive interview research. Miles and Huberman (1984), for instance, have suggested that in qualitative research, "instrument validity and reliability ride largely on the skills of the researcher" (p. 46). They stated the following characteristics were most likely to make an interviewer a valid and reliable "information-gathering instrument":

- "some familiarity with phenomenon and the setting under study
- strong conceptual interests
- a multidisciplinary approach, as opposed to a narrow grounding or focus in a single discipline
- good 'investigative' skills, including doggedness, the ability to draw people out, and the ability to ward off premature closure" (p. 46).

As the researcher, and a graduate student at the same university, with my own Masters training experience, I have personal familiarity with the setting and phenomenon under study. In addition, some of the students I counselled during my five years as a counsellor at Counselling Services at the university were counsellor trainees. This counselling experience gave me an even greater appreciation of the transitions associated with counsellor training. I have strong conceptual interests in the transitions these women go through, and have attempted to attain a broad background of experience and familiarity with the literature. I have had more than 15 years of professional counselling experience and more than eight years experience as a researcher. The women in the pilot interviews reported that they felt at ease with me and that I listened well. They chose to share many personal experiences at a richly detailed level.

Participants

The women who volunteered to participate in this study were extremely pleasant, agreeable, and articulate. They were a pleasure to work with and to interview. The most difficult part of the interviews

was finding time in their over-loaded schedules to meet for the research. Despite their shortage of time, however, the women were extremely accommodating and with some juggling managed to find a block of time for each of the three interviews. They also set aside time to read over the transcripts and tables of quotes following the interviews, and wrote a short feedback note with their comments. They seemed glad to have participated in the research, and to have the opportunity to later revisit their experiences through the transcripts. As the quotes in their case histories will reveal, the women were very forthright and shared a significant part of their personal experiences in the interviews.

The demographic information for these women has been deliberately limited to protect their identities. Clara, the first of the women described in the case studies, was in her thirties at the time of the interviews, and was living in Victoria when admitted to the graduate program. She was married and had no children, and had completed her undergraduate course work at another university. Bonnie, the woman in the second case study, was in her forties when interviewed. She left her work in her small rural town, and sold her house to come to graduate school. Bonnie was living alone, and had adult children living on their own, and had completed her undergraduate courses at another academic institution. Ann, the woman in the last case study, was recently separated from her husband, and had been living in a small rural town prior to her admittance into the program. She was in her thirties, had school aged children, and had also completed her undergraduate course work elsewhere.

All three of the women were Caucasian from Canadian or European backgrounds. The women who participated in the study were not remarkably different from the other women admitted into the program. They each worked prior to their admittance into the graduate program, had good academic grades, and had at least two years professional and/or volunteer experience as helpers. Admittance to the Masters Counselling Program at the University is extremely competitive, applicants must submit letters of recommendation, have two pre-requisite counselling courses and an undergraduate degree in an affiliated area of study. In addition, they had to submit a letter and videotaped interview of themselves responding to certain pre-set questions. The University of Victoria prefers to admit applicants who have demonstrated experience in the field, in addition to the required academic course work.

Transcripts and Quotes

Transcripts were transcribed verbatim from audio tapes, with pauses, ums, hesitations, and noises (e.g., laughter, sighs, increase/decrease in speed or volume) noted. The original transcriptions were typed by confidential secretaries who did not work at the university. The transcripts were then listened to by the researcher, amended as necessary, and more descriptions were added in brackets. Any parts that had not been completely clear to the secretaries were carefully listened to and clarified when possible. When one of the people in the interview was speaking and the other person interjected a comment like "uh huh," "yeah," or "right," the comment was bracketed e.g., (yeah) within the first person's speech.

Pauses within the speech were denoted by two dots "...", and particularly emphatic statements were typed using a bold format.

The transcripts were then analyzed and quotes selected for the case studies. At first, what Weiss (1994, p. 192) called "the preservationist approach" to editing was adopted; the quotes included in the first case study were originally identical to the transcripts. This approach was changed when feedback from readers indicated that the exact quotes of the spoken material were too difficult to understand. The women, themselves, were struck by the difficulty of comprehending their own transcripts. It was then decided that instead of the preservationist approach, "the usual compromise" (Weiss, 1994) approach to editing would be employed:

[researchers] permit themselves to eliminate words, sentences, and paragraphs ... their own questions—in order to achieve a more compact statement. They will standardize the slurrings of colloquial speech ... but never is a word changed, never is a word supplied. (p. 193-194)

Statements that were circumlocutory, truncated, or repeated were edited out of the quotes. Often repeated words such as "like," "you know," "I guess," "that," were also removed from the quotes. In order to protect the women's identities, some details in their stories were altered, and others were omitted. Any mention of a particular place, age, workplace, or practicum, was changed or replaced by a bracketed word e.g., [hometown]. Any word that was inserted into a quote (e.g., to make the context of the quote more understandable), was also indicated by square brackets. As in the transcripts, words that were strongly emphasized by the woman herself, were indicated in the quote using a bold format. The words that I, as the researcher, wanted the reader to note, were italicized. Other than the cases indicated above, the women's grammar and choice of words were left intact, e.g., contractions and unique usage of words or phrases were not changed.

Analysis

A case study approach was chosen for this research because, as Yin (1994) stated case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" or "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context. (p. 1)

The purpose of this research was to develop a better understanding of how individual women manage the transition of training to become a counsellor, particularly the ways they were able to grow through the experience. Therefore this research, an investigation of a "how" question where the focus was on the real-life contemporary experiences of individual women was eminently suited for the use of a case study approach. The intent of this research was to illustrate what Weiss called the "concrete and particular" rather than the "abstract and general" (p. 167).

Kvale (1996) suggested there is no clear demarcation between descriptive and interpretive research, and proposed that, instead, description and interpretation should be conceptualized as existing on a

continuum (p. 187). Nevertheless, case studies can generally be distinguished on the basis of which side of the continuum their primary focus lies (e.g., Giorgi, 1992). Stake (1994), for example, differentiated between the intrinsic and the instrumental case study. The intrinsic case study is undertaken when the researcher wants to better understand a particular case, not because it “represents other cases or because it illustrates a particular trait or problem, but because, in all its particularity and ordinariness, this case itself is of interest” (p. 237). Unlike instrumental case studies, the purpose of intrinsic case studies is not theory building. Yin (1994, p. 99) drew a similar distinction between descriptive and explanatory case studies and yet, at the same time pointed out that “a descriptive approach may help to identify the appropriate causal links to be analyzed” (p. 105). Thus, although the focus of the case study may be descriptive, it can still serve to illustrate causal links that can be used to build theories that can later be tested. This research used a descriptive case study approach, or what Weiss (1994) called “concrete case studies of individuals” (p. 168). The goal was to, as he put it, “make the reader aware of the respondents’ experience within the context of their lives; this is what it is like to be this person in this situation” (p. 168).

Patton (1990, p. 376) suggested that one of the first decisions the researcher needs to make regarding the analysis of case studies is whether the interviews should be analyzed on a cross-case or case-by-case basis. He believed it was most appropriate to begin with the analysis of individual cases when individual variations were the primary focus of study (p. 376). Polkinghorne’s (1994) description of the analysis of narratives versus narrative analysis is roughly analogous to Patton’s cross-case versus case-by-case analysis. The purpose of narrative analysis, as Polkinghorne described it, was to “construct a particular story that expresses the special character of a person’s or group’s lived experience” (p. 15).

In this research I wished to learn more about the individual women’s experiences within the transition, therefore the transcripts were analyzed using a case-by-case (or narrative analysis) approach to the data. The individual women’s narratives, SDMs, and possible selves were examined over the three time periods to discover emerging themes and patterns in their counsellor training experience. This was done using an inductive analysis process similar to the one described by Patton (1990) “patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data, they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to the data collections and analysis” (p. 390). The analysis was carried out using a process similar to the one suggested by Polkinghorne (1988):

the goal of analysis is to uncover the common themes or plots in the data. Analysis is carried out using hermeneutic techniques for noting underlying patterns across examples of stories ... the analysis of narrative data does not follow an algorithmic outline, but moves between the original data and the emerging description of the pattern. (p. 177)

In this research the individual women’s narratives, possible selves, and SDMs were analyzed for patterns to learn more about how the threads of their past, present, and future influenced, and were influenced by, their movement through the transition.

The search for themes, patterns, or threads, in the case study analysis focused on the four directions that Clandinin and Connelly (1994) suggested:

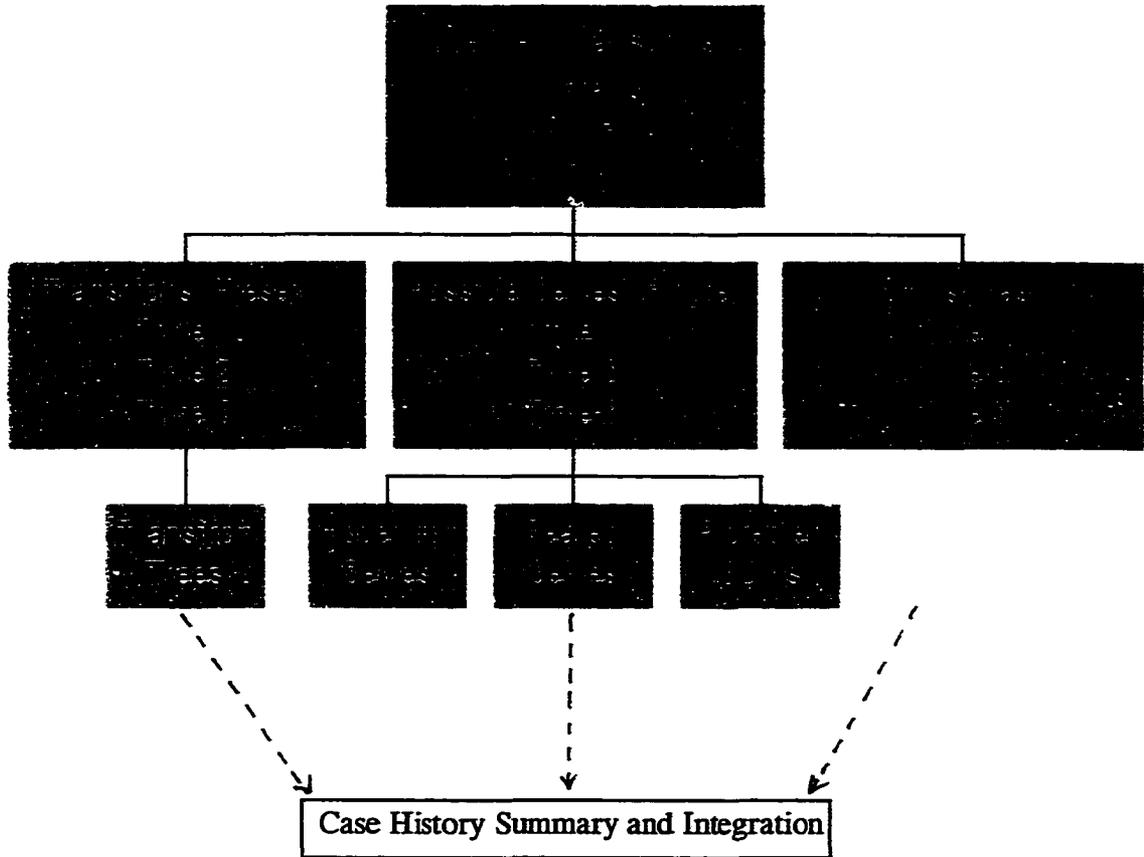
inwards and outward, backwards and forward. By *inward* we mean the internal conditions of feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions, moral dispositions, and so on. By *outward* we mean existential conditions, that is, the environment ... by *backward* and *forward* we are referring to temporality, past, present, and future. To experience an experience is to experience it simultaneously in these four ways and to ask questions pointing each way. (p. 417)

This research explored both the women's "inward," or personal characteristics and perspectives as well as their more "outward," or situational and environmental influences. In addition to asking them about the "temporality" of the women's experience in an interview (through their narratives, possible selves and SDMs), this research also tracked the women's changing experiences through three different parts of their counsellor training. The information collected using this approach had the advantage of being very comprehensive, but the disadvantage of being too unwieldy to grasp without further organization.

The task of searching for patterns and themes in the interview transcripts for each of the women was a demanding one; each interview revealed a wealth of information about the women's perspectives and experiences, and there were three interviews for each woman. There was too much information, changing over time, for the complexity of the women's experience to be understood and conveyed without separating it into smaller, more manageable sections.

One way in which this was accomplished was to organize the woman's responses into three general areas; transitions, possible selves, and SDMs (see Figure 1). The three transcripts for the woman were read and highlighted using coloured highlighting pens, with a different colour corresponding to each of the general areas (possible selves were differentiated by using two different colours to denote hoped-for and feared selves). Evocative words (Rice, 1974) or phrases that connotated strong feelings or experiences were circled or starred, and notes and observations were made in the margins about potential patterns or themes. The transcripts were read several times, and then summary tables for the transitions, hoped-for and feared selves, and models of what a helper should or shouldn't be, were constructed for each woman. The women's statements were condensed into brief verbatim quotes of the material that best encapsulated the women's experiences, and then the quotes were tabulated across time. At this point the women were given copies of their transcripts and the tables and asked to comment on how accurately their experiences had been represented (see Appendix D for their comments). With the exception of one additional entry that Clara requested in one of her tables, the women were pleased with (and somewhat amazed at) how accurately the tables reflected their experiences.

After the feedback had been received for a woman, her case study was then constructed. Separate files were created for transitions, possible selves, and SDMs, using the computer to excerpt the appropriate sections from the transcripts. Themes were then sought across time for the various internal and situational influences on the woman's experience. The transcript sections were analyzed for meaning using the "tactics" identified by Huberman and Miles (1994). These tactics included:



noting patterns and themes ... seeing plausibility—making initial, intuitive sense ... clustering by conceptual grouping ... making metaphors, a kind of figurative grouping of data ... making contrasts and comparisons ... shuttling back and forth between first-level data and more general categories ... factoring ... noting relations between variables .. finding intervening variables ... assembling a coherent understanding of a data set ... through building a logical chain of evidence and making conceptual/theoretical coherence (p. 432).

This search for meaning used the spiral-like process of analysis described by Kvale (1983), a “continuous back- and forth process between parts and the whole ... which ... [allowed for] a continuously deepened understanding of meaning” (p. 186). Meanings which had been developed from the data were illustrated using quotes from the transcripts to illustrate the context they had come from. As Weiss (1994) suggested, the analysis progressed through several iterations of sorting, integrating, and editing before a final report was generated (p. 169).

For the first case study to be analyzed (Clara’s) the themes were reported using verbal descriptions of the data. In the succeeding case studies, the technique of analysis evolved to include the use of a tabular format to identify significant themes. These tables reflected the results of a process similar to what Huberman and Miles (1994) described as “factoring ... an analogue of a familiar quantitative technique” (p. 432), and Osborne (1994) called rational factor analysis. Osborne (1994) outlined the process as one where “the researcher identifies all the themes in the protocol for each participant then sorts them into thematic clusters which are then sorted into higher order clusters in much the same way as in a rational factor analysis” (p. 172). Quotations from the woman’s transcripts were conceptually grouped into thematic groups across the time periods. This also served as a form of thematic triangulation, where it became possible to identify the themes that were most strongly represented across or within interviews. These themes were then visually arrayed using the computer to summarize the results into tabular form.

The final part of each case study was the summary. The summary attempted to integrate the themes or patterns that had emerged within the various sections of the case history into a more or less coherent picture of the woman’s experience in the transition. The themes that had emerged for the transitions, possible selves and SDMs were compared over time to develop a contextually sensitive understanding of the woman’s experience through the transition.

Validity

Kvale (1996) stated that it is important to treat validity as an integral part of every stage of an investigation rather than as a separate stage of the research (p. 236). He likened validation to “quality control throughout the stages of knowledge production” rather than “inspection at the end of the production line” (p. 236). Maxwell (1992) also emphasized that validity should not be thought of as “an inherent property of a particular method, but pertains to the data, accounts of conclusions reached by using that method in a particular context for a particular purpose” (p. 284). Validity is, therefore,

inextricably linked to all parts of the process, and needs to be examined within the context of the purpose, design, method, analysis and reporting of the research.

Narrative research produces a collection of stories which the researcher tries to sort through, analyze and describe. Polkinghorne (1989) suggested that in the analysis phase, the researcher searches through the narrative descriptions to come to “a grasp of the constituents or common elements that make the experience what it is” (p. 46). In this study, the search for common elements was done at several levels, first at a primarily descriptive level, which was reflected in the tables of quotes, and the paraphrasing of the women’s experience in the case studies. Kvale (1983) called this type of analysis as “the first level,” and described it as an attempt by the researcher “to condense and formulate what the interviewee himself understands as the meaning of what he describes. The level of interpretation is here more or less limited to the *self-understanding* of the interviewee” (p. 181). Maxwell (1992) named the type of understanding that corresponds to this first level of analysis “descriptive validity” (p. 285). Descriptive validity refers to the factual accuracy of the researcher’s account, that what has been reported was not made up or a distortion of what was seen or heard. According to Maxwell, it pertains to “specific events and situations. No issue of generalizability or representativeness is involved ... they are all matters on which, in principle, intersubjective agreement could easily be achieved, given the appropriate data. (p. 286)

The descriptive validity of this study was maximized by tape recording the interviews and then having another person transcribe them. I then checked their accuracy by listening to the tapes and correcting any errors, omissions, or distortions in the transcript. The women who had been interviewed served as a final check of descriptive validity by reading over the transcripts and the summary tables of quotes. The women’s feedback (see Appendix D) indicated they found the transcripts and summary tables accurately reflected their experiences:

Clara: You did an exceptional job of pulling together main themes/quotes. I don’t know how you did it!

Bonnie: I kept rough notes on key phrases and words from each session that would fit under your summary headings ... There was excellent correspondence between the two.

Ann: The content was accurate ... you did an excellent job in representing the accuracy of my message. Your attention to detail is appreciated.

The analysis not only sought to describe the women’s experience, but also what Kvale (1983) called the “second level” of analysis. At the second level of analysis the researcher attempts to go

beyond what the interviewee himself experiences and means about a theme, while remaining on a broad *common sense* level of understanding. One here attempts to get at the spirit of what is said, extending its meaning, by reading between the lines and by drawing in broader contexts than the interviewee does. One may here distinguish between an object and a subject centered approach to interview statements, one focusing on what the interviewee states about the world, the other on what the statement says about the interviewee. (p. 181)

This second level of analysis corresponds to what Maxwell (1992) described as “interpretive validity” (p. 288). Interpretive validity refers to the woman’s perspective, “what objects, events, and behaviors mean to the people engaged in and with them” (p. 288). Although it is based on the accounts of the person interviewed, it “is inherently a matter of inference ... accounts of participants’ meanings are never a matter of direct access, but are always *constructed* by the researcher(s) on the basis of participants’ accounts and other evidence” (p. 290).

Kvale (1996), suggested that interpretive analysis takes place at several stages throughout the research process. One stage is when “the *subjects themselves discover* new relationships during the interview” (p. 189). In the process of telling their narrative the participants “start to see new connections in their life worlds on the basis of their spontaneous descriptions, free of interpretation by the interviewer” (p. 189). The feedback (see Appendix D) from the women in the study suggests they found the research interview an opportunity to go more deeply into their experience than they had with other people, or had found the time to do on their own:

Clara: I felt amazed at how much I had to sayI just feel so happy to have been able to talk about all of this ... I wouldn’t say this to anybody else. I wouldn’t say it to my husband.

Bonnie: An interesting process for looking at where I’m actually at ... I haven’t had a lot of time for introspection helpful ... I don’t really verbalize all this stuff with peers.

Ann: It was demanding for me! ...challenged me in a way I hadn’t ever been challenged before ... I like it because I can’t do this with anyone else [a chance to] just separate myself and take a breather, and look at what has been happening, as opposed to experiencing it so intensely.

The feedback also suggests that the interview was structured in a way that allowed the women the opportunity to spontaneously choose their own material without feeling pushed or intruded upon by the interviewer’s interpretations:

Ann: You asked me to select. The very question can dictate a response, and that didn’t happen ... [with a checklist] I could think of what a nice successful counsellor might respond like, but in this case I didn’t have any of that, so that’s goodYour questions are wonderful! they don’t pry ... I got to choose and that was incredibly empowering I felt safe and secure ... there wasn’t a time ever, in all these hours that I felt uncomfortable, or intuitively off.

Thus, there is support for the belief that the women, themselves, had the opportunity to discover new relationships and uncover new meanings in the interview without worrying about the interviewer’s expectations. There is also evidence that during the interview the women were actively interpreting the information, finding new connections, meanings, and possibilities:

Clara: I feel ... a lot more personal power about my life ... helpful to have a chance to lay my life out like that ... more holistically ... everything is all linked .. a whole picture of my life as where I came from, where I’m at, and where I’m going an opportunity to look into my process ... this process, in terms of my own growth, is just tremendous.

Bonnie: Making the connections [in the interview] ... looking at wider angles really helpful because now ... I know what I can do today ... problem solving a bit.

Ann: While I'm giving my answers, I'm analyzing them, too ... I'm out there processing while I'm responding, so it's like this dual thing always happening ... I'll go home and think about this it's a time for me to take stock, and to do some goal setting, and a confidence building time for me I'm creating my own future ... and that's an incredibly powerful thing for me.

The feedback shows that during the interview the women were not simply retrieving information, they were also interpreting, analyzing, and developing new ways to understand their experiences.

Kvale (1996) suggested that another stage of interpretation and analysis takes place in the interview process when:

the interviewer, during the interview, condenses and interprets the meaning of what the interviewee describes, and 'sends' the meaning back ... this form of interviewing implies an ongoing 'on-the-line' interpretation with the possibility of an 'on-the-spot' confirmation or disconfirmation of the interviewer's interpretations. The result can then be a "self-correcting interview. (p. 189).

This type of interpretation can be validated during the interview process, if the participants are given the opportunity, and feel safe enough, to give accurate feedback to the interviewer throughout the interview. The success of this level of interpretation is also dependent upon the interviewer having the skills to accurately condense, interpret and send back to the participant.

The feedback from the women in the study shows that they believed the interviewer accurately reflected their information back to them, and that they found the reflection helped them to develop a greater understanding of themselves:

Clara: *Your incredible paraphrasing. I grope for words ... when you would say something back to me .. you just have this one sentence, or metaphor, or something that would just fit so well ... I would think that the issue's finished ... but you kept with it, which helped me just deepen that awareness ... the depth that I went into was often surprising, and that I always felt so supported there.*

Bonnie: *[You were] excellent at reflecting it exactly and often gave me images that really helped me focus more on what I was saying, or help me to express more what I was saying.*

Ann: *In the first session, or the second session, you would paraphrase, and maybe once or twice I would restate it differently ... [it helped] me to kind of find my own thought ... I was in really gray area, wasn't sure what was happening, was trying to articulate it I never thought that you weren't with me ... I was really impressed with how much you were with me, because I was going to places that are very new for me ... your paraphrasing was very good, summaries were excellent.*

The feedback suggests that the women felt heard, understood, and comfortable enough to "restate" or correct the interviewer if her paraphrasing had been inaccurate. Acker, Barry, and Esseveld (1983) stated that in "qualitative work, the accuracy of listening and hearing may be as important as the openness of telling" (p. 146). As counsellors-in-training, and women with their own professional helping experience, they were eminently suited to assess the accuracy of the interviewer's listening skills. It is unlikely that they would have continued to participate in the repeated and lengthy interview process if they did not believe in the interviewers' listening skill and the value of the research process. In addition, as Weiss (1994) has indicated, the inclusion of interview excerpts within the report can give the

reader a chance to assess the adequacy of the interviewing (p. 212). Interview excerpts were included in the case studies to allow readers to gauge for themselves the effectiveness of the interviews.

In the next stage of interpretive analysis suggested by Kvale (1996), the transcripts of the interview are interpreted by the researcher, which “involves developing the meanings of the interviews, bringing the subjects’ own understanding into the light as well as providing new perspectives from the researcher on the phenomena” (p. 190). As Maxwell (1992) has stated, this understanding of meaning is “constructed” by the researcher and is “a matter of inference from the words and actions of the participants’ own accounts” (p. 290). Therefore, any assessment of this type of interpretive validity is less directly accessible, and must rely more on the judgments of the reader.

Stake (1994) suggested that the challenge for casework was to “learn enough about the case to encapsulate complex meanings into a finite report but to describe the case in sufficient descriptive narrative so that readers can vicariously experience these happenings, and draw their own conclusions” (p. 242). Elliott, Fisher, and Rennie (1994) similarly emphasized the importance of “grounding in examples” (p.2) as a method to assess the validity of interpretations. I have attempted in the case studies to document as clearly as possible, using quotes from the women themselves, how I came to construct my perceptions of the women’s experiences. Thus readers, themselves can use their judgment to assess the accuracy, likelihood, or plausibility of my understanding of the women’s experiences. Huberman and Miles (1994, p. 439) refer to this approach of providing a clear audit trail as “transparency” of method, and state that it can give “interested and rigorous peers” “analytic bases to touch” (p. 438) when they wish to assess for themselves the validity of the methods and analyses that have been used. As Osborne (1990) has stated “the best the researcher can do is to argue a particular interpretation as persuasively as possible, supported by references to the data, and leave the final judgment to the reader” (p. 87).

A final area deserves mention before closing the discussion on validity; the effect of participation in the research on the participants. This area has received little attention in discussions of validity, possibly because majority of studies in this area have not been longitudinal. When Kvale (1996) discussed the various stages of analysis, he described a “possible” final stage that extended “the continuum of description and interpretation to include *action*, in that subjects begin to act from new insights they have gained during their interview” (190). He believed in such cases the research interview could “approximate a therapeutic interview” (p. 190). Acker, Barry, and Esseveld (1983), raised this issue in a discussion about validity in their research:

much more difficult problems of validity began to emerge in the interviews that were continued over a period of four years. These problems have to do with how reality is constructed and reconstructed in the process of talking and thinking about it and how the process of research becomes part of the process of change. (p. 147)

These authors raised the very thorny question of how much participation in the research influenced their participants’ process of change. This is an ever-present problem in virtually all areas of research (e.g.,

Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle in physics); the more closely one studies something, the more likely the process of observation will, itself, influence the very thing the observer intends to study.

In this research the women, themselves, were divided in their opinions (see Appendix D) of whether participation in the study had influenced their transition process. None of the women believed the first interview had a appreciable effect on their transition, they were far too busy and too preoccupied for it to have a significant impact. Clara, however, identified the period between her second and third interviews as a time when the research had strongly influenced her transition:

I would start thinking about the questions and I've used the term self-defining memory about 40 times since ... and I've thought about it, so yes, it has ... and that's kind of helped me ... I've reflected on this significantly between January and now [March], a lot I've used my memories as a way to validate the process that I'm going through right now, to push aside those myths that I have of who I should be and searching through my memory banks of different ways of being, and using that to validate where I am now! So, oh, it's been significant!

Bonnie, on the other hand was at the other extreme and did not believe the research had any determinable effect on her experience in the transition:

No, I think in September I was so busy .. and then, by December, it was kind of the end of term, so I went off for two or three weeks, and [I] really didn't think that much about [it] in counselling we're always talking about process, so it's like being one of a million, everybody wants to know about your process.

Ann did not think her participation in the research had altered the course of her transition, but her viewpoint was more equivocal than Bonnie's:

I don't think it has. I think this is a time to step out, and say what I'm already experiencing, and to be kind to myself, and to celebrate what I've experienced. Maybe it has encouraged me ... I feel I've been kind to myself here and I like it, and I will continue to be kind. So it's reinforcing, to be kind to myself, but I had already decided that before I came in, I was already there ... so, it hasn't altered it, it's just a continuation of what's already happening ... I am only ready to see where I'm at anyways ... if I wasn't there already, I wouldn't be able to perceive it ... so I don't think you've altered the course at all, certainly I thought about what I said afterwards ... but only as in reliving those memories, thinking about those memories that I've thought about so many times before.

Each of the women indicated at some point in their feedback they had benefited from their participation in the research. Logically, this suggests that their participation did in some way affect their experience. The extent of that influence, however, appears to have varied considerably for the women. It may be that, as Ann suggested, the research acted as a continuation of what was already happening in their lives. For example Clara, who believed the research had significantly influenced her, concurrently was using narrative therapy as another "gospel" to help her with her transition. Similarly, Ann had already known she needed to be more kind to herself, and when she found a way to do that in the research interviews, she wanted to incorporate what she had discovered about being kind to herself into the other parts of her life. Although when Bonnie was directly queried about the impact of the interviews, she did not believe they had influenced her experience, she did mention in the first interview that she had used the process to

problem solve and had developed a clearer idea of what she needed to do as a result. Participation in the research appears to have had at least a subtle influence on the women's experiences and, perhaps, with Clara, a more dramatic effect. This is a question that clearly could merit more investigation.

Paradoxically, it may be that the more salient the research interview is to the individual, the more likely the interview will come to approximate a therapeutic interview. Polkinghorne (1991) has suggested that in narrative therapy:

the therapist works with and assists the client in creating a personal narrative that positively coheres the client's past and future. The therapist is engaged in helping clients clear the decks of dysfunctional plots so that they can then cultivate a plot that integrates their own life events. (p. 150).

A research interview that uses the person's narratives of the past, present, and future to understand the context of the person's experience, and how that person comes to negotiate through a transition, may slip into the same area as the therapeutic interview.

To some theorists the movement from description and interpretation to action is a sign of validity. Kvale (1996), in his review of types of validities, for example, described a type of verification called pragmatic validity:

To pragmatists, truth is whatever assists us to take actions that produce the desired results. Knowledge is action rather than observation action-oriented quality criteria for qualitative research, such as an inquiry enhancing the level of understanding of the participants, and their ability to take action, empowering them to take increased control of their lives. (p. 248)

The pragmatic approach asserts that the validity of knowledge rests in its usefulness, its ability to help participants to take desired action in their lives. The goal of this research was not to promote growth in the participants, but to develop a greater understanding of their transitions. When the research was designed, care was taken to ensure that no harm would come to the participants, and it was hoped that they might get something out of the process. It appears that indeed, no harm did come to the participants and they did get something out of the process, but the effect may have been more beneficent than intended.

It makes intuitive sense that participants who developed clearer insight into themselves might then choose to act on that insight. The women in this study were motivated, intensely interested in their self-growth, and at a period in their lives when they were devoting their energy to their own development; any "good" interpretive inquiry that takes place in such fertile ground could be expected to sprout a few seeds.

Case Study: Clara

Transitions

Time 1.

Clara faced many significant transitions in her first month in the program. She entered into the program already in transition, and brought with her a history of experiences which influenced how she negotiated through the transitions she faced. Clara started her training insecure about her standing in relation to other graduate students. Although she believed that she was "basically okay as a counsellor" she was very uncertain and uneasy about whether she was as skilled as the other students. These concerns were significant for her, but she was even more overwhelmed by the other changes (see Figure 2) with counsellor training. When asked to rate on a scale from 0 to 10 how much in transition she felt as a counsellor, she rated herself as a "3 or 4", whereas she rated her transitions in general as an "8 or 9".

Clara perceived the transitions in her life to have had a significant impact on her growth as a counsellor:

[when] there is so much transition going on in all these areas in my life, I am going to be much less likely to want to take a risk in counselling ... *I'm going to want to stay the same because everything is changing so much* in all the other areas in my life ... I'll be less likely to want to take that huge leap and risk. Remember my goal of trying to be less tentative and less cautious? My god, to be less tentative and cautious, I've got to be pretty grounded in who I am, and quite stable, and not be stressed. Or, oh my god, how am I going to pay my tuition? How am I going to do this? How am I going to find time for myself? If that's going on in my life, I don't see myself really ready to be out there and make a big risk in my counselling style. So, in terms of what I want, *the transition I would like to see happening in counselling, I don't really believe it's going to happen, not in the next few months anyway*. And actually I've noticed that with my first few assignments and in prepracticum, they haven't changed much even though I keep writing down, "oh, I need to do this," I keep writing down the same things that I want to change because nothing changes. *The bottom line: I know I need to change, and I want to change, but there is this other part of me that (with emphasis) I don't want any more change in my life*. At least in counselling I know *I've got the basics to get by* which is more than I can say for maybe my finances or for my other things which are causing me a lot of stress. So, when it comes to the bottom line, *I don't know if I'm really ready to make these changes in counselling*.

... there's no immediate solution to how am I going to find the time to do this, this, and this. *I see this going on and on for months on end, I find it almost impossible to be centered*, because the way I used to center myself is accept myself, "this is what I'm going through today, it will be different tomorrow, I'm all right." I can't believe that anymore. So I sit down and center myself and go "this is the way I am today, and it will be okay tomorrow..." *it's not going to be okay tomorrow and I can't make myself believe that*, so I go in a little frazzled *and trying my best to stay in my head because my head's safe you know, it's not too risky*.

...my goals come to, I hate to say this, but "I've got to get through this," is what I'm thinking of in terms of my Masters degree,... not "I want to get meaning out of this, I want to be a better counsellor." *Originally, that's why I wanted to go to grad school. But the reality has now changed to "I've got to get through this. I know I can do it, I've just got to get through this."* Big change.

When Clara looked back at this time from the perspective of Time 3, near the end of her practicum, (see Appendix E) she referred to this time as "the dark ages," a time when she felt panicked, overwhelmed by changes, and wondered if there was any stability left in her life. For Clara, Time 1 was a time of so many taxing transitions that she felt hard pressed just managing on a day-to-day basis. The prospect of risking growth or change as a counsellor felt too overwhelming for her to do more than contemplate it in her mind, or as a writing exercise, for one of her assignments. Intellectually, she recognized what she needed to do, and wanted to do to grow as a counsellor, but she did not have the emotional energy available to risk it yet.

Time 2.

Clara also found Time 2's transitions (see Figure 3) challenging. The most difficult aspect of this time was her alienation from the thing she valued the most, her "heart presence:"

I find it really hard, cause I'm more a heart person than head person, and having a focus on the head all the time takes away from my presence and my heart presence. I guess I try and trust that this process will eventually help me to be a better counsellor, but I certainly don't see it right now, it's a struggle and being in the thick of things right now I really honestly feel that, if anything, I'm going down the hill as a counsellor.

...I wonder if the heart will ever come back again. (slowly, softly, sadly). I wonder if I have crossed into the head stuff so much that all I can do is think about techniques and theories and go studying ... I really believe I used to do that naturally when I was counselling and I don't, I don't know if I'll ever get it again. Because I'm (softly) already scared about all this head stuff and (louder) how much of this there is! You know it's not to say I don't read books and always improve myself but it's just it's so much. It's so concentrated, the head intellectual stuff, that I can't seem to get out of it, what can I do?

At Time 2, Clara rated her general transitions as a "2", and as a counsellor a "5". She perceived herself to be in more in transition as a counsellor than she had been at Time 1 because:

things are different ... I'm very concerned and conscious of what I do in the counselling process, too concerned, and too conscious, in the way that it blocks my ability to be present. And it blocks my intuitive knowing and clarity ... I see myself as being a very ... analyzing type of counsellor right now I don't like that but I have admitted it, it's happening, it's changed, it's changing.

Clara rated herself a 2, on transitions in general, because she believed she was well entrenched in a routine. She perceived no immediate end in sight to this state, which she thought was unbalanced:

...right now I'm having a hard time balancing what I need as a person ... I feel very constrained right now, in doing this Master's program in the year. Even though I've chosen to do that, I feel really that a lot of my needs are going to get unmet right now and I'm having a really hard time deciding what to cut out of my life... In order to achieve this goal of getting my Master's degree, I'm making compromises in satisfying my personal needs. That causes a tremendous amount of stress because it has taken me so many years to finally discover, honour, value, pay attention to my needs, make time, and then suddenly have to put all that on hold. I had this deep down value ... One of my values was you have to take care of yourself first, and I had started to live like that. And now, I can't ugh! are you kidding? This goal comes higher than you know my most treasured value? (disbelieving) that's a really hard thing for me right now.

...I didn't think it would be as bad as it is... it's like 8 to midnight that's Monday to Friday plus weekend work. I had never worked that hard! I would never choose to be that type of worker in my own personal life, unhealthy, unbalanced. So here I am choosing to do something for a year that completely goes against my philosophy of who I am as a person and what I need! Of course, anyone would say "well don't do it in a year do it in two years" but I don't have the financial ability to do that, so ... it's a no win situation. I just didn't [think] that the cost would be so high though, in terms of my personal cost, even though the financial cost is really high, my personal cost. I never thought it would bother me as much as it did, I never thought that there would be so many expectations.

Clara was upset about the choices she believed necessary to be in the program. She did not like to see herself making choices that compromised her basic values and philosophy about living a balanced lifestyle. Her personal time and energy were depleted. She was also struggling to maintain her "heart" presence as a counsellor despite having "crossed into the head stuff" for her training. Clara was grappling with new techniques and the "intellectual stuff" she was being exposed to in training. These techniques felt alien from her natural and valued way of counselling.

At Time 3, when Clara was looking back at her experience at Time 2, she described it as the "dark ages." She perceived it to have been an extremely negative time when she was "really lost," and wondered "where the hell am I?" She talked about having felt "stressed beyond capacity," and having been desperately "in search for some type of control and balance" in her life. Fortunately, the transitions she experienced at Time 3 (see Figure 4) were tremendously different from her earlier transitions.

Time 3.

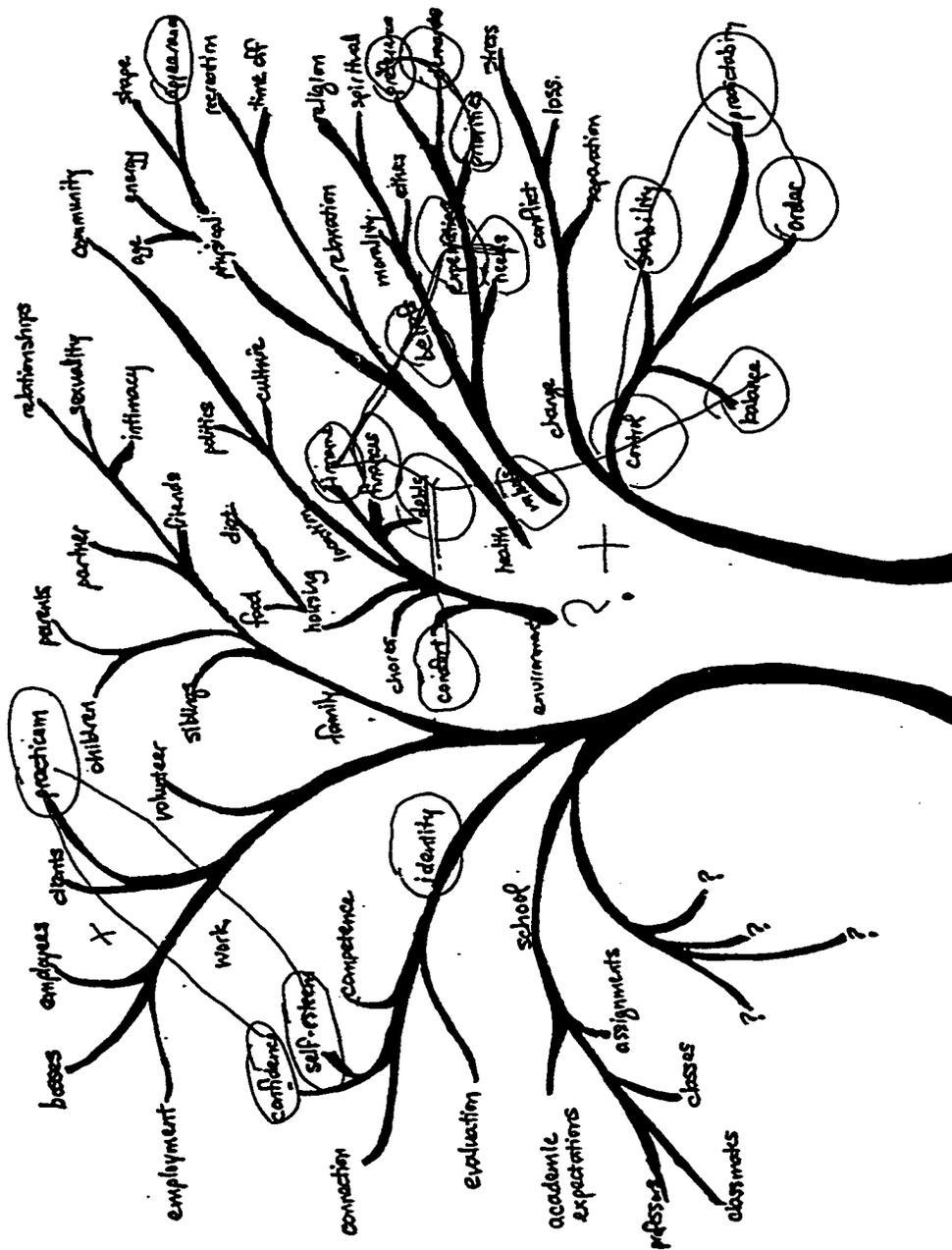
Clara characterized Time 3, and the time leading up to it, as a time of "revelation:"

I was talking about the process of becoming a counsellor and it dawned upon me that my vision of what I want to do in terms of being a counsellor, has changed a lot throughout being in the Master's program ... before getting in the Master's program it just, I thought everybody else wants to be a therapist or a um a school guidance [counsellor], all the typical types of counselling. The whole time I felt I never really fit in and there's something [that] doesn't quite fit for me in any of those. I still haven't got a clear vision of what I would like, but ... I like to give information and be resourceful. So I don't think I want to do heavy therapy with people over bigtime childhood issues or something like that. I think I've discovered I'm going in a different direction and it's just unclear to me as to what that is. This was a big thing to accept. I wanted to be kind of like everyone else. [People always asked] "what are you doing Clara?" "Oh well, [I'll] probably be in private practice someday," which I know isn't true, it's not what I want to do.

...and it feels so good, I feel really, really good about that, just a new energy for being in the program and for just being myself. I don't know, so much of this program was, trying to fit in and a lot of self-doubts and stuff. And n-o-w I think [I'm] entering in a different phase.

...I remember talking about this before, about needing to get that piece of paper. You know I didn't really feel I really wanted to do the degree but I really need that piece of paper to keep going ahead. In many ways I felt it was a bit of a sentence and I have this metaphor about what the Master's degree has meant to me. It's here, I am lying in the road and a Master's truck is coming down and it's coming down, the Master's truck just runs over me a couple of times so then I get my (laughs) Master's stamp, you know the tire tracks, "Masters." But [now] it's like the Master's truck

Figure 4. Clara: Transition Tree at Time 3



is coming and ... *I'm not tying the road anymore*, can't say I'm in the driver's seat but there is *something different I'm just not tying in the road like, "do it to me" type of thing anymore.*

Clara's experience in her practicum had led to her discovery that there were bona fide counsellors doing work other than deep personal work. This discovery, and a visualization exercise she did as part of another research study, helped her to expand her idea of what "real" counselling was. This revelation increased the number of her counselling options. For the first time in the program she began to feel energized, less passive, and more in charge of her experience. She was excited by the prospect of just being herself. She was no longer desperate to be like everyone else, or how she had believed the others to be.

When Clara was asked how much in transition she felt as a counsellor, she responded "probably around an 8 or 9." Her whole idea of where she fit in as a counsellor was undergoing a dramatic shift. Although she rated transitions in general as a "5 or 6," these changes were still significant:

it's not obvious ... it's not as [great an] upheaval as it could be, but there's stuff there!... *it's certainly not visible, you would never know if I didn't tell you.*

there is a transition, I'd say quite a lot. It's about *inner transition*, about *shifting in what I believe*, what my goals are in terms of what I want to do, the whole counselling thing. There's a *value shift* as well. I'm *starting to question everything about what I value in life*: how important is money? and do I want to have a house? and 2.5 kids? Now that I'm reaching the end of my program, another transition is happening, "Okay what do I want? *Where do I want to go from here?* What do I want to take? How is that going to make it all fit together? Where do I want to direct my life energy now? So I do feel quite significantly in transition now, and it starts like I said, all the shifts, they're all happening, *the gears are starting to click. I'm not in crisis*, I'm not in that same 90% [as Time 2] "Aaughh what am I going to do?" *I feel very calm about this transition*, and there's this type of "okay, okay, *let's just see what's going to happen from here*" type of thing. There's *transition, but not crisis transition* I guess that's the best way I could put it.

Although Clara was in the midst of a significant inner transition, she felt relatively calm, not in crisis. Unlike her earlier transitions at Time 1 and 2 her self-esteem and confidence were increasing. At Time 3 a sense of hope and excitement accompanied her fear and uncertainty. Even though her values were shifting and she was questioning her goals and lifestyle choices, she was able to maintain a sense of calmness. Despite being in the midst of so much transition Clara was more confident in her ability to handle whatever might lie ahead.

As alluded to earlier, the words Clara had used to characterize Times 1 and 2, e.g., "dark ages," "night," "despair" and "being lost," contrasted dramatically with the words she used to describe Time 3. At Time 3 she was "on the route to being found," and used words like "excitement," "happiness," and "revelation" to describe her transitions. Several things were very different at Time 3: Clara had come to believe her self-esteem and confidence were on the upswing (a broadening of hope); she felt more in control and able to make her own choices (particularly in the program); she perceived more options available to her in the helping role (beyond the traditional role of personal counsellor doing in-depth

therapy), and felt more freedom to just be herself. Together, these shifts helped Clara to face the many transitions looming at Time 3 with greater calm and less panic than she had at Time 1 or 2.

Possible Selves

Clara entered the program with many strongly feared selves. She was much more strongly preoccupied with, perhaps even driven by, these fears at the start of the program than she was by the end of her practicum. Her statements regarding her feared counsellor selves (see Appendix F) decreased in number as well as degree of elaboration over time. Overall, the emotional energy she invested in her feared counsellor selves had considerably decreased by the time of the last interview.

Feared selves: Time 1.

At Time 1, Clara spoke in great detail about her fears of becoming either a "smotherer mother... taking care of the person so much that they become dependent, counselling never ends" or a "manipulator... not being open enough to the person who is in front of me and being arrogant and knowing." Both were issues she thought she might struggle with in the future; "I don't want to be like that... but I guess I got to be aware of it. I know both exist in me."

One of the factors likely to have shaped her fear of becoming a manipulator was an extremely negative experience (see Appendix G) she had in a community peer counsellor training setting shortly before the start of the program. She characterized this experience as an example of what happens when counsellors abuse their power, and used words like "oppressive," "confrontative," "hammering," "battering" and "abusive" to describe her experience. This was the first time Clara had become personally aware of "the danger of playing God." She found out that "something really awful can happen, and a lot of damage can be done" when a counsellor does not operate "from that basic foundational square one of accepting a person and where they're at." During the experience she had found it difficult to sleep nights, resist being "brainwashed," and not to believe the "barrage of stuff" directed at her and the other group members by the co-facilitators. When the experience was over, she was proud of herself for not having hooked into their perspective. It did, however, take a toll, she came out of the experience feeling "pretty beaten up about it and really off-center."

Clara believed that her goals as a counsellor had been strongly influenced by this abusive training experience and her fear of similarly damaging her own clients. Her fears at the start of the program were still strong at the end of her pre-practicum when she still felt off balance with clients:

I know it does affect my counselling right now ... I'm very tentative. I used to be able to challenge people in a way that respected them, I believe. But right now, I'm just so afraid of being overbearing and overriding their process that I lock onto the extreme of being tentative ... I'm struggling right now to get that balance back.

By the time Clara reached the end of her practicum, she was much less fearful of how she would perform as a counsellor. Clara had far less to say about her fears at Time 3. When she was asked to give an example of a counsellor who helped shape her image of what a counsellor should or shouldn't be, she remembered previously talking about her experience with the peer training facilitator, but she only sighed and remarked that she didn't have "a lot of thoughts around that right now." The relative tameness of this remark contrasted sharply with the extensive and emotionally-charged response she made to the same inquiry at Time 1. The experience was still unpleasant, but it was no longer invested with the same amount of emotional energy as it had been for her earlier. Clara believed the practicum, itself, had been a very positive influence: "the practicum has kind of upped my self-esteem and confidence and my connection with reality, and it's just been really a positive type of transition, a really good transition."

At the start of the program, when Clara was struggling with fears about her counselling skills (and the damage that could be done by a counsellor who abuses that power), she was also grappling with fears regarding her personal worth and her competence as a graduate student. She was acutely aware that she had not been accepted immediately into the program, and she doubted she was of the same caliber as the other graduate students. Clara felt insecure about her status as a counselling graduate student, and believed she had not been judged as worthy as her classmates: "I was definitely not deemed as qualified or as able as they are ... I didn't stand out like my other colleagues." Clara perceived herself as a "struggler who has just barely made it on the bottom rung, right before the ladder got snapped up." She believed she was going to have to really struggle "to fit in." Clara had not expected to feel so insecure because she had felt such a "high" when she found out she had been admitted to the program.

Gradually, however, doubt had begun to creep in:

after the third week, it started to seep in, this other voice that says ... I guess that maybe reflects a lot of the negative stuff that I have, *voices inside of me that still say I'm not good enough and I'm not going to make it...* So I guess it's more rooted than I thought ... It started ... when, I saw people, I was impressed by the caliber of people that were in there, and their experiences and how they presented themselves ... It came from the outside. Oh well, no, it was obviously in the inside, I had my negative, I was open to it obviously, but I remember at one point thinking you know this particular woman in the course, WHOA, isn't she articulate, Holy Mackerel I don't know what clicked, but I remember things started to come up when I saw this woman and how she presented herself ... she somehow represents the model of what it means to be, what someone should be in Grad School. It has something to do with, this sounds silly, but I could imagine her being a professor, and, I can't imagine myself ... *I just see her as the complete person, and I'm not complete*, because I don't have that, that articulation of theory as well as she does. And I think I (longingly) should have that if I want to be a real Grad student. *I can't just be this Clara* who's gut level, who talks about her experience, *it's not good enough ...* And I don't know even know *why this woman hooks me*, that's why, because I'm not normally like that.

Clara was upset to find herself reverting to fears of an earlier age. These fears had caused her to become hyper-vigilant with the other students, particularly the student she dubbed "the ultimate graduate student":

I have the judgment ... I guess I'm not as mature, or as far along, as I thought, and why is this coming up now? I got over this when I was 24, 23, here I am [her age] and what? (half laugh) Back to a previous stage in my development, you know, I'm regressing here. (slowly) So, that's my judgment of what I'm going through. ... *what I'm feeling isn't normal, and isn't acceptable to me*, this hooking. When we got our papers back the other day, you could almost hear it, I wonder what she got, and just bending that way. Oh, I hear she got an A- and I got a B+. You know, I mean, (energetically with disdain) *that's grade school stuff! Nobody does that* and a Masters Student isn't, I should be at a different... *I don't think that there is anybody as crazy right now as I am about comparing myself*. I really believe that! I'm almost sure, of the 15 or 16 of us, that nobody is as hooked into comparing themselves as I am right now and I really try hard to cover it up ... **This is awful! I mean this is crazy.** ... Nobody's checking out others on that level ... Sometimes I think if I look at her, I'll be able to understand what she's all about and maybe get a piece of what she's got. *It's so primal, it's so primitive what I really don't like this.*

These strong fears of being unworthy not only interfered in class, but also in her counselling sessions:

to be open to someone else and let their feelings, I have to have that open space inside here, and that open space is not there. It is filled with all this bunk and junk about can I make it? Will I make the grade? Will I survive? ... there's so much, so full already, I can't make space for someone else ... so I go in a little frazzled and trying my best to stay in my head, because my head's safe, it's not too risky. Okay, do paraphrasing, summarizing. I can do that, because it's all up here. *I can't activate my heart, my insight* which feeds into feeling less about myself. I'm thinking, "Clara, what the hell happened to your insight? What's going on here?" *So it feeds into me feeling less about myself.*

Clara had enough insight into her own process to be able to recognize that her old "hooks" were being reactivated. She was so preoccupied with anxiety about her performance that she was unable to focus the way she wanted when she was counselling a client. Unfortunately, her preoccupation handicapped her ability to "activate her heart" and her insight. She could not access the things she valued and relied on to boost her self-confidence and self-worth. Clara's awareness of this process and her inability to unhook only increased her frustration and negative self-judgments.

Feared selves: Time 2.

At Time 2, the end of pre-practicum, Clara was still extremely frustrated by her preoccupation with comparing herself to others:

a significant part of my learning and growing as a person in the past 10 years has been letting go of the need to please others and living up to other people's expectations... get good grades for my mom and all that sort of stuff and it took me years to let go of that ... I never thought it would just all come back up again (astounded) and here it is again! I get all (sigh) worried about what I'm going to get on a paper I'm almost scared of really presenting my true self, unless it's a professor who I know values process. If I start writing a paper that means a lot to me and I don't get a grade, if I get a grade lower than B+, I'll be absolutely crushed because I believe myself as a person I think I'm an A ... I wish I had the ability to say well "this is just who I am, it's your problem, you just don't recognize it." There's that voice that does say that ... but now, being in the program has changed that. *My sense of value and identity and self esteem and confidence is very much linked to what others expect me to produce ...so there is that big link between their expectations and who I am and how I value myself ... I thought I was pretty solid. I thought I was pretty solid in not getting hooked into to external expectations and evaluations of who I am. I thought I'd come pretty far and here I am back ... not being able to separate who I am from what people think they see of me, not being*

able to separate who I am as a person from that mark that I got in that class or from that scathing comment that was written on my paper, it's really hard.

Although Clara was clearly upset and dismayed to discover that so much of her sense of worth was still linked to others' expectations, she noticed that on her stronger days she could hold more firmly to her of self, "this is who I am." She judged this reliance on others for her self-esteem to be unhealthy, but was not yet at a stage where she could extricate herself from the pattern.

Feared selves: Time 3.

By Time 3, near the end of her practicum, Clara believed she had come "full circle:"

yeah, I belong, but man, I just don't want to be in on this little game stuff anymore ... it's different ... the whole theme of "do I really want this?" has ... played itself through ... *It's such a relief to be back here and looking at inside myself as the judge of that, rather than outside and measuring up ... I feel it's coming back inside to me, I just feel really energized by that ... I'm starting to see that I'm not at the top, I'm not at the bottom but I'm somewhere in the middle, and that's good enough for me. So I have [to] let go of all that stuff, about (mocking, self-pitying voice) "oh ... I got to prove to myself that I belong" ...so I'm doing much better with that ... the first time we met, I was almost neurotic about comparing myself to others, particularity this one women in the class who, I've resolved things with her since, which has been great, but I started as almost like a neurotic insecurity and gradually the process have been moving towards, I guess you would say, *the locus of control has shifted from comparing myself to out there, to this g-r-a-d-ual type of acceptance of myself, and of going up in self-esteem and self-confidence and the locus of control switching more to me, to my inner self, and I'm the judge of what's important and what I want.**

Clara believed this return to "self as a judge" came from several sources. Ironically, the grades she had previously focused so much on, received little attention at Time 3; she attributed only minor significance to their importance. She saw the grades as having influenced her "to some extent," but it was a very casual observation: "I did manage to pull off a few As, which was good for me. Yeah, I can do it, yeah I can do this stuff." At Time 3 she could state that she went "through the hoops quite well" but found them to have been of relatively little importance in helping build a stronger sense of herself. When she started graduate school and was uncertain of her ability, she anxiously had wanted good grades to prove her worth, but when she finally did attain them, it felt like an empty victory.

Clara thought several other factors had been far more influential in helping her to develop a stronger sense of self-worth. One of these influences was the unexpected discovery that she had a special strength:

when I do presentations ...I feel I really shine... it's just my strength. I get excited and it's fun and ... I just come alive and all of my qualities come out at that time, my sense of humour ... it's amazing, I just want to connect with each person in that room and I look in their eyes and try and kind of get them in, and it's just wonderful! And I really love that! And many many many of my classmates, as well as professors, have commented on what they call, *my extraordinary ability to give presentations* and to be all those things, to be articulate, to be personable, to be all those qualities that I sometimes don't acknowledge, seem to come out and I get such great feedback ... *it just wasn't being in the discreet middle, I actually had my moments of shining!* And a that meant more to me than ... this extremely hard paper that I've worked on and everybody knew I had gotten

an A ... Once the presentation starts *it's like I'm on the star planet* or something, I just feel like *I radiate who I am* ... that people are accepting and even those four in the class ... whatever, it just doesn't matter because I'm talking, I'm including them, and it just *I lose that self-consciousness* about and where I am in (in an exaggerating tone) "ranking in the class" (lightly) everything just goes away... I'm so happy to have discovered this *and so happy that there's been room for me for me to shine in this program cause I didn't expect it.*

Clara was extremely excited to discover she had an unsuspected talent. When she gave presentations she felt as if she was on "star planet," she shone, came alive, and lost her self-consciousness. Finally, there was room for her to be herself in a way that met with other's approval and admiration. During her presentations she felt free to totally involve herself in the task, to just concentrate on the presentation.

Clara also believed that her colleagues in the program had helped her to develop a stronger sense of her worth:

like colleagues consulting me about things, or asking me about stuff, about a paper, or asking my opinion. I was, at first I'm like, "why?"... and this would happen over and over again and it happened very recently and I asked this woman "Okay why are you talking to me?" She said "because you listen, because you're compassionate, I can't talk to other, just by being who you are, that's why I talked," I said "no, nahnah" cause she would ask me stuff ...[of] a personal nature, but other people have asked me stuff about academic stuff, which shocks me, like why? What do they think that I have? But *somewhere in the process it sunk in that, in some ways they value who I am,* or have seen something, in spite of my [makes a mocking comment about not getting into the program right away] ...(lightly) *somewheres in there they saw something that I didn't, and just by their interactions and their forwardness and that helped to say "yeah hey I belong,"* cause of their approaching me, so that was significant.

Once again, when she had external reinforcement that others valued her and saw something in her, she began to feel she did belong, and to see her own worth.

Perhaps one of the most significant things that helped to build Clara's sense of worth was something that she initiated. Clara, much to her own amazement, decided to confront one of her largest fears from the first semester. She took the risk of speaking to the woman she had believed to be "the ultimate graduate student:"

I think was it about January, or no actually February by the time I finally talked to her. I approached her and said "I've had some, a lot of feelings, and I just wanted to see if you wanted to talk to me about, or if you'd be willing to listen to some stuff, some issues that I've had" and I was able to let go of a lot. And her and I, had this **great conversation** and talk, and she gave me lots of feedback of how she perceived me, and how *she perceived me as kind of being up there.* *What!?* So all this stuff got cleared away ... [it was] **was huge!**... she thought that I was extremely capable and that she was often, she used the word "I was floored by some of the things you would say in class" and she said "you've never said a whole lot but when you spoke Clara, wow! You know people listened, cause you, just the way you say things." And, oh my! ... but that **approaching her** to ask her for the meeting..(long drawn out gasping noise) "a-u-g-h" wawa, my voice was shaking, I just ah ah ah (laughs) it was really hard. *So one of my accomplishments this year,* as much as my papers and everything else, *[was] being able to approach that woman and being able to say what I needed to say and feel, and being supported by her was one of the most tremendous things throughout this year,* (sounding pleased) so it's been neat! (laughs).

Clara chose to take the risk to initiate a meeting with the person she had feared and felt the most intimidated by, in the program. She found out, much to her shock, that this woman perceived her as "being up there," and respected her abilities. Once again, someone outside, this time the woman she'd been so insecure about, provided validation of her worth, an affirmation of belonging. At Time 3, two months after this experience, she was still "getting used to that whole self-esteem thing and being pretty high up there." Clara had changed so much that she needed the context of the interview to reconnect with her previous feelings. She felt a greater sense of power and control from having made the choice to confront her fear of the graduate student.

Clara's recovery of a sense of worth and belonging at Time 3 is a remarkable contrast to her desperate fear of not being good enough at Times 1 and 2. She attributed this change to a number of sources: finding out she could get "A"s in her course work, learning that she could "really shine" at something (i.e., oral presentations), finding out that colleagues respected her enough to seek her help, and probably most significantly, discovering that the "ultimate graduate student" actually respected her. Clara's previous (prior to starting the program) sense of being solid in her sense of personal worth had been seriously rocked by finding herself become so "neurotically insecure." Clara's validation from various external sources appears to have quieted some of her need for approval. She was gradually developing more self-confidence, and had even begun to conceive of a self who could provide her own strokes. Clara had not yet, however, arrived at a place where she could separate her sense of self from others' perceptions of her.

The times when Clara's feared selves were most predominant (Times 1 and 2) were the times she characterized as "the dark ages," when she felt lost and in despair. In contrast, as she moved closer to Time 3 she began to: confront her fears, use the opportunities in the program and practicum to build her sense of self, and risk making more active choices. She began to receive positive feedback about performance and her perception began to shift to a more hopeful one. She felt "on the route to being found."

Later on, in the section on self-defining memories, we will see how Clara's past experience primed her to have strong issues in the area of self-worth. She came laden with heavy parental judgments about helping and her worthiness. Her attempts to break away from external judgments to forge her own identity in the graduate program mirror earlier experiences she has not yet completely resolved. First, however, the influence of another aspect of possible selves, i.e., hoped-for selves, and her struggle to develop those hoped-for aspects of herself will be examined.

Hoped-for selves.

At the time Clara was struggling with her fears regarding potential damage to clients, and whether she fit in as a graduate student, she had similar mirror-imaged hoped-for selves. These hoped-for selves

(see Appendix H), however, were much less intense, and less dramatic than the fears which drove many of her actions at the start of the program.

Hoped-for selves: Time 1.

When Clara's entered into the program following her bad experience in the community training program, the predominant theme in her helper 'shoulds' was "who you are is important;" and that the "bottom line" for helpers should be "acceptance." Trust, support for the other person, and giving them space, were all important goals for how to treat clients. These were, of course, precisely what had been sadly lacking in her recent community training program; they had become the most important things she wanted to her to bring to her own future helping experiences, and were a significant part of her hoped-for counsellor identity.

Clara, personally, wanted to feel "confident and okay ... solid again and able to make that leap into being less tentative, sure of myself." She had hoped at the start of her academic training that this would happen through "meaningful" (which for her meant "experiential and practical"), experiences. Once she began taking courses in the program, however, she became discouraged:

there's ... a lot of theoretical stuff, and it's *just a little far removed sometimes*. Maybe I'm feeling this right now 'cause I'm not in practicum yet. Maybe that will change, but right now I feel it's *very academic* and to be honest, I don't really enjoy my classes a whole lot. *Everyone is going off on tangents ... I can't really wrap my head around what's going on. Everything is just all over the place* so (sigh), I don't know, that just kind of adds to this feeling of "oh man I just want to move on." (laughs) Get it out of the way! *It's not going to be as meaningful as I thought it might be.*

Clara's hopes for an opportunity to build confidence and to feel more solid through more practice, and less theory, were *put on hold until her practicum*. In the meantime, however, she still had a strong need to shore up her confidence. One way she did this was by relying on the memory of her past accomplishments, reassuring herself she had the basics she needed, and hoping that in the future she could use the same strengths:

I count on ... my memory of myself as being a good counsellor and my experience that ... I have experience in the real world. I know what it's like to be a counsellor. I remember, and I'd think I was a pretty good one, and that even if I don't maybe go through all the *academic hoops, nobody can take away what I already know about myself as a person and as a counsellor. I can ... put up quite a few chisels and chisel away at the old self esteem and stuff, but I really think that I have a base. There's a base of gut level stuff ...* I know what it's like out there in the real world, it's a comforting thought sometimes when I hear a professor go off on an academic, theoretical...

Another way she handled the delay in being able to activate her hoped-for self was to readjust her goals, try to tone down her expectations:

another thing that helps me get though it, and say that "this is not the be all and end all" and "*this is only a year of my life and I'll grow in so many other ways*", "*I don't have to learn everything that I need to learn as a counsellor in one year.*" "This is just a little part of the journey and for me." "I just want to get that piece of paper that'll open some doors, to keep me going on my journey." And when I put it in that perspective, *suddenly a lot of stress* (makes noise of balloon deflating) *goes down about performance.*

as well as her goals:

my goals come to, I hate to say this, but it almost changes "I've got to get through this," is what I'm thinking of in terms of my Masters degree ... not "I want to get meaning out of this, I want to be a better counsellor." That was my, originally, what's, that's why I wanted to go to grad school for. But the reality has now changed to "I've got to get through this. I know I can do it, I've just got to get through this." Big change.

Clara entered the program with the goal of obtaining "the piece of paper" (i.e., Masters degree) that would give her professional standing. In addition, she had hoped to find meaning, become a better counsellor, and develop a more solid sense of herself through the program. The theoretical focus of the academic program combined with the overwhelming transitions she experienced (e.g., lack of personal time, unbalanced lifestyle, lack of supports), and her significant fears (e.g., damaging others, not belonging, etc.) had caused her to, at least temporarily, put aside these other hoped-selves and to focus almost exclusively on academic achievement.

Although Clara tried to lower her expectations, and to put some of her hoped-for selves on hold, she did not abandon them entirely. At Time 1, within only a few weeks of starting the program, she perceived that the prospects for growing and developing in the way she had hoped to looked pretty grim until the semester was over. Instead, she focused her hopes on the practicum:

... till December *there's no relief*. This is going to be just grin and bear all of this until December. After that, the practicum starts and I see [myself] as maybe being more motivated to do theory stuff once I'm out there. ... maybe that will motivate me more to, to wrap my head around the theory stuff and really sink my teeth into it more, but, that's the only real thing I see as changing. The practicum could be really helpful, but it won't be if at the same time the courses are so heavy, the readings it'll just be another stress if it's like that, but *I have this imagining*. I don't know if it's right or not, but *the second term is going to be a little bit better because the practicum is going to be there*. And that there won't be as much academic stuff required. I don't know if that's really true.

Another way to learn more about Clara's hoped-for selves is to examine the self-defining memory she imagined her future self would create from Time 1:

it has to do with having a conversation with a professor. I think the conversation would be in the class setting, but I'm not sure ... the professor says something to do with me having mastered something really good, something theoretical, and myself ... saying something about what I'd hoped grad school would be, and that it'd encompass more parts of the picture and *I would put out what we had needed and would've helped*. Something like "I've been through the hoops, I've done everything, but I really question, when I look back at the ways in which I've been trained, I'm really wondering or *I have a sense that it's only a really small part of the picture*" and ... really standing up for that somehow ... because I can't right now. And I think it would be really important in the future to look back and be able to put it all in place and look back at this year and say, "well, it was good, I got through it, and I went through all the hoops, but there is something more, that this program is not really ultimate in counsellor training and that *there is a big piece missing here* and I'm not ... sure what that big piece [is] ... but my sense is that there is a piece missing, a big piece and *I would like to know what that is, to find a way to say it* ... I'd love to see myself five years down the road, thinking back to that day when I said that in class. *Or came out and not kept this secret part of myself...*

...right now I don't [feel] safe in coming out with "I don't think this is going to be the be all and end all in counsellor training." I'm really having a lot of doubts about this whole process. But, I can't even say that right now because I am right in the process. I don't know what this process is going to be. I just have to be open. *But I just have this gut feeling that something is not quite right here and that five years down the road I'd know what was not quite right, could name it, and have said it, and moved on.*

...that would be very, very big for me to be able to say that and ... not be part of the game. Get in to the status and prestige that this is grad school, this is UVic grad program. All that stuff that goes with being in grad school that I really feel I have to keep very closed-mouthed about right now, especially for someone who was so lucky to get it. It's certainly not acceptable to say that in any way shape or form. That maybe I'll find a way, maybe it'll happen, kind of my little dream, I guess... And that I'd have it enough together ... have all that stuff that I don't feel I have right now ... *and I think my future self would be really , really happy and proud of that person to be able to say that.*

Clara's hoped-for future self would feel confident enough to be able to speak up to a professor in class about her truth. She would not feel so intimidated by status and prestige and that she would have to keep gut feelings secret. Clara would have it together enough to find the words to express the doubts she had at Time 1, and she would know the system well enough to do it in a way that would be acceptable. This hoped-for Clara would be a strong, confident, and integrated Clara, able to bridge the schism between the academic theoretical world based in her head, and her secret, gut level way of knowing that came from her heart. At Time 1 Clara felt eons away from that hoped-for self and safe enough only to handle the theoretical aspect of her training.

Hoped-for selves: Time 2:

At Time 2, in mid-December, when the semester was drawing to a close, Clara had stuck to her goal of getting the piece of paper that would give her a Masters degree. She had not, however, given up on her ultimate value of working from the heart as a counsellor. It bothered her that she had put that hoped-for aspect of herself on hold. At one point in the interview she forlornly remarked that a "counsellor should live from the heart ... *I wonder if the heart will ever come back again?*" When she gave examples of helpers who helped shape her image of what a counsellor should be, the predominant theme was that these were helpers who "lived from the heart;" or demonstrated "inner clarity" and wisdom. These were helpers who had helped her "to trust in my own process and trust in that intuitive voice inside of me."

Clara had made the decision to postpone developing her heart side, but it worried her, she was afraid she might have gotten lost in the theoretical approaches. She was also frustrated and resented the consequences caused by this delay of her experiential learning:

there's almost a powerlessness to it too, just having to go through these hoops to get my Master's degree so I can move forward. There's kind of a resentment or a powerlessness or shucks (frustratedly) "Why do I have to do it this way? Why can't I continue to do a specific training like

Holkomi training or body therapy?" ... *those things always contributed to my growth as a person and counsellor far more than this program does, but (laughs) it just doesn't give you that piece of paper.*

...if society was different ... I don't think I would really choose to be here. I really think I would continue my training, my counsellor training, in other ways that are experiential based. That I grow, that's *the strength of my counselling, is when I'm strong as a person.* So that's not really what I'd ultimately choose to inspire me, but it's what I've chosen (sigh) ... *the commitment's there, I'm going to get that piece of paper, and I'm just going to do it now that I realize that I have the abilities to do it, I will get it, but it comes at cost.*

Clara remained resolved to fulfill the requirements needed get a Masters degree in order to be able to work in the community as a counsellor, despite the cost of having to forego more experientially-based learning. At one point it had been important to say she had a graduate degree, but by Time 2, the degree itself had lost its importance. Instead, the degree had become valued only as a means to an end.

Clara's strong hope at Time 1 to fit in as a graduate student, and to feel like she belonged, underwent a shift by Time 2:

it's been a change since we talked last time, cause I remember last time we talked I was feeling like I didn't fit period; I don't belong here, I'm not smart enough I'm not, I'm just, I don't fit. *Now I can see how, yeah I can do it, I'm as good as [the] next person, but not all of them, as most of the people.*

I have a right to be there, but that's not really what I mean by I don't really fit. It's that *there's a part inside of me that doesn't really want to do this, it resents having to go through this particular hoop.*

She was beginning to change her perspective from an external focus of fitting in and belonging in the graduate program, to a more internal focus, wondering did the graduate program really match what she wanted? Clara's internal focus was not yet solid. There were still times when she questioned herself and was ambivalent about, or blamed herself, for not being up to the standards of her idealized graduate student:

[there's] this part of me that says that this program isn't quite [right because] it focuses so much on the intellectual ... *maybe a person that's really interested and keen, that well-rounded intellect and that type of person would cut it really well. I don't cut it in that Master's thing. I feel I don't really belong there. I'm just, I'm okay (more strongly) I've got the abilities and skills [to] B+ my way through it and get the grades, or whatever that I need, but it's just not me (softly) I think that's the problem.*

The desire to fit in was still a live issue for Clara, but one that appeared to be losing some of its intensity by Time 2. At times she was able to state she had a right to be in the program and that she was as good as the next person (or most of them). At other times, however, she compared herself with an imagined all-capable well-rounded graduate student, and felt inadequate by comparison. She was also beginning to question whether the program (although she was capable of doing it) fit with her values.

Time 2, as already described, was a sorely taxing time for Clara; she characterized it as the "dark ages," a time she was "stressed beyond capacity." This stress is not too surprising, since at the same

time she had put the "heart" side of her development on hold (the side she found the most energizing), she was also working extremely long hours with very little attention to personal needs. When Clara was asked how these transitions might affect her counsellor development, she talked about one of her strategies to minimize distress:

my future as a counsellor ... well ... I don't see it as ... really influencing me a lot *because it's temporary, all these stresses of transitions are temporary. If I could not see an end to it, then that would be different, then I'd say this is the dark ... dark night of despair* (laughs) type of thing. This is horrendous! This is awful! I could never counsel people with this type of stress in my life, right now, *these transitions and the stress and expectations are definitely affecting my ability as a counsellor in a negative way, but I don't see it as affecting them in a negative way permanently.*

Thus, one of the ways she minimized her distress at Time 2 was to reassure herself that this experience was temporary, to imagine that its effect would be contained and not affect her permanently.

Another way Clara contained her distress was through a support person who helped her to focus on her "true self:"

[there's] one particular person who extended herself in a very human way, that helps me to keep my goal about getting through the program, about developing as a person ... she reminds me of my true self or the things that I am.

Clara was beginning to understand which pieces were missing for her in the program. At Time 2, she was able to articulate some of the things that at Time 1 she had not been able to express:

that sense of the humanness that I thought was the heart of counselling, there's not a whole lot of room for it in the way the courses are delivered ... I always believed that it's important, for people to be good counsellors, to have opportunities for them to be supported, and I think the whole Master's program is such a huge transition from usual life, I believe they should set up ways for people to get support. I know it's my responsibility, as well, and I don't want to just put it on the University but it's just that there seems to be such a lack of it.

She had started not to blame herself, or see it as a sign of personal inadequacy if she needed support. She had begun to, instead, question whether something inherent in the program and way the courses were delivered, made it difficult not just for her, but for students in general. Clara was not, however, just blaming the program, she also knew that she could have taken more responsibility for setting up her own support.

Clara found it easy to visualize the SDM her future self would create from Time 2 because she had already fantasized about it:

I don't know if this quite fits, but there's one that I was thinking of just the other day, something that I wish would happen ... it's the day that we're writing our comprehensive exams ... I just had my little exam and I've done my thing, and I'm sitting in this waiting room, waiting for the big decision as to whether I get the degree or not. And somebody accidentally left the door open, so I can hear them talking, and one professor, it's funny because he's not like a key person in my life, but this particular one professor, he's kind of like a father figure I think. But anyway this one professor says to the rest of them, and all the professors I ever had are assembled in that room, and he says *"there's something about Clara, you know she may not have gotten the highest grades this year in our program but there's something really special about her ... she's just a very knowing type of person in a way,"* and them saying "it's too bad that we don't have any measures [of] that" ... and they all kind

of agree and say "yeah I wonder, I wonder if there's a way that we could measure that type of person. Yeah, I know what you mean about that Clara, she was different. I wonder what we could do to address people who are like that."

This memory was significant for Clara because she would finally be seen and acknowledged by all her professors. It was also important because she wanted to have an impact on the way the program functioned. She perceived herself to have somehow been missed:

I see myself as falling through the cracks in some ways. Well, not falling through the cracks, I'll get the little piece of paper, but in some ways just kind of going through this processing factory and working like everybody else, and coming out with the same piece of paper as everybody else, but not really being acknowledged for who I really am. So there's something about that, I wish, and then have this fantasy about being acknowledged.

When Clara was asked what would be important about the memory, she replied:

If I were to look back on it years later, and think about the whole year, it would mean *just do what we can for the moment, and things will be okay. Or that ... this persistence that I have just to keep going with it and being there and trusting that maybe something will come out of this, will eventually, how do I put this? ... that persistence is enough ... I don't have to change the system, that who I am is enough, and that it will be recognized.* I guess it would be a trusting thing in the way that I think ... [it] would give me trust that in other situations in life where I would feel perhaps, "oh boy (sounding down, disappointed) whatever I do doesn't matter and nobody sees" ... it would *bring some kind of trust that, "yeah maybe the structures of life or society are like that, but people still do see, and they see in different times than when I need it."* Maybe they don't see it right now ... but you know but it will happen at some point.

Instead of looking back at this year as "Oh God how did I ever get through that?" or, "boy oh boy that was really hard." Instead of looking at it as a hoop jumping experience, it's just recognizing that "well yes, *I had to jump through this hoop but I maintain my integrity of who I was and that did shine through at the end.*"

Clara's fantasy, or projected SDM, is that she would finally get the recognition she craved from all her professors, in a way that acknowledged she was uniquely special. Not only would she get the recognition she had been hoping for, but it would also act as an impetus for the professors to question the program, and to change it so that others would not fall through the cracks. The hoped-for message from that future self was that all this difficult persistence would be worth it, and who she was would be acknowledged, that she could trust that things will work out in the future. Probably the most important part of this fantasy was that she would be capable of jumping through these academic hoops *and* maintaining her integrity. In the end, the schism would be bridged, and who she was could shine through. These hopes and fantasies helped Clara to persist and to continue her efforts to adapt to the academic world when she felt powerless to change her environment. Her vision of being able to *maintain her personal integrity and still be acknowledged* by the professors gave her something to hope for when she felt little enthusiasm or energy for her academic work. At Time 2, she was still seeking acknowledgment from an external authority source, but it came paired with the recognition that ultimately she would need to be persistent and learn to trust herself.

Hoped-for selves: Time 3.

At Time 3, near the end of her practicum, Clara was beginning to trust herself more and to recognize her worth. As mentioned previously, in the section on transitions, one of the most significant factors in helping her to make this shift was her experience in the practicum. On the practicum she met helpers who modeled a much broader range of helping behaviors than she had been exposed to previously in the graduate program. She also received validation for her "resourceful" behaviors. These conditions set the stage for what she called a "revelation:"

I think I've discovered *I'm going in a different direction, and it's unclear to me as to what that is.* This was a big thing to accept because I wanted to be like everyone else. Always "what are you doing Clara?" "Oh well, probably be into private practice someday," which I know isn't true, it's not what I want to do.

the lid has just been opened in terms of, "wait a minute here there are other options." So like I said, very unclear as to what those options might be, but I know I'm not going to be the traditional mold.

I'm just connecting again with the sense of power and that, "wait a minute this is my life and I have some choices here" and just very recently that whole thing being opened up for me so, that's a big shift.

Clara no longer felt as much a prisoner in the graduate program, she was beginning to see options and choices open up. She no longer wanted to automatically follow the standard goals, and adopt the expectations of her classmates. Clara wanted to forge her own dream, and to break out of the traditional mold that so ill-suited her. She was, however, uncertain which dream she did want to pursue: "I wish I could say more about what my vision is ... but I think that will come, just step by step." Clara was beginning to trust that her vision would come to her gradually over time, and to be less anxious about where her path would take her.

As mentioned previously, Clara was also feeling less passive; she was no longer lying on the road waiting for the "Masters truck" to stamp her with its tire treads. She did not see herself in the driver's seat, but neither was she still on the road saying "do it to me." Like her hope at Time 1, the practicum did turn out to be a very positive experience:

the practicum placement was tremendous in helping me to, kind of *like a reality check ... feeling grounded, and rooted somewhere in the real world and not just at the University* and ... another thing that's been huge for me is that so many people say, "okay you have to have a Master's degree to be a counsellor," and that's why I got it ... but suddenly something happened ... since I've been at the practicum placement when all these tremendous people with incredible skills, way above mine don't even have bachelor's degrees, and I have. So what's happened, is ... *that myth about needing to have the Master's degree to be a counsellor is--like I know it's going to help me in my journey--but it's not going to make me a better counsellor. And the skill, it has to do [with] living ... life experience, about being open to different things and being in touch with yourself. All of this has come back to me, all that intuitive knowing that I always knew has come back to me in the past month, about what's really essential about being a counsellor. I really feel I've touched with that again, and those practicum people were just so instrumental in reminding me.*

Clara's experience in the practicum had helped her to become more grounded. Earlier, she had believed it necessary to put aside her beliefs to work on the degree. After her practicum experience, however, she was starting to become more in touch with her value she of intuitive knowing, and to think again about what was important to her.

Clara had begun to become impatient with her previous passivity:

I can't say at this point I'm ready to let it go of the ritual of waiting ... I know I'm still entranced by it. But, on the other hand, it's like this nudging of "*okay let's get on with it, Clara, now come on,*" there's another voice that's starting to come.

there's *stuff stirring* around for me ... [I'm] just in that weird, like I call it limbo land; where, *what's my vision going to look like?* (sadly, with emphasis) How long am I going to sit here and wait?! *And when am I'm going to ... do whatever needs to be done to get in touch with ... that vision?* I'm not sure, I just don't have the answer to it, but I know I'm getting tired!

Clara felt nudged and was starting to get fed up with being in "limbo land." At Time 3 she was starting to build the energy she need to more actively choose what she wanted to do. Clara was at a nexus point, poised to begin her journey; but she was only vaguely aware of where she wanted to go:

my goals right now as a counsellor are in a state of transition and flux. I'm in a place right now where I feel that I don't have to follow the traditional mode of being a practicing counsellor in private practice. [I] am now looking into ways that my qualities of resourcefulness, and ability to communicate can be used in a different type of setting. And like I said, I'm not sure what that looks like right now, but it has to do with resourcefulness, that's the key for me, that's the key word. My goals have something to do [with] *integrating who I am as a person* and this resourcefulness quality, with something that I can serve people, or I can just use those qualities to serve people, I guess. So I wish I could say more, but that's all that comes clear for me right now.

Although Clara was clearly uncomfortable with this questioning process, she valued it:

this is really good, that I'm questioning all these things and in *the process of reordering my life*, rather than going on in this baaa sheep-like existence of following what everybody else is doing. *I haven't done that in a long time and it's uncomfortable, it's not a nice feeling, but I sense it's positive.* It's the bottom line that *out of this is going to come what I really want, and what I really value and I'm going to be able to commit myself to it, rather than this type of half-and-half commitment to being a sheep and doing what everybody else is.*

so I figure that even though I'm not happy and this is not a very comfy place to be, that *it's going to lead me to somewheres where I will have that commitment and that passion for life and living that I know is inside of me, but I just haven't flushed it out yet.*

Clara had a vision of what she hoped would come out of this difficult reordering process, a self who was passionate and committed to what she valued in life, rather than following others. Her belief that a much hoped-for self would eventually emerge from this process enabled her to continue this struggle despite her discomfort in the uncertainty and flux of this transition.

Clara was beginning to trust herself and her intuitions, just as she had hoped she would at Time 2:

I think I have a *deep sense of ... going in the right direction ...* that if I'm unhappy, my soul, or whatever, my body, will tell me I'm unhappy and I will change. *I adapt, I don't stay very long in unhappiness.* I'll give it some space, but *when it's time to move, I move!* ...and I think I have a neat

sense of introspection and looking inside and listening. I listen to what is revealed to me, whether these [are] little snippets, whether they come through in dreams, or through talking to others. I'm a searcher, an introspective searcher I really believe that's a neat thing about who I am, and how I do things, that's going to see me thought this time ... I have a deep trust in my process, that's going to lead me in the right direction.

As Clara learned to trust herself, there was a dramatic shift in her mood: she became much more optimistic and hopeful. Although she was still struggling to develop a vision of what she wanted to do as a counsellor, she faced the task with far more equanimity and confidence at Time 3 than she had before.

The details of Clara's projected SDM at Time 3 will not be described to protect her confidentiality. Instead, some excerpts from her discussion of the SDM will be given. Many aspects of this memory are similar to those of Times 1 and 2. For instance, in this memory, she again hoped to achieve external recognition from others and to feel better about herself:

a lot of my colleagues coming up to me, and being impressed ... not only can I do all that counselling stuff, but what I really am, and who I am, and what I want to do as a person is recognized and affirmed and people acknowledge that ,and there I go! (laughs) Off and convinced that I'm on the right path, and that providing a lot of the motivation and oomph to say "you bet I am!" and letting all those myths go about what a real counsellor is and that would be a real turning point for me, just letting all that go and focusing who I am.

There were, however, also some differences at Time 3. This time she hoped to accomplish something outside of the academic sphere to gain recognition, and it is from her colleagues, rather than from her professors that she hoped to get this affirmation. Clara wanted to be able to use the confidence she would gain from the experience to let go of myths and start focusing more on who she was and what she wanted to be. She hoped that she would learn

I'm the type of person that really shines when I'm doing what I really, really am good at. Or what my mission in life is about. I can do a lot of things kind of well, but there's some things that I do really well and that um my future self would say that I can trust that when I focus on those things, that I do really well, that's all that really matters.

Although Clara was beginning to recognize the importance of creating a personal vision of who she wanted to be, external affirmation was still a prerequisite for the development of that vision.

Clara was also, however, beginning to question her need for validation from others and to conceive of a future self who might be able to provide her own acknowledgment:

as I reflect on it, I wish in some ways that I didn't need strokes from those people who are in the academic [world]. I would see that as a really important switch, and maybe I'll learn how to do that for myself without needing their strokes or feedback. By saying "boy you really do well in this other area" maybe I'll find that for my own ... I see that that would really help me to let go of all that myth stuff that holds me back at times? And I see that event as propelling me forth.

She anticipated that she would still need the impetus of an external event to propel her forth into action, to discard the old myths she was clinging to. At the same time, Clara had begun to conceive of a stronger, more assured future self who would not require reassurance from outside. If the hoped-for self

from Time 3 is similar to her previous hoped-for selves it may foretell her next area of development; i.e., she will learn to rely less on others for validation, and begin to provide her own strokes or acknowledgment.

Three main themes emerged in Clara's hoped-for selves. The first theme was her hope that she would bridge the schism between her heart and her head. Clara wanted to more effectively integrate the two ways of learning and experiencing, particularly, within the graduate program. Just as Clara had hoped, by the time of the final interview she was on her way to trust herself and her intuitive way of knowing. She was more able to combine her personal feeling-based values and her counsellor-self. She had also come to perceive the academic environment as less inimical to her values. With this shift in her perception new choices opened up and she felt more energy, enthusiasm and hope in the program.

The second theme, somewhat allied to the first, was the hope she would build a sense of confidence, worth, and a feeling of belonging. This hope was gradually being realized over time as Clara began to believe more strongly in herself. The shift began when she realized that she did belong in the graduate program, and strengthened when her special abilities (e.g., verbal presentations) were noted by others. She also got a boost for her self-esteem from her applied experiences in the practicum. There was also a hint of an emerging self who would no longer need external validation, a self who could develop an emerging independent vision of her goals. This independent self would be confident and strong enough to provide her own strokes and develop a sense of personal worth; she would not have to depend on validation from others.

The final theme was developing more active decision making. Early in the program Clara had believed she had no option but to passively accept the pre-existing structure of the program. Previously, she had automatically adopted the same goal she thought her classmates were choosing, i.e., private practice. By the end of her practicum, she had a revelation that she needed to develop her an independent vision of the future, and to make more active choices in her life. She had reached a nexus point; she was fed up with being in limbo-land, passively adopting the goals of those around her and waiting for things to happen. Instead, she was feeling change nudge within her; she uncertain what she wanted to head towards, but she did know she wanted to work where she could use her strength, passion, and resourcefulness. She was starting to see a glimmer of who that hoped-for self would be, and to get ready to take a more active role in creating that vision.

In the next section, *Self-Defining Memories*, we will see that many of the themes in the transition that Clara struggled with had their nascence in significant events much earlier in her life.

Self-Defining Memories

When Clara was asked to share self-defining memories, in some interviews she chose to tell a previously untold memory, while in others she chose to retell one of the memories. Clara was the only

woman in the study to choose to retell one of her SDMs even though each of the women had been given that option (i.e., "it can be a new memory, or one you have already shared with me"). The concept of SDMs was new to her, but was one she found particularly relevant. When, she was asked at Time 3 whether her participation the study had any influenced her in any way, she singled out the SDMs as having a strong impact upon her:

I've used the term self-defining memory about 40 times since (laughs) you first explained the concept, and I've thought about it, so yes it has. Like I said when I was starting to think about the bunny rabbit thing, when I would look at picture in my album, the words "self-defining memory," and the question would come back always... what self-defining memory do you have that influenced your process of becoming a counsellor? I've reflected on that many times and that's kind of helped me. I really believe in this process, of being in this really rich fertile time of "where to from here?" And the whole thing about memories, and looking back at who I am ... I can take this memory, and this being who I am, and then there's that memory, and that's part of who I am. So I've reflected on this significantly between January and now, a lot.

For Clara, the SDMs were an important part of the interview, and she personally valued what she got out of the process. When asked how the interview would have been different without the inclusion of SDMs, she replied:

It would have been kind of like a check in of where I am at now. It wouldn't have had the depth to it ... there's just so many different parts of who I am, and connecting to those parts, it just would not have been as rich. It would kind of like, just been a check in ... it just would have just been focused on my here and now, like, just wouldn't have had that richness, and I don't think would have helped me. I don't think I would have gotten to the place that I am now without having this neat little tool, about self-defining memories. I'll never forget this. That'll always be a way to look back ... this goes very much along with narrative therapy that I am learning a lot about. The two together, it's like my little gospel right now, so (laughs) it's working well.

Clearly, the whole experience of working with SDMs was powerful for Clara; she used it frequently between Time 1 and Time 2 and ended up adopting it as one of her "gospels." Perhaps this is also why she chose to repeat two of the SDMs; they were memories she had been actively processing. For example her bunny rabbit SDM (which she shared at both Times 1 and 3), had particular relevance to her as a way of understanding her experience in the program. She believed this memory had helped her to reflect upon and validate her experience:

almost like a validation! For example I'd say this coordination thing ... [I'd ask] am I resourceful? So I'd start going searching my memories, how have I been resourceful? what memories do I have of being resourceful? (snaps fingers and makes bell sound) Doing, the bunny rabbit, there it is! So yes, it's, I've used my memories as a way to validate the process that I'm going through right now, where, to push aside those myths that I have of who I should be and searching through my memory banks of different ways of being, and using that to validate where I am now! So, oh it's been significant! (laughs) I have to say so, yeah.

Given that this particular memory, the bunny rabbit, had such continuing relevance for Clara, the discussion of her SDMs will begin with a description of that memory.

Time 1: The bunny rabbit narrative.

Well, it's funny because I have told this one to people a number of times, but it has more to do with my role as a kid ... an important memory that has come back to me, that *I talk about a lot* and that happened years, and years ago, is a play situation with friends and ... I can remember this well, and this happened often, that is why it is not a specific [memory] but *I remember this happening over and over and over again and when I grew up*. I was very close to my sister who was only 15 months older than me, and I had a cousin who was very close in age as well. So the three of us always played together, and I can always remember this happening ... and we'd always play the same game. We read a lot of fairy tales, and the stories we always read seemed to have a prince and princess. And it would always come, we would open the tickle trunk and someone would say, "OK I want to be the princess," and it was always my cousin. And very quickly my older sister would want to be the prince. And I always remember this well, "what are you going to be Clara?" and *I remember not being able to say what I wanted to be and asking, "Well what do you think I should be?"* and they would say "the bunny rabbit, you can be the bunny rabbit" and I would say, "Well, what do I do as the bunny rabbit?" And the answer would be "well, you just kind of hang around." I said "okay." The thing is, *I remember not asking too many questions*. Okay, I'll be the bunny rabbit and I found this fox fur that I would put around and I would look like the bunny rabbit and I would just kind of hop around. I remember hopping around and kind of being on the outside of the prince and princess and serving them and helping the princess put her clothes on and things like that. And, I remember being patted on the head all the time, like the bunny rabbit. It's a very vivid memory that has come back to me a lot about who I was as a child, and *this kind of looking to the outside for people to define who I am, and wanting to please them ... "you tell me who I am and I will be that"*. And this memory, I feel *so sad* when I talk about it and I remember thinking, oh, you poor kid. You know, if big Clara could go back and see that scene and say you know like "*Clara, you say what you want to be*", but that invitation wasn't extended out to me. So I have *a lot of sadness* about when I think about that memory, and *a little bit of anger about being*, that my sister and my cousin kind of *took advantage of my goodwill and kindness and willingness to please them*. But more sadness when I think of that bunny rabbit hopping around ... and *I see myself like that*. I think that was *really big* and it obviously it wasn't just one situation, *it happened over and over and over again*. We even have a picture at home [that] I found, here I am in my big fox fur and this hat, square pill-box fuzzy hat sitting there, you know like this (mimics bunny rabbit position with hands like paws before her) and *I look at the picture and I just, a lot of sadness comes up*.

At Time 1, Clara felt predominantly sad recalling this memory "I can often go back and feel that sadness just wash over me." Mixed with that sadness, however, was some anger that others took advantage of her "people-pleasing" nature. She felt sad for the little Clara who had been so desperate to please others that she would try to be whatever they wanted her to be, without questioning, she would look to others to define her.

Looking back at the memory she had a somewhat ambivalent sense of pride for not feeling trapped in the bunny rabbit role any more. She perceived herself as now having a choice of whether she wanted to be the people-pleasing bunny rabbit:

I am aware of when I'm doing the bunny rabbit and when I'm not, and that it is my choice to be the bunny rabbit. I can put the bunny rabbit hat on and be the bunny rabbit, and that's okay, but I can take it off too and take care of myself.

As an adult, Clara got value from the memory and the message in the experience. She would use this memory to find the strength to stand up for herself. She would remind herself:

"What do you want to be Clara, what do you want to be? It's okay to say it." And that helps me to get through a lot of those situations in life where I feel I can't define who I am.

The bunny rabbit experience had become a very important metaphor in her life, and she used it to validate both the people-pleasing and the more "strong" independent parts of her:

the more I think about it, the more I see that as such a big metaphor of how I live my life. I can be very dependent, needy, at times ... and suddenly, that's okay now. And the other part of me, that strong part, I don't have to choose which one anymore. I can be that if I want and the big message is and that's okay. And it's all right, I'm all right even if I'm the bunny rabbit.

This metaphor helped her to affirm both aspects of her identity, without sacrificing either important part of her. At Time 1, although she felt sad about her bunny rabbit role, she also valued it. She preferred to err on the side of people-pleasing rather than being too aggressive:

even though I say I feel a lot of sadness, there is another part of me that says "Clara, yeah, you are really a sensitive, caring person, willing to put your own needs aside for others. That's a good quality." Maybe that is ties into my Catholic upbringing of self-sacrifice and I can do that, I know that number. I'm not a selfish person and that's important to me, and believing that I don't want to be this assertive bitch woman ... that's not who I am and when I tell people that story, it's almost like acknowledging that a part of me is very caring, very willing to be there for you... but it's just that I have other options, that I don't have to be there all the time, too.

Clara's religious background had reinforced a value of self-sacrifice and people-pleasing. At Time 1 she was struggling with how to temper her caring and to make more conscious choices about when to care, and to set limits without being a selfish "bitch woman."

Clara emphasized the "two-pronged" aspect of this memory. One part of her felt sad when she thought of the people-pleasing bunny she used to be. Another part, however, was proud because it showed how much she had grown and how much more capable she had become since that time:

when I tell people that memory, I think it stirs up for them sadness, "oh you poor kid," but it also says I can take care of myself now and big Clara can take care of that child who just quite couldn't take care of herself at that time. I think it sends a two-pronged message of me being sensitive and caring, a people-pleasing person, but at the same time being strong and rooted in myself, like knowing who I am, and that they don't have to take care of me.

She was very cautious about sharing the memory because she feared that others who heard the memory might would see only the bunny rabbit side, and judge her to be too dependent or needy:

That's what I fear, if I told it to somebody that I didn't know is that (using a nasal, judgmental voice) "Oh, boy she's got a problem, Miss Dependent here is just lurking under the surface. I don't want to get too close to her or she will latch on," or stuff like that.

Overall, Clara's feelings about this memory were mixed. Although a strong feeling of sadness predominated the SDM, the memory was also a metaphor of strength for her. The memory reminded her that she did have options and the right to speak up and to make her own choices. She used the powerful feelings behind the memory to guide her towards making more affirming and independent choices in her life.

The bunny rabbit SDM clearly reflected many of the significant themes already discussed in previous sections. The themes of needing approval from others; struggling to establish an independent identity, validating her caring side, and being strong enough stand up for herself were all repeated in this memory. At Time 3, many of these same themes continued to play an important role in the bunny rabbit SDM, but there were also some significant transformations within the themes.

Time 3: The bunny rabbit narrative.

It might sound demeaning in the beginning, but isn't. In some ways, it was a positive thing. When we were kids I had an older sister who was very close in age to me, and a cousin was also close in age, and I was the middle person, in terms of age. We'd always play this little fairy tale game of my sister being the prince, and my cousin, who was younger, being the princess and I was the bunny rabbit! And the role of the bunny rabbit was to make sure that everybody had what they needed, and to be the communicator between the prince and the princess. "Well, tell the prince that I'm interested today, come on over," and I'd go relay that to the prince and set up the meeting time, and I'd also help the prince and princess choose their wardrobe, because we had like this big tickle trunk full of like costumes and stuff. I said to the princess she'd look good in this today, and we'd help the princess to dress ... it's funny, because I think of this particular memory and I'd say "oh Clara, you know what a little schmuk you were, you were such a people pleaser", its sick! ... prince, princess, I get to be the bunny rabbit? For many years I was quite, (sound of disgust) aghhh! But now I look at it in a different light ... I have to admit I've given this thought, because I was reflecting on, remember this big revelation I was talking to you about? The vision and how it had something to do with being resourceful and not working intensely with people who have childhood pain and stuff like that? This is the image that comes up about resourceful, I think, gees have I ever been resourceful? What does that mean for me? ... and I remember really enjoying that role, even though when I would look at it years later I thought it was very demeaning. And I thought my sister and cousin had taken advantage of my good, kind of people-pleasing nature but in many ways I enjoyed that role. I loved coordinating their little outfits and being the communicator and the seer of all the needs, providing the resources ... I really enjoyed that ... and I wouldn't have talked about this in the last sessions, because I used to see as helper being that intense type of work, a person getting into being sensitive to people's deep innermost stuff, that's a real helper ... but the thing is my vision has changed a little bit about counselling ... there are people who do coordination work and who are resourceful and who are information givers. And oh my god, this was my whole role in growing up as a child, the bunny rabbit! And it's come back to me and I've really, in the past couple months, started to value my bunny rabbit role.

At Time 3 Clara was enthusiastic about the same bunny rabbit memory that had previously evoked such sadness. She had learned to value the bunny rabbit role and remembered it with a new appreciation and enjoyment. Clara was far less ambivalent about the role at Time 3, but she still retained a few of her prior reservations:

the bunny rabbit role, it's only been just recently that I've kind of (light, high voice) "yeah, hey, wait a minute now, that was okay," but there's still that part of me that says (skeptically) "nahhh." So, there's work to be done there.

Nevertheless, at Time 3 her judgments about the role were clearly much less severe and she did not view it as "demeaning" as she had previously. At Time 3, she used much stronger words to describe the way she remembered her perceptions at Time 1 than she had actually used at the time. For example, at Time

1, she was mainly sad for the little bunny rabbit figure of Clara, whereas at Time 3, looking back she reported having said things to herself like how "sick" it was, and what a little "schmuck" she was for being such a people-pleaser. In contrast, by Time 3 Clara had begun to perceive the SDM as a positive helping memory. Previously, she would not even have classified it as a "helping" SDM (at Time 1 she had recalled it in response to the general request for a SDM). At Time 3, however, after her revelation expanded her vision of possible counselling roles, this memory had become validation for the joy she felt when she was being resourceful.

At Time 3, Clara's description of the bunny rabbit role underwent a change. The bunny rabbit had become "the communicator", whereas at Time 1, it had been someone who just hung around. From the vantage point of Time 3, the role had undergone a transformation to a largely positive and active role. When Clara recalled the bunny rabbit memory at Time 1, several times she mentioned the pats on the head the bunny received, making them sound patronizing. It is interesting to note that at Time 3 she did not refer to pats on the head, instead she recalled all the various active ways in which the rabbit performed valuable services: coordinating, communicating, seeing to needs, and providing resources, and her enjoyment of that role.

As we saw earlier in the Transition section, Clara referred to Time 3 as a time of revelation where she was "on the route to being found." It appears that one part of being found was being able to value parts of herself that she had previously perceived as schmuck-like. The passive, people-pleasing bunny had been transformed to a role she could value, an active, communicative and resourceful rabbit. Part of this transformation took place when she had been able to expand her idea of counselling to once again create a vision consistent with her values:

somewheres in the middle I kind of got weird and believed that "only the deepest things in life count" and I've been living under that spell for quite a while and I think I'm almost returning back to the wisdom I had when I was a child about the beauty.. even the simplest things that are done in life carry with it profound beauty and wisdom, if it's done with the fullness of the heart. And if that service is rendered with that fullness of heart then what else is there?

For Clara, being found meant a return to her earlier wisdom of being able to value helping that was "done with the fullness of the heart." She was once again able to value help that dealt with the simpler things in life, rather than "the marrow of life." She had begun to reintegrate her heart into her view of helping, she was letting go of old myths, realizing "I don't need to be digging around in your deepest stuff, I'm already there by who I am." Clara came to realize that there were many ways to help, and she was starting to discover the sense of self she had been so desperately been seeking. She could finally accept who she was:

it's been neat because ... I have pictures at home of us in our costume... and I look at that picture and it just carries me back to that time, and I've been able to look at that picture and smile for the first time in many years.

For the first time, she was also able to look at the bunny aspect of herself and smile. Although she knew she still needed to work on her image of herself, she believed she was on the route to finding herself. A new sense of hope and optimism about counselling had emerged, and she was developing a clearer vision of her goal. She was gradually starting to build a sense of self that was less dependent on *what* she did and based more on *who* she was, "I don't have to put all my marbles in *what I do, it's about how I do it and who I am.*"

It is clear that the bunny rabbit SDM was very powerful for Clara, one where she worked through significant issues. Or, perhaps, significant issues she was struggling with were mirrored by a change in her view of the bunny rabbit role. It is likely that the two interact. Clara indicated that she used the memory to help her identify an instance where she had been resourceful in a helping role. This realization had only come, however, after she had thought many times about the bunny rabbit role, and examined her feelings about being the bunny. It is also evident that even though many of the basic elements of the memory remained the same, the feeling tone, and the meaning of the memory changed dramatically after her revelation. It appears difficult, if not impossible to portion out how much each contributed to the other. Instead, they appear to have interacted with each other to shape her ongoing experience.

Clara's two narratives of the bunny rabbit, were each quoted verbatim, as well as relevant selections from her description of how these memories were significant to her. In the interests of brevity, her other narratives will not be produced in their entirety. These SDMs will, instead, be paraphrased with selected relevant quotes used as illustrations of her experience. In the next section, the other SDM Clara retold, helping granny, will be discussed. Again, we will see how her early experiences came to help shape some of her current issues and concerns, as well as her goals and values.

Time 1 and Time 2: Helping Granny.

In the helping granny SDMs Clara described how, as a small child, she went to the small rural airport near her home to see her sister and grandmother off to visit a relative. Her grandmother, a formidable ex-teacher, who scared her "shitless," wanted something to drink, and there was no coffee shop in the airport. The grandmother was told there was a vending machine, and it became apparent to Clara that Granny did not know how to use a vending machine. Clara sensed how scared Granny was, felt compassion for her, and wanted to help her. When she took Granny to the vending machine she slowly carefully pretended to figure it out with her (Clara already knew how to operate a vending machine), and got her the drink.

This experience of knowing what Granny felt and helping her "in a very non-threatening way, in a way that preserved her dignity" was a very significant memory to Clara:

it's one of those tingly little things that, (excitedly) that sticks in my mind as, I really, this is what I want to do for the rest of my life... something in that really struck me, there's really something neat

about knowing where people are at and going really slow and gentle with them and helping them to be more than what they are, go beyond it.

This memory may have helped to shape her decision to become a professional helper. It is interesting that this early memory of helping, one that may have formed her original vision of helping, is a very practical, instrumental form of helping. It is a concrete, resourceful way of helping closer to the vision of helping she re-found at Time 3 than the vision of deep personal work she previously got "lost" in. Again, in this memory, like in the bunny rabbit SDM, the theme emerged "it comes back to recognizing that the simple things in life are the most important."

Like the bunny rabbit, there are also some interesting changes over time in this recalled SDM. For example, at Time 1, Clara is much more ambivalent about her choice to help her granny in a way that was empowering, caring, and ultimately, people-pleasing, than she was at Time 2 when she recalled the memory. At Time 1, remembering how good it felt to help Granny, she could still feel "tingly" and see it as something "neat" that she did. At the same time, however, there was another part of her that wondered if "'I'll put her in her place' would have been a more appropriate response, almost you'd think from an 8 year old who felt quite oppressed by this grandmother." Looking back at the experience at Time 1 she was still puzzled:

I still don't know why I didn't almost take advantage of the moment to kind of put her down, or something, because I always thought about it in my head. "She thinks she knows it all, you just, wait, she's going to be in a spot one day." I'd think about this, (jokingly) you know, but when the moment actually happened, her vulnerability is something that I hadn't ever experienced, on that end before.

There is a part of Clara that judged "maybe you didn't do the right thing. Maybe it would have been better and more pleasing to have stood up for myself or, maybe I shouldn't have activated that compassionate part at that time." The good feelings the memory evoked at Time 1 were tainted with shame and doubt about whether she had done the right thing. A part of her wondered if she shouldn't have used the chance to put Granny down instead.

At Time 2, she was much more solidly focused on how good it felt to show compassion and caring to her granny:

the special light that I have with me that seems to shine! And it was about helping others in a way that doesn't give me any great glory, but helps others wherever they are, out in their life. I just said [to myself] "yes, this is special, and that was my light."

The way she approached the issue of putting Granny down is also quite different. At Time 2, Clara made no mention of thinking she, herself, should have put Granny down. Instead, she presented it as something she had feared other family members would criticize her for not doing:

I thought *everybody would chew me out* for it, because she [Granny] was so harsh towards other people. I think other people would have said in my family that "oh, you should have taken that opportunity to put her in her place, and say 'well I guess you don't know everything, do you Granny?'" You know that *I was afraid that I would be criticized for being kind to someone who wasn't always kind to others, and so I never spoke about it.*

The thoughts of putting down Granny at Time 2 were attributed to the judgments of family members. These judgments are externalized, rather than being introjected to feelings of guilt or shame for compassion and caring.

At both Times 1 and 2 Clara spoke of the harsh judgments she received from family members, particularly her mother, when she was growing up. There were very strong messages against compassion, people-pleasing, and being a follower, that came from her family:

"Stand up for yourself," and "Be gruff," "Face the World!" was my mother's message, a lot. From a very young age, I remember her telling me, "Clara, you're a follower. You're a real follower. You better watch out, because people are going to step all over you."

[mother] wanted me to be a leader.. "that Clara, she's just led around the nose." And, "she's going to get in a lot of trouble if she doesn't smarten up and stand up for herself" ... there was really no room for that compassion ... I definitely kept these things hidden away. It's not something I'd tell anybody.

I always felt my actions misinterpreted and the gist I would get from my mother, especially, was "you're just too scared to stand up to people, you're just so mouse-ish, and you just don't stand up to people when you need to stand up to them."

when I think of the one special, *the really special part I had, was always twisting into "that's awful, shouldn't be like that,"* so.. (continues too softly to hear, huge sigh)..

I guess what I'm saying is, that I feel sad when I say this, my specialness is seen as a weakness [by my mother] for many many years (softly) so I feel some sadness (big sigh).

These remarks illustrate why Clara was so ambivalent about the caring and people-pleasing aspects of herself. In her memories of growing up in her family, there had been no room for compassion. She remembered the really special part of her that was kind and helpful as *having been twisted and misinterpreted and judged to be a weakness or liability rather than a strength*. The legacy left by those judgments left Clara vulnerable, struggling to build her self-worth.

The negative judgments she heard from her mother about her preferred way of helping people had caused her to delay going into counselling, to first go into teaching instead:

to go into counselling, that that would definitely not been okay if I had said that out of high school. You know, it just doesn't, it just wouldn't go over very well, you know, whereas teaching is safe. You're still helping people, but I can't even quite articulate what it is, why, what would the difference have been. Why teaching was okay and counselling not. Because they are both helping professions. This one is more personal. Actually there may be a connection there. I think it has more to do with feelings. Feelings are definitely risky and unsafe for my mother. We won't talk too much about that stuff (softly). So I guess that's why counselling wouldn't be okay.

Eventually, after teaching for a while, she did start counselling in the schools. She worked hard over the intervening years to be more independent and less influenced by those early judgments. Clara believed she had made progress towards that goal:

It's (louder) okay now, to talk about my last five years of experience, or 10, as a counsellor and a helper and that's fine, I've separated from the family. *I'm my own person.* (getting more soft,

slowing down) *Sometimes I find it really hard to acknowledge being like that as a child because I know it wasn't okay then. It's okay now (louder) and (more slowly, softly) but not even, when I think back, even then, it's hard.*

Although she had come a long way towards valuing her own goals, to separate and be her own person, she believed she still had issues to work through from those early experiences:

even though I like to think, "oh, what's the point to look at my life in the past, there's no problem anymore." Well, I think there's still, I guess that's what the message is, that yeah I still do carry some of the judgments or whatever when I was a kid ... because I notice I don't rush in as the adult, so I think there's inner child stuff here. As a adult, I don't rush in to say "well that was very good behavior" (laughing) I'd go back into the child at that time, kind of integrate who I am now.

Intellectually, Clara could look back at the memory and value what she did to help her granny, but emotionally, there was still a part of her that was still hooked into those early, harsh judgments: "I know it's nothing to be embarrassed, or shy, or ashamed about, but it's hard to relive it, *but now still feels like then, somehow.*"

Many of Clara's struggles at the time of her interviews were towards an independent valuation of self, to not have *now* feel like then. The change in Clara's perspective of the bunny rabbit SDM at Time 3 reflected an abandoning of the old, other-centered viewpoint, and a more personally constructed vision of helping. We saw in both her bunny rabbit and helping granny SDMs how vulnerable she was to being pulled into others' perspectives and goals (whether it was her mother's or the other students in the program) but we *also* saw how she struggled to work her way out of being trapped into their visions and to begin to adopt her own value system.

Clara's search for external validation, (which she eventually got from grades, professors, presentations and other students' respect) and ways to bridge the schism between her heart and head were things she had been seeking since childhood. In the graduate program, she began to achieve positive results, after an initial period of feeling overwhelmed and then lost. These successes gave her a more secure base to launch herself from and to take the risk of becoming more fully independent; to dare to think of picking her own vision of her future. She had started to more firmly believe that "I have the gift of light" and "I can stand my own ground now."

Time 2: Making a special meal.

The making a special meal SDM illustrates how some of Clara's core values and strengths were accessed at Time 2, when she was feeling lost and "stressed beyond capacity." This memory helped her to focus on "the heart at the center of life."

In this memory Clara was around eight years old, and her parents were having guests over for dinner. Clara and her mother went to do the food shopping and Clara, unbeknownst to her mother, had prepared her own shopping list so she could make special cookies for the guests. Her mother let her get these items, Clara then baked the cookies and laid them out on a tray with other special favourite goodies

of the guests. When Clara served her treats, she got appreciation from her father for being such a special girl and the guests who were also impressed.

One of Clara's struggles at Time 2 was having to jump through the academic hoops necessary to graduate the program. As has been previously discussed, she felt lost in this "head" world, alienated from the things that really mattered to her. The special meal memory was particularly significant to Clara, because it reminded her of what really mattered:

something that [is] *really deep*, that it just stirs inside of me ... *the little things* like how you sweep the floor, how you bake the cookies, *this the marrow of life, this is really, really, really important*, this is really, really important, *what life's about*

how it's done is really, really important, and that attention, *the love that goes into whatever I choose to do is really the most important thing to me, it's what life's all about*, as opposed to Masters degrees (laughs) and all the rest of the hoops.

the hoops don't make sense to me, but this does, even though it's really simplistic, and I think it was *my first memory of doing something so consciously, so meditatively, so absorbed*.

This memory spoke of a "loving simplicity" that allowed her at the age of eight to care for others with "no anxiety, it's just an outward flowing of the heart." When she prepared the special meal, she felt none of the self-consciousness about performance or being judged that were so much a focus in her life at Time 2. She looked back at that time and somewhat wistfully compared it to her current experience: "whereas now, unfortunately, that's very divorced from my experience... I've moved away from that, but I know that's who I am at the core, and little eight year old girl is inside." Clara was determined to find the kind of loving simplicity she had experienced as an eight year old again. The memory was a concrete way of remembering what she valued and wanted to work towards; to unselfconsciously, with loving simplicity help others in a "low key" kind of way.

This memory evoked strong feelings in Clara that were echoed when she read "*Care of the Soul*" and saw the movies "*Like Water for Chocolate*" and "*Babette's Feast*." The book and movies served as a strong and secret validation for the value she placed on doing things for others with loving simplicity. Clara kept their special relevance to herself, however, because she was not sure that others would understand their special meaning. She had some ambivalence about this memory, but primarily valued it as an example of how she would like to approach her life:

one thing that strikes me about what could most easily be misunderstood, or even in *part of me questions, about why I like this experience so much. Does it say more than I just love to please others?* Or that I base my value of myself on, okay, *maybe there is some of that*, but *more than that. I would like people to see that...that it speaks of a loving simplicity about me*, about a simplicity in life but very deep and loving at the same time and *very deliberate living*. A person who lives life very deliberately but doesn't need a whole lot out of life, it's just the best, living a deliberate, loving approach to life. *I would like for somebody to understand that of me (softly), more than pleasing others.*

When Clara was able to live life with that kind of loving simplicity, and to just be present in what she was doing, she found herself so absorbed “that there’s not other clutter around like ‘is this good enough?’” When she was absorbed in those almost meditative actions, she left behind the self-doubts and anxieties about performance that so often overwhelmed her. At Time 2, when she was feeling lost, the memory served as a potent reminder of how different things could be, and a goal she could work towards.

At the age of eight, when this experience occurred (approximately the same time as the helping granny experience, and the ongoing bunny rabbit games), she had also been getting the harsh judgmental comments from her mother about being a push-over and a people pleaser. This memory, with strong overt approval from her father and guests, where her mother allowed her to buy and prepare the ingredients, was an important validation of her helping. At Time 2, when she was feeling vulnerable and shaky again, this was a very empowering memory for Clara to be able to access.

This SDM, like the helping granny and bunny rabbit SDMs, was a helping memory that involved a concrete, instrumental form of helping. None of the SDMs she chose to share involved more passive, reflective, or listening types of helping behavior. It is possible she had other SDMs, involving more reflective types of helping that she chose not to share, or perhaps even filtered out, but it she did make it clear that each of the memories she did share were ones she thought about a lot, were important to her, or had even served as an inspiration for her life goals. The “resourceful” adjective that struck her as a revelation at Time 3 is consistent with the types of helping she demonstrated in these SDMs.

Out of the six SDMs Clara shared, five (2 bunny rabbit, 2 helping grannies, 1 special meal), had strong helper themes. The last of her SDMs, the ritual of waiting, is the only one not directly linked to helping.

Time 3: Ritual of waiting.

Clara’s final SDM, the ritual of waiting, was a memory that had negative connotations for her because it revealed a part of her that she was uncomfortable with at Time 3. Even though this memory was negative, she chose to share it because

*it does say a lot about who I am... kind of the obsessive part of my personality... I was a compulsive mail-order person. My mother would freak when I would save all my allowance to order away for these things in the mail from the states; sea monkeys, and whoopee cushions, and all these weird things in the mail ... I believed that because I would get a parcel in my name that I was special ... Everybody would say “oh Clara got something in the mail today” and the whole center of attention would be around me and about my little package ... Well, actually there is another part to it, as I got older ... and this exists to this very day, I compulsively enter contests, again *thinking that I’m going to be discovered and special* ... I think what it says about me is that, and again I say *it’s negative, is that I don’t, I feel I don’t have a whole lot of power and that I wait for somebody or something to happen to me, I wait to receive things to feel special* ... *it just says something about needing to be special and needing to be discovered but I don’t have the power ... I don’t have the power to make myself noticed.**

At Time 3, when she recalled this memory, she was beginning to get enough confidence to believe what friends had already been telling her "I have a lot of potential but it's, I don't do anything with it." Her increasing sense of self-worth made her aware that she had been "waiting for flukes" or attributing many of her previous successes to flukes, rather than her own strengths:

it took a while before I was able to realize in presentations that *this is my gift*, this is my qualities, and it wasn't just the right timing and a bright day outside that brought out these qualities. *They're here [points to herself], it's not about the outside*, and about the environment. I have them and ... *I'm still not sure where to go with that, cause I say "well, I've got them, now I'll just wait."*

Even though she had started to acknowledge her strengths, she was still holding back, waiting to be magically singled out. She could state "I'm getting tired of waiting," but she was not yet ready to take a more active stance:

I can't say at this point I'm ready to let it go, of the ritual of waiting ... I'm still entranced by it but, on the other hand, it's like this nudging of "okay, lets get on with it Clara, now come on," there's another voice that's starting to come.

there's that part, like I said, "this is not going to do, and *something's going to have to shift*," I don't know when, or where, or how, but I'm getting tired of it ... I don't know where that leaves me right now, in this kind of "limbo land of awareness."

Clara was in the early stages of a transition, getting ready to take the risk of leaving her comfortable and familiar ritual of waiting. She had begun to outgrow the ritual, she was no longer comfortable just waiting:

I don't have the commitment to waiting anymore. Go through the motions, and the ritual, and yeah, and the comfort and all that, but I'm not committed to the ritual. *I don't believe like I used to believe, my ship is going to come in* and that lotto is just around the corner. Yeah, sometimes I get into a little ... but not like I did before!

At the same time, however, Clara was not quite ready yet to take the risk of moving on, she was afraid to launch into the unknown "I'm almost scared to clarify the vision because that would mean having to commit myself to it, which would mean leaving the ritual and the comfy 'let's wait and see land.'"

Although at Time 3, she was unready to take the next step of clarifying her vision she believed that it was imminent. She also appeared to derive some comfort from the knowledge she was approaching the time she would take a more active stance in her life. As noted previously, one of her struggles had been to become more assertive, to more actively choose what she wanted to do in life, rather than let the roles be assigned to her (e.g., the bunny rabbit). Clara's dissatisfaction with the ritual of waiting, the role-models she met in the practicum, her realization that she wanted to be resourceful, and her increasing confidence in her worth were all helping her to move closer to choosing *her* vision of *her* future. As she approached that vision, she was feeling somewhat anxious about the risk of making a choice, and following it through. At the same time, however, she was happier because she getting ready to move towards a future that would be her choice.

Summary

Clara started the program weighed down by significant fears and a shaky belief in her strengths and abilities. Two significant fears shadowed her entry, a fear of not belonging in the program (not feeling as worthy as the other students), and the fear of doing harm in counselling. Although she was very articulate, emotionally expressive, intelligent, resourceful, determined and courageous person, she had difficulty seeing her strengths amid the fears she carried with her. She also had strong values (heart, integrity, trust, compassion, helping others) and a sense of hope that carried through even very difficult times.

Clara's lack of confidence was strongly rooted in her childhood memories. Her remembered experiences in her family were of judgments that devalued her compassion, empathy, and the joy she found helping others. These memories had sewn seeds of deep ambivalence about pleasing and helping others, and a lack of confidence in who she wanted to be. In the years prior to her entry into the program, she had struggled to build more confidence in herself and her goal of counselling (vs. teaching, the more family's more acceptable option). She still, however, struggled with her negative feelings about "people pleasing," and had not yet developed a sense of confidence or a belief in her worth. When Clara did not get into the program right away, it fed into her self-doubts, and she began to question whether she belonged in the program. When she started the program, her confidence in abilities were at an ebb. Fortunately, however, her courage and determination would prove to be strong assets in the struggle ahead. Clara's fear of harming others in counselling came from a peer training experience that she experienced as being emotionally abusive, just before her entry into the program. This, unfortunately, made her even more insecure and afraid to take risks when she was entering a difficult and demanding program.

When Clara started the program she became immersed in an academic world of learning. The compassionate "heart" aspects of herself that she valued were subsumed into the more "head" based academic world. It is possible that many aspects of the program may have eerily echoed the intellectual or "head" aspects of teaching that were approved of in her family. She may have felt even more vulnerable and overwhelmed in the academic situation; like she had no option but to put those heart aspects aside as she had been expected to in her family. She clearly felt overwhelmed by the demands of the program, and did not have the energy to integrate her heart side into her learning. Instead, she chose to put the heart aspect aside until her practicum, when she hoped she would be able to incorporate more of the feeling side of counselling. This choice appears to be based on her perceptions at the time: to either prove herself in the academic head world, or devote energy she did not have into integrating the heart side and head sides of her learning.

It was only in the second semester, after she began to get positive external feedback (doing well in courses and oral presentations, other students calling her up for assistance), that she had enough confidence to think about what she wanted. She also began to take risks. The most significant of these risks was the decision to share her feelings with the classmate she had found most intimidating. This risk achieved strikingly positive results; she learned that "the ultimate graduate student" had actually been impressed by her. It is only as Clara began to answer some of her basic questions of worth, and to build her confidence that she was able to start formulating her own vision of what she wanted to do. A "revelation" that had an immense impact on her was the realization that she most enjoyed helping others by being "resourceful" rather than through in-depth personal therapy (the goal she perceived her classmates to be pursuing).

Throughout the second semester, Clara struggled to develop her own vision of what she wanted to do. She very actively examined herself and her memories for clues about who she was and what she wanted. Clara also began to be impatient with her passivity, and to contemplate making more active choices about her future. At the time of the last interview, she had not yet taken the leap of formulating that vision, she was, however, readying herself for that leap. By the time of the final interview she believed that she was "on the route to being found" or, perhaps more accurately, to finding herself. It is interesting that even in her wording, there was still a passive element, and a reference to something outside of her ("being found" vs. finding herself). She was contemplating the next step, but had not yet taken it.

Clara's time in the program could almost be characterized as a quest. During the first semester, the quest had been to prove herself worthy by doing well academically, to prove to others and to herself that she could succeed in the "head" world. In the second semester, as she began to get more positive feedback, her confidence in her abilities grew, and her quest shifted to developing a clearer vision of what she wanted. In the more distant future she hoped she would be able to provide her own validation.

An examination of Clara's narratives reveals how inter-related her transitions, possible selves (both feared and hoped for), and self-defining memories were. Although many of her actions at the beginning of the program were driven by her feared selves, her hoped-for selves also helped shape her goals and her actions, and to move her towards a desired end. At the same time, her memories influenced both her fears and her aspirations, and these memories changed as her hopes and fears changed. The inter-relatedness of her memories, hopes and fears make it difficult to distinguish between the warp, the weft, and the weave of her stories.

None of the changes Clara crafted would have been possible if she did not have the energy, determination and courage to follow through with her quest. She was relentless in the pursuit of her goals, and drove herself to great lengths to succeed. It is possible that, at times, this may have been a strength overdone, and a source of some of her difficulty. Clara was so determined to succeed in the head world of academia that she was able to artificially split off the heart side of her. She put aside,

until the next semester, the part of her that helped fuel joy and energy in her life, at a time when she desperately needed them.

Even though Clara was beset with doubts and was unable to find intrinsic satisfaction or meaning in academic learning, she determinedly carried on in her task. How much extra suffering did this create for her? What would have happened if she had not had such relentless drive and began, out of necessity to instead integrate the heart and head aspects of her learning in the first semester? Did she put herself through extra misery or did she stave off a crisis and enable herself to tackle the integration at a time when she would be more prepared? What would have happened if she had reached out sooner for support? Would she have found validation earlier or would she have felt more unworthy? These questions, are of course, speculation. What is known is that her courage and determination helped her to pursue her goals, until she could get external validation from others. Once she had the external validation, she had the courage to become more active, take further risks and to begin to craft an increasingly independent vision for herself.

The options Clara perceived, and the solutions she sought, were based on perspectives that shifted with time. When she enrolled in the academic program and was feeling insecure about her worth, she threw her efforts into succeeding in the academic world, and getting academic proofs of success (i.e., grades, acknowledgment by professors and colleagues, etc.). After Clara decided to invest her efforts into success in the head world, she poured energy into that task until she succeeded. Once engaged on that path, she did not search for alternatives, such as setting up additional supports or sources of meaning outside the academic world. All her energies became devoted to the task at hand, she felt too beleaguered to consider other options. She was too overwhelmed to step outside of the perspective she was in, and to be able to examine her situation from another vantage point.

In the first semester, when Clara's transitions were the greatest, she was also the most uncertain about her worth. This lack of confidence was very stressful, and she became more conservative in what she chose to undertake. She preferred to maintain her current skill level rather than to risk jeopardizing her confidence. This also meant she had less energy available to consider options and possibilities other than the goal of proving herself academically.

Clara felt lost and alone the first semester. She felt a deep interpersonal loneliness because she dared not risk confirming her fear that she was the least worthy of her classmates. In addition, her wistful fears of losing the heart aspect of herself spoke of an intrapersonal loneliness and alienation from what she most valued in herself. Lastly, during the interview she spoke of research interview as the only place where she felt she could really share her experience. She was afraid to share her fears too closely with her partner because of the sacrifices her partner was making to be support her. She wanted to protect her partner from the doubts and fears that had plagued her.

Clara's determination enabled her to stay in the program, to build her confidence through successes, and to speak to the classmate who intimidated her. As she came to believe more in herself, she had

more energy to explore options and possibilities and to take risks. In turn, the possibilities she saw, and the risks she took, paid off in terms of increased optimism and an even greater self-esteem.

Case Study: BonnieTransitionsPre-time 1.

Bonnie's preparations for graduate school began at least four to five years before her entry into the program, and were a significant part of her transition. The initial impetus for her decision to apply for graduate work in counselling came when she was working as a teacher. She found that as a teacher she was gradually doing more and more informal counselling, particularly in parent-teacher interviews. She was uncomfortable with this counselling role because she did not have the "solid foundation" she needed to feel competent:

[I would ask myself] What am I doing? (laugh) And what's dangerous and what shouldn't I be doing? Even the ethical parts of it, there was no, I mean there's teacher ethics but that the College of Teachers puts out, but this seemed to be getting into areas that the ethics really didn't cover. And that really bothered me as well ... I don't think it was very professional not to have the background, the expertise in that area and the training, a solid foundation you'd feel like, a little bit floaty, what am I doing? These are some of the issues that made me look at going back into it and getting some real training.

Once Bonnie decided to apply for formal counsellor training, she faced many steps to pursue her goal. One of the most formidable barriers she faced came from her role as a single parent, financially supporting school-aged children in a remote area:

Looking at the feasibility of going back to school, and yet having children at home. Realizing that and trying to, I had to financially support them, I couldn't, I had to kind of wait until a certain point in my life came where they were off on their own ... a lot of it was financial that held me back, I just couldn't see how to swing it.

When her children grew older, faced many difficult decisions to make this transition to graduate school a reality:

Do I give up my home, like sell it? Or do I stay, or keep hold of it and move just temporarily? Do I give up my position in the school where I was teaching, or do I try and just have a year's leave of absence? What about children, and although they may be 18/19 when they leave home are they completely independent? Not really, especially if they're going to school. And also just leaving my support group, it was difficult. That was another, like coming to a new city where I don't know anybody, and striking out on my own, and going through such a program that requires a lot of intense personal growth and looking at yourself, analyzing and not having the support system around.

Bonnie prepared both herself and her family for this transition by building up through smaller steps. It was only during the research interview, however, when Bonnie was looking back at her experiences that she really became aware of the many steps she had taken to accomplish her goal:

Although I don't think I was really aware of all the parts, and that it was an orchestration, it was more like, okay, here's the next step, here's the next step, I don't think I ever really had a big picture of it.

...Or *how long the process actually was*. In some ways I guess you could look just a year ago, but it wasn't, there were things looking up to that, even the types of jobs I would do in the summer and uh I had part-time business from my home that I did on the weekends ...so that was widening my experience to a different range of people...

I had *teenagers* [other's kids who were having difficulty in their own homes] living at the house... I found myself getting into *career counselling* without being aware of it. You know, looking at what colleges and universities are offering... I worked on finding those areas in BC and Alberta where they could go.. So, yeah, that was *another step*.

That's a *big jump* to make. I think it *took years to prepare myself ... also preparing the family* for that as well, so I have their support and their understanding of what I'm doing ... doing *little steps at a time* and taking courses while they were at home and they were seeing what was involved ... *they would watch what I'd go through*, especially the process papers where you're really kind of bringing up stuff inside, and I'd be talking to them about what I was going through, and so *they kind of understood more what the process would be when I left home* to go to school ... so that *they could understand* what was involved, that it was very heavy ... *They were part of that process*, so I think that really helped ... *it took place over time and I think that helped ... they became just as excited as I was about the new move ... so that when the move came I had everybody's support and that was important*.

The understanding and support of Bonnie's children were very important to her. She enlisted their support approaching the transition gradually, and by involving them in the steps leading up to the program. Bonnie was aware that the training would be very intellectually, emotionally, and financially demanding of her resources, and that she would have less to give to her children than in the past. An important part of her preparation for the transition to graduate school had been to ensure her children would not be upset or shortchanged by her decision.

Time 1

The most striking aspect of Bonnie's experience when she started the program was the "overwhelming" number of major life changes she was going through:

so many, not just ...*taking this course* or doing this program, but transition from *being a mother, and to having my children be independent*, the transition of *moving from a small town to a large town*, so all those other transitions ... coming to a *no support group* and working on trying to develop that for myself here. *Changing jobs*, like going from a job where *you know what* (laughing) *you're doing everyday*, to this new type of program where you're studying, *you're not quite sure where you're going with it*. Lots of it seems quite *nebulous*, including the papers that are assigned because they're very process orientated ... like "*what's happening for you?*" and "*what sense do you make out of this?*" So those type of transitions, there's quite a few of them going on, so I'm finding for myself it's almost like *the number is overwhelming, just too many changes*.

Not only did Bonnie find the large transitions stressful, but also, the smaller day-to-day changes in routine and things to learn about her new environment. Very few aspects of Victoria, or graduate school, itself, were familiar:

going home to *an empty apartment* and there's nobody there to talk to. That's different ... I remember thinking last year where do I go to get some peace and quiet? where do I go to get alone? And now, this year, it's like uh *I'm alone! and it's not always that much fun*.

Real basics! I was thinking of that the other day, when I was *shopping*, boy sometimes feel like um *I almost feel like somebody from another country might feel*, I can kind of feel the same experiences a bit. For instance here, you have to have a quarter all the time when you go shopping! (laugh) Just *little things, finding the transition to university is now in the computer age*, not in [my home town] yet. I mean the library just got a computer, so computer literacy hasn't been that big of a deal ... So all that is new to me, so *learning how to use the computer, and learning how to use the library, that's hard, it takes hours*. And then there is the part of the actual, *what's happening in the classroom, meeting all these new people*. I'm sort of glad there's a core of people who are in the same classes, that's kind of reassuring. And all the *new procedures though*, that are involved, *which room do you hand in your paper for this course? Who do you contact about this? Where do you go for financial aid? All that, it's all new*. Lots of stuff, it's very *stressful*. (laughs) ... *Where to park?* (large laugh)

The large number of transitions in Bonnie's life (see Figure 5) both in major life-roles and daily routines levels left Bonnie feeling like "somebody from another country." This feeling echoed back to a very significant earlier experience in her life, when as a teenager she had her first schooling experience with others in a classroom setting. As we will see in the section on self-defining memories, she used very similar words to describe that experience, when she likened it to being a "stranger in a foreign land." As an adult, however, she felt more competent to handle the "very stressful" changes but was still extremely challenged.

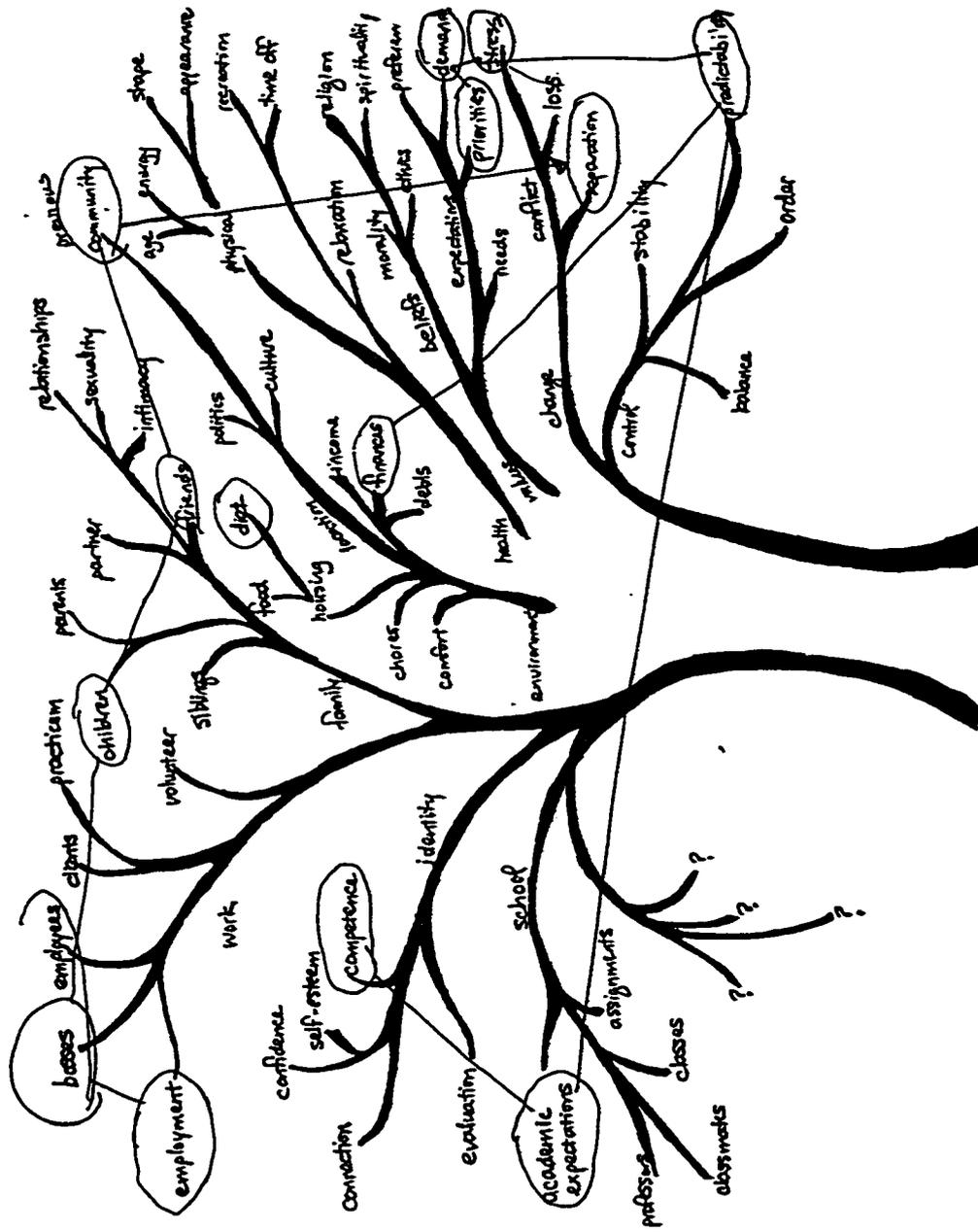
At the same time as Bonnie was struggling with geographic, social, academic, financial, vocational, and emotional changes, she was also having to adapt to changes in her day to day routine. Even the simple task of buying groceries has been transformed; she needed to remember to take a quarter to unlock a shopping cart when she went shopping (a practice common only in larger centres in British Columbia). From the perspective of the second interview, looking back at this time, she would remark: "too many 'news' at the beginning, that made it very difficult, there were a lot of other things besides the counselling, it was hard to separate what was the most difficult ... so it all was overwhelming."

At both Time 1 and Time 2, when Bonnie described her experiences at the start of the program, all the "news" were clumped together. Even by the end of the semester, when she was feeling more settled into the program, and had more of a routine, her view of that time was an homogenous mass of overwhelming change. A clue to the reason for this lack of differentiation may be found in some of her perspective at Time 3 when she looked back at the first term and observed:

little awarenesses, but generally so busy and so overwhelmed that they kind of just float away and you forget about them. So this term I think ... is so different from the first term in that there is, chances to reflect a lot more.

Bonnie had been so busy dealing with the numerous changes at the start of the semester that she had little time to reflect on her experiences. This preoccupation made it difficult for her to step outside the moment she was in. Instead of prioritizing, or being able to evaluate the relative difficulty or importance of the changes she faced, they were labeled globally as overwhelming, very stressful, or difficult.

Figure 5. Bonnie: Transition Tree at Time 1



At Time 1, when Bonnie was asked to rate the general amount of transition in her life, she replied "I would say 10... I can't think, it's very hard to think of things that haven't changed, even my car is new (laugh)." From Bonnie's perspective the transitions were global and all encompassing.

When Bonnie's was asked how much she felt in transition in role as a counsellor, she rated it as a "6." She perceived the change as less dramatic, and saw it happening more slowly, and shifting more gradually than the changes in the rest of her life. Despite her relatively lower rating for her transitions as a counsellor, significant shifts were, nevertheless, occurring:

As a counsellor, yeah, things are shifting, it seems like all this new information coming at you and trying to integrate it into your style, what fits for you, or what would work for you. Cause, I've seen already some shifts happening, and questions about how much direction can you do? It seems like there [has] always been this ideal about counselling what you can and can't do, but I'm finding that's not quite so delineated as what you might think, it's a lot more flexible than that.

Another significant struggle for Bonnie concerned her uncertainty about her competence: "the feeling of, *am I competent?* ... everything seems to be shifting in that area, and I'm sure, I'm hoping anyways, that ... somehow, it comes together."

Bonnie's separation from her community and the things she was familiar with, left her feeling less confident. The challenge and struggle to adapt to so many changes extended into doubts about her counselling competence:

This lack of confidence generalized from the feeling of unfamiliarity, and I think the separation thing, it's impacting, in that I'm feeling I don't have the same foundation underneath. So going into something new, like counselling, I'm feeling I'm missing some support that would have been really great to have had. It seems like it would be easier for me if there was just one aspect of my life changing instead of so many.

It takes away my feelings of being competent, to do this. It's much more of a juggle, or, much more of a, I'm not sure of the words. (Struggle?) Yeah, struggle. That's it, than it would have been. And I'm feeling less competent because I see not being competent in other areas, therefore it's harder to see myself as competent as a counsellor when I feel incompetent to find my way around (laughs)... it's not really encouraging.

Even though Bonnie was feeling less confident about her counselling skills than she would have liked, she was able to recognize these doubts were having a greater impact because of all the other transitions in her life. This intellectual recognition of the emotional impact of this transition may have helped to partially mitigate some her distress.

Another way Bonnie may have minimized her distress in this time of extreme transition was through her assessment of the situation:

I would think that the stress and the demands and setting priorities and predictability, academic expectations, I think that that would be just very typical of any program at the beginning, that would be what I would have expected. Shifting around, trying to find out what is it that each professor wants from you, what are the demands of the course, you don't really know until you're in the course. And the stress level involved, you don't know that, and that's something you have to cope with and set priorities to, okay, how can I lower the stress? What do I need to do for myself? You know, so those ones are ones that I was expecting.

Bonnie did not appear particularly upset or angry about the stresses and demands associated with the program because her experiences were not dramatically different from her expectations. Nor did Bonnie perceive her experience in the program to be much different than other graduate programs. Her approach to these anticipated stresses was quite pragmatic; you "cope," "set priorities" and look to see what you can do to reduce the stress. Bonnie recognized her stressors, attributed them to external causes, and looked within herself to see what she could do reduce her distress. Perhaps some of her questions about her competence came from the expectation that she should be able to cope with all these stresses internally. As we will see later on, there will be a shift in her perceptions regarding the academic environment. Once she became more comfortable in the academic environment and familiar with some of the implicit rules of the system, she began to modify her stress levels by negotiating changes within her environment. Instead of relying solely coping methods that focused on independence and internal changes, she began to look for ways to modify her external environment.

Although Bonnie tried to prepare herself for the transition by anticipating the changes in her life the program might begin, she had inadvertently missed an important area:

This part, I hadn't realized so much the impact of the losses, not having a job, being separated from children and that, the impact... I hadn't realized how big exactly that would be.

Bonnie's focus on the things she would face in her new environment helped her to handle the overwhelming number of changes she faced at Time 1. Unfortunately, however, this focus was only forward facing, it left her unprepared for the impact of the things she was leaving behind. Bonnie was also having to grieve significant losses; she was no longer parenting her children (at least not directly, or daily, as she had before), nor was she working as a teacher, enjoying the ongoing contact she had with the students over the years, nor did she now have the income or the familiar routine provided by her job.

When Bonnie was queried about the things that were helping her with the transition, she identified her ability to organize at home and at school. At home, she thought her ability to organize things around self-care was important:

being organized, (laughs) and taking care of myself is really important. I've really made sure that I'm doing recreation, taking time out. Planning it, making, it's part of my schedule, just as important as my course load, doing weight lifting and aerobics and spending my Sunday afternoons doing something like going hiking, whatever. So the self-care is really important.

Although she emphasized the importance of self-care she also recognized that it might difficult to make self-care a priority when she became busier with academic work. Bonnie was concerned about her ability to maintain a "balance" between self-care and academics "cause I'm sure as the term goes on ... there's going to be a real chance of forgetting about these other aspects of your life that you need to take care of as well." For Bonnie, this was to be an accurate foretelling of one of her upcoming struggles.

Another way Bonnie helped herself cope with transition was through the use of her organizational strengths in academic areas:

again, just *being organized and looking ahead, without panicking* about what's ahead. Just being sort of aware of what's coming up, so I *can plan rather than leave everything to the last minute*, and *making sure I have the skills*, like right now I'm working on going to the library every weekend, just for a little bit and working on, okay if this is the topic how would I find material on it? So that when it comes time to do assignments and essays, I'm not dealing with that as well and I'm learning how, I've bought a computer and I'm learning how to use that *Just trying to take care of the next step.*

Bonnie tried to take as much control of the situation as she could by anticipating difficulties that might arise. She then organized her time, set about learning the new skills she thought she would need, and tried to prepare herself for the challenges that lay ahead. Bonnie felt more confident when she could prepare for changes well in advance of the actual demand or need.

Other things that Bonnie did to facilitate this transition was to reach out to make the to make contact with others, and to make sure her home environment was "warm, cozy, homelike." Bonnie recognized that in this new environment, she was going to have to make sure to "reach out rather than expecting others to reach out to me." She chose to make contact by using the phone list of students to get support when she felt she was "getting stuck on an assignment and feeling just like I need to talk to somebody." She found value even in a two or three minute phone call "it's helpful to know that they're out there." In addition, she would make phone calls to friends or her children for support. These were all very active, concrete things that she could do to feel more comfortable in a transplanted and unfamiliar environment.

When Bonnie was asked what might get in the way of this transition, the primary concern she identified was within herself:

becoming totally stressed out and then everything would be affected by that, and (quietly) your health. And *losing confidence*. So *I've got to keep that confidence level up, which means that I need to be feeling good about what I'm doing in class and I need to make sure that I'm doing the best that I can, to make sure that I'm not sitting there feeling like a fool, or that I don't know whr?'s going on* (laugh)

Again, when Bonnie identified a potential problem area, the first thing she assessed were the things she, herself, could do to change the situation, i.e., not to sit there feeling like a fool, to find out what's going on.

Time 2

By Time 2, the end of the first semester, Bonnie was not feeling as beleaguered by change or beset with doubts as she had been in September:

I'm beginning to grasp what it's about where I wasn't so sure when I came in September.. I thought I knew, and then I went through a time when it felt like I, *I wondered if they made a mistake* that I'm here *or I'm not really cut out for this*, so I've kind of gone through that.

At the end of the semester, however, she was starting to believe "that it's possible (laughs) for me to be a counsellor and that I will get there, but it's still going to require some work."

Bonnie's perception of the program and her competence also underwent a considerable shift in the first semester. By mid November, she began to feel differently about the program and her skills:

I started to feel like it was ... *pulling together* for me, I was beginning to *see a way for me to be to bring ... skills that I have into this program*, it wasn't that evident to me before ... *I didn't see the transfer of what I've been doing since working in Graduate school ... took a while to figure that out.*

Looking towards the next semester she expected a similar adjustment, but had much more confidence in her ability to meet those challenges:

as I'm going into my second term ... it's *another adjustment* (louder) but it's *not as difficult as the first one in September...* there's not all those other things, I mean I'm settled here, I know kind of the system a little bit and ... I have worked with children, so you know it's something I do know, it's just I'm not sure how I take what I learn and apply it, *but I'm sure that will I will find my way I've had experience now* (laughs) *of finding my way so it does give me a little more confidence that I can do it.*

Bonnie's experience of managing to find her way after an initial struggle in the first semester, combined with feeling more settled and grounded in her current environment helped give her more confidence about her ability to meet the challenges of the next semester.

Bonnie had been very active over the semester, doing many things to become more settled in her environment and to build her self-confidence. By the time of the interview she could state "I'm settled here, I know kind of the system ... know contacts ... I've networked enough to know who I can talk to if I'm having difficulty, while it wasn't really all that evident in September." One of the ways she built her confidence was through small study groups. At Time 1 Bonnie spoke of her difficulty starting a process-oriented graduate program without social supports. Shortly after that interview, she acted on her recognized need for support by forming small informal study groups. The formation of these groups was a "new skill" she chose to develop at the very time she was faced with an overwhelming number of transitions. Her choice to initiate these groups proved to be valuable to her:

there's a lot of help within that group, I mean most of the people have been counselling for quite a while, just don't have the little paper (laughs) ... you can talk to people and kind of *get a feel for if you're going through the same thing as they're going through* at least, it's somewhat a support, and you get *their perspective on how things are going for them* and that, oh yeah okay, *that kind of fits for me.* I did start doing that, but I took awhile, I'd say till the end of September anyways.

I enjoyed having to talk to people, and on a one-on-one basis, and then the groups were small enough that it was a good way to share information and we also just talked too, about what we're going through, so it's *a good time to share what's going on inside*, which *I'm always amazed how, the masks that people have in class, they all sit there looking so together* and (laughs) they know what they're doing (laughs) asking intelligent questions and then you find out things like they haven't read any of the articles (laughs), which you know always kind of blows me away, and you know they're way behind in their reading, and they don't know what for sure what they want to do, *so you find out those type of things that you don't see when you're in class.*

When Bonnie's confidence was low, she took the risk to reach out and form the study groups, and as a result, was able to benefit from the support of these groups. One benefit of this contact with other students was that it put her fears and feelings of inadequacy in perspective, and to a large extent served to normalize her experience. She felt less insecure when she found out that others had similar things "going on inside" for them, and relied less on the "masks" of competence and confidence they wore in class to understand what was happening for them.

Bonnie's study groups not only brought her valued support, but also the opportunity see new behaviors modeled by her peers:

I think part of it too, is just I haven't been at school for a long time, so it was also ... not being as shy, being more forward, when I need help going and getting it, being (softly) a little more assertive... I always watch other people and notice what they're doing ... "okay they've been going, and doing this, oh okay I guess this is okay to do, so I'll go and do that, and see how it is for me."

just getting ideas from them [classmates] ... how they go about if they're having difficulty, say even using the computer, the ERIC ... they know how to.. find someone who can help them and I don't find that as easy to do, I think I'm used to being pretty independent, I've done most of my work by correspondence, so I'm not used to being in a school situation so I haven't learned a few of those skills, I think, or I'm not as aware of them.

Her previous limited experience in on-campus settings, linked with her remote locale and her "shy" and "independent" tendencies made it difficult for Bonnie to now know how to behave in the graduate program. She found it very valuable to be a "people watcher" and observe the behavior of other students and the professors:

I'm a real people watcher anyways but I think that's because I went to school later and I had to learn that there's a lot of implicit rules if you haven't been socialized, it's a long learning to begin, you don't really realize, like if you'd been in the system, how (softly) to read teachers.

Bonnie lacked relatively common knowledge about the academic environment like the possibility of negotiating with professors about extensions, or getting help to look for resources. Her previous experience in correspondence school lead her to believe that no late papers would be accepted and no help would be available to locate resources. She had learned not to expect, or look for, assistance. As Bonnie watched other students, however, she learned there were more possibilities within the system than she had known.

Bonnie spent considerable energy trying to learn more about the possibilities and implicit rules of the academic setting:

observing, just listening very carefully, and watching body language ... but I'm always interested ... there's the actual material you take, and then there's all this other stuff going on at the same time.

I think I get really pretty distracted by all the other people and what's going on.

and I think that takes a lot of my energy. I'm trying not to do that as much but it seems like it's still very powerful for me, and it probably is a different type of learning .. maybe not content so much,

but it's probably important or else I don't think I would be doing it (laughs). So I am, there's a lot of changes it's a lot of things that are happening that are new to me and that's making it *quite a challenge*.

In addition to the "challenge" of trying to absorb the implicit rules of the group dynamics in the program, she also faced with the challenge of learning to respond quickly in class discussions:

I'm watching how other people interact, some modeling's probably involved as well, *so I tend to sit back in class more, I'm also not used to responding to my learning, except in a written way, not a lot of... time to formulate my thoughts ...* (softly) I'm not very quick at that I'm finding, it's quite a difference from my classmates who tend to be a bit, you know teacher says something, they think, they put up, *they jump into the conversation. I find that more difficult to do ...* I'm not used to that, and that's a skill, too, yeah that I hadn't realized. It's one of those you would never think of, I'm becoming aware of it.

For Bonnie, one of the consequences of her lack of classroom experience was a slower response time than her classmates, which meant that, at times, she felt overlooked in class. Although she realized she needed to participate if she wanted to gain recognition in class, but she found it difficult to keep pace with the speed of the classroom interactions. It was particularly demanding task for Bonnie because at the same time she was trying to study the group process and learn more about the implicit rules in the academic setting. Determined to cope with these dual demands, she devoted extra time at home to catch up with what was happening:

however when I go home, I have a lot of time on my own, I don't have family here, so I use that time I think to do a lot of the processing ... yeah and I do a lot of writing, so I tend do that when I get home and so in that way I keep up.

Bonnie filled the time she previously spent with her family by processing her university experience at home.

At the end of the semester, however, Bonnie was not happy with the proportion of time she devoted to academic work. As she had accurately foretold at the beginning of the semester, she did find it difficult to maintain a balance between work and time for herself. In order to feel in balance, she knew she needed more relaxation in her life:

for the last month I haven't really done anything much relaxation. And you know I feel like if I'm going to be working with people, *I also need to* (laughs) *look at my own self care ...* which is all related to *setting priorities* for myself and again the stability of some looking at ways, *it might even require setting some sort of routine* for myself because I've moved away from a place where I had a routine, to a place where I don't have a routine, maybe I need to develop one that would make sure that I set time for myself.

Although Bonnie recognized the need to increase her relaxation, she also knew herself well enough to realize how easily she could get off balance: "I can get really caught up in the academics and I really enjoy learning so it's easy enough to happen." The way she envisioned getting more time for herself was by re-establishing a routine similar to the one she had at the beginning of this past semester. At the same time, she also recognized that she was going to have to do something different to ensure that she

did not repeat this semester's erosion of personal time. She anticipated being able to do this by once again relying on her organizational and prioritizing skills:

Realizing that *this balance needs to come back into here* too, has to do with *keeping myself healthy ...I sure am tired!* (laughs) ... doing some thinking of *how I would better manage my next term in terms of not letting everything lump up at the end*, which is kind of what happens. I mean *I'm not unusual in that, that's how everybody's done it, but I'm wondering if there is another way*, to maybe to start, now that I kind of know what's involved, and how school works, and how the library works, and that if I could *get going on some of my assignments in January, rather than in March*.

Bonnie was, at the end of the semester, already looking ahead to the next semester and trying to figure out a way to better organize her work so that she would not be as exhausted at the end of the term. This is another instance where she was careful to put the difficulty in perspective, as a situational rather than personal stressor. She was determined she would find a solution.

Although Bonnie had some ideas about things she could do differently in the next semester, she wanted to spend more time thinking about how she could bring more balance into her life:

I've been really focused on doing papers and that, and school, *and it seems like the other parts of my life have just sort of gone by the wayside, so I want to think about that a lot over the holidays and how to get that back on an even keel*.

She was looking forward to the break between the semesters to have some time to think about the past semester and to put things in perspective. She anticipated that the time would help her to figure out how to live more balance into her lifestyle and how to prevent the previous semester's work overload from reoccurring.

Bonnie kept herself extremely busy with academic work, but she still found it a lonely and difficult time:

the transition with friends and children has been rather a *lonely* one, as well as one of big changes for me ... the last of my children left home and so I'm doing the *empty nest thing* at the same time as going to graduate school, and yeah I'm finding that *a little more of a struggle than I had anticipated*, even though I'm very busy.

The absence of Bonnie's children continued to be difficult for her, and had a greater impact than she had anticipated. On the more positive side, however, she was feeling less socially isolated in Victoria. She was beginning to establish social contacts with her peers in the program:

loneliness not so much with friends, I'm changing friends. I think I'm really moving, changing ... [at my hometown] I taught in a private school, it's quite religious, and a lot of my friends were from that school ... I'm finding when I'm with my peers in the counselling [program] there's such a wide variety of backgrounds that I'm finding that very *exciting*. So I think *I was getting a little bored and a little bit too closed in, so I was ready for a change, so it I'm not seeing that really as a hardship, it's just a change* ... They've always seemed to be very closed and they're not into looking outside their life. So yeah, yeah, definitely *energizing, especially lately, like you know, I'm really seeming like I'm making a lot of contacts*

Although Bonnie clearly still struggled with the loneliness of her "empty nest," she was feeling more energized by friendships she was developing with her classmates. Her choice to reach out and make connections with her peer group continued to be a very positive experience.

When Bonnie was asked how much she felt in transition generally, she rated her experience as a "5, kind of medium." As mentioned previously, she was becoming settled in the community and was making contacts with others. At the end of the semester, she was *"starting to pull things together a little bit, and because of the holiday ... I think things might get more consolidated, and then I'll start in again, losing it all (laughs)."* Bonnie believed she was at a plateau, consolidating things before the disruptions of the upcoming semester:

consolidation ... I'm anticipating that I'll lose that again, not completely, but that I'll go through another period of time feeling like I'm totally ... not on top of it and that things are just happening and that I'm kind of going along for the ride ... and then I would anticipate that April will be that time again to kind of pull a little bit more together and then finish up the year.

Bonnie rated her transition as a counsellor as a "7." She thought she was "still kind of working on that," and doubted that things would consolidate for her as a counsellor over the holiday. She also believed she "still had a long ways to go in that area" and that it was "going to be experience that will help me solve that one actually being out there."

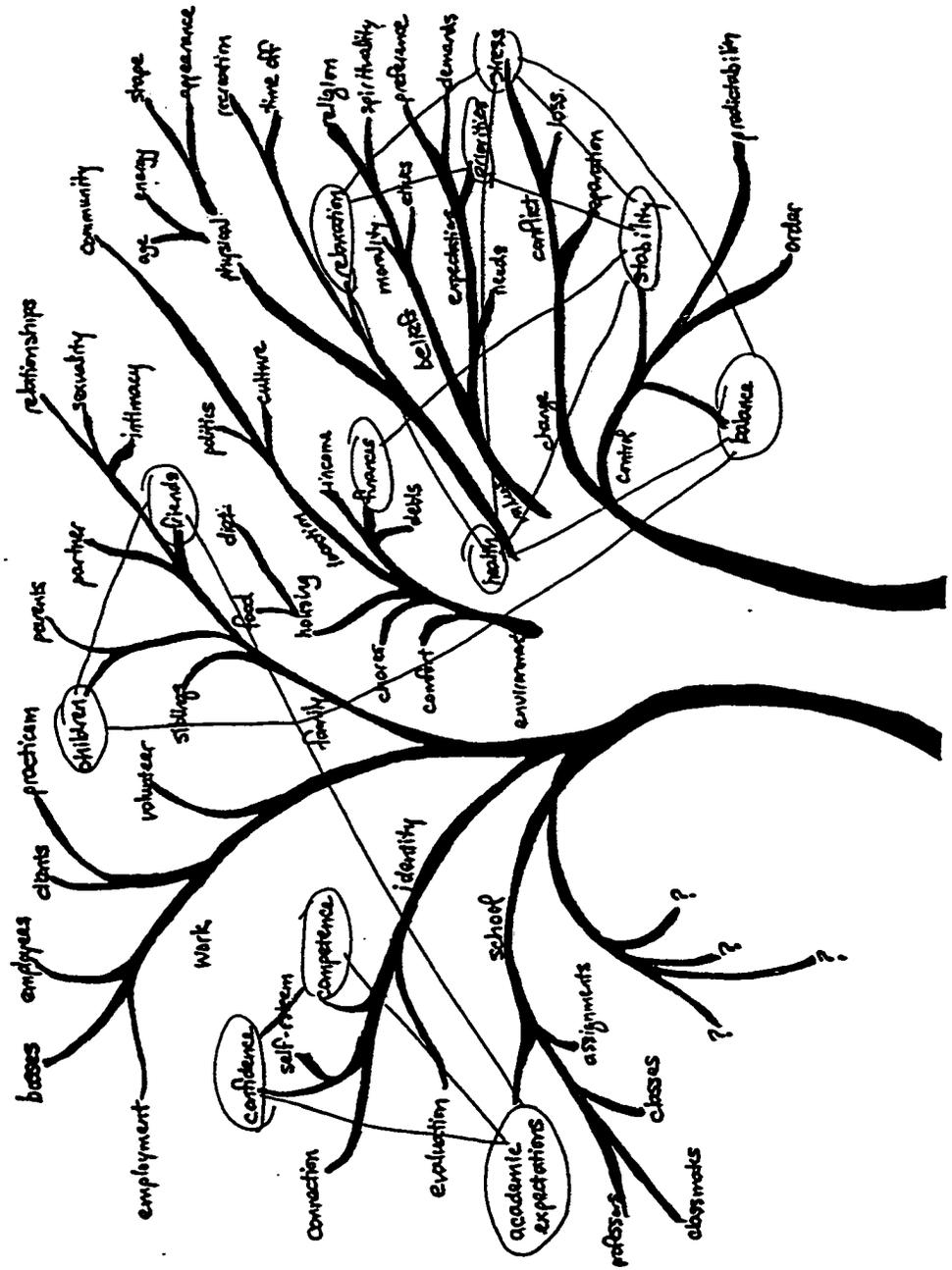
Bonnie's description of her experience made it clear that she had already undergone considerable amount of change as a counsellor by the end of pre-practicum. Her experience with clients had shifted dramatically over the semester. She used words like "self-conscious," "extremely nerve wracking," "uptight," and "awkward" to describe her first experience with a client in pre-practicum. Her expectations for herself had been very exacting "I got to get it right the first time... I've got to listen to everything and I've got to reflect everything," there had been no room for error. When Bonnie's anxiety was the strongest with her first client, she coped by relying on the instructor for guidance and feedback:

it was really important to receive immediate feedback from the instructor on how I was doing, and [to get] some alternative ideas to what might be going on in the session that I might not be picking up on, or a slightly different interpretation of what was going on than I had ... that feedback was really important um and I think I would have been really lost without it

By her second client, however, Bonnie's need for immediate feedback had lessened. She attributed this change partially to the client, who she found easier work with than the first, but also to changes within herself:

I found that I wanted to be, have more independence ... I didn't want to hear the hunches so much of what the instructor thought... what might be happening. I wanted just to, even if I messed up, I knew it wasn't going to be so terrible where the first time I thought "oh if I mess up (louder), you know this would be the end of the world, or something," I don't know what I thought was going to happen ...and I knew logically that was not going to be the case, but that was sort of the feeling I always carried around with me, where with the second one, I thought "well if I miss that, I get to go home at night" and I'd listen to the tape and think "well she only said it three times and I missed it all

Figure 6. Bonnie: Transition Tree at Time 2



three times huh but I will get it the next time," where I don't think I had that flexibility in the first session.

Bonnie's self-talk underwent a significant change between her first and second clients, changing from "this would be the end of the world" to "I will get it next time." When she changed the way she thought about possible shortcomings in her counselling to a less catastrophic belief, she felt less need for immediate and explicit feedback from her instructor.

Bonnie also perceived her view of the counselling role to have shifted. Initially, she had been uncertain how much she could "allow the client to take over the rein." As a result, Bonnie had adopted an uncomfortably "this is your role, this is my role" approach to counselling. As the semester progressed however, she found herself loosening up, becoming more flexible, and willing to play around with the structure of the session a bit. She also came to the realization that everybody "has a different way they are comfortable." Part of this realization came from the observation of her instructor's counselling style:

the modeling was really helpful for me, just a lot of things that you read in the books, but you can't quite visualize how that would really work, that you can't imagine yourself saying it. Then you realize when the instructor's doing it ... [she's] not doing it out of the book either, it's her blend of herself and the strategy and realizing that that's what happens and a then beginning to experiment with that yourself.

Bonnie's use of her people-watching skills to learn more about counselling skills was similar to her use of people-watching skills to learn more about the academic system. She closely observed the instructor, thought about how she might apply what she had learned, and then tried the behavior to see how it felt.

Bonnie also began to realize she could adopt more of her own counselling style when she compared her learning experiences in counselling and teaching. She realized she could apply some of her insights from teaching to counselling:

*everybody ... has a different way that they are comfortable. I hadn't really thought about that in September, of course, but it's just like in teaching, you start teaching and you discover *this doesn't work for me ... my supervising teacher may be doing that, but that's not, I can't do that, it's uncomfortable ...* so finding that, I mean there's still lots of structure we work within ourself but ... yeah I was starting to feel like I could play around with it a little bit, there's some flexibility there and that I, myself, had to be more flexible, it's not my nature to be so rigid, and I found I was almost playing a role at the beginning ... it felt too uptight (laughs) ... it was just an awkward feeling.*

As the semester progressed, Bonnie feelings about her counselling went through a marked change. She felt awkward and rigid in the counselling role she had imagined for herself at the beginning of her training and to be the counsellor who took the reins, made no mistakes, and counselled "out of the book." As time went on, however, she gradually began to loosen her expectations not to feel like she had to direct the client, and to adapt a more flexible style. This change was facilitated by observing the instructor's style of counselling, and by thinking back to her experience as a student teacher and

extrapolating it to her current experience as a counselling student. As we will see at Time 3, the end of the next semester and her practicum, brought even more changes.

Time 3.

When Bonnie was asked at Time 3 to describe her experience over last two semesters, she used vivid imagery to express herself:

almost being drowned (laughs), under the water and struggling and ... knowing that it's going to pass, but whether you're going to survive it or not (laughs) that's another question, and then this term is more like the surfacing and yeah (coming up) coming up, and looking around, and going "okay ... still got some stuff to do."

Bonnie used more dramatic language at Time 3 to depict her experience in the first semester than she had used when she was actually going through it. Her likening of the experience to being drowned and under the water struggling evokes a much stronger image of that time than the word "overwhelming." The image also serves as a sharp contrast to the second semester's image of surfacing, coming up, and being able to look around.

Bonnie was very glad she chose to persevere through the first semester: "yeah, I can't imagine if one had quit after the first one, you know that would have been really—not to experience this part of it (the surfacing) uh huh, uh huh." When Bonnie was queried whether she had ever thought of quitting, that semester, she replied, very definitely, "no, no, I never did. No, I don't quit easily (laughs) no, no." Nonetheless, she was clearly grateful and relieved that she had continued in the program and been able to experience the relief of surfacing after having been under the water struggling.

Not only did Bonnie use stronger language at Time 3 to describe her experience of first semester, but looking back at the transition tree she was also surprised she had not circled more items on the tree at Time 2 (see Figure 6). She saw herself as having been so "buzzed out" at Time 2, "on overload," in a "a panic" and on the "edge of anxiety all the time," that it was only at Time 3, in retrospect, that she could really get a perspective of the experience. At Time 3, looking back at her transition tree for Time 2, she would have chosen to circle more items on the tree:

self-esteem, identity, and more of the classmates that's like competition, wondering too, question marks about the professors, what they thought? how they saw me? probably would have been more concerned about that I think.

It is also possible Bonnie felt more comfortable discussing her doubts, feelings of inadequacy, and worries about the professors' perceptions of her once these issues had passed, than she had been when they were occurring.

At Time 3, her overall assessment of the first semester, was strongly negative:

I never want to go through that again, yeah it's just too much, ... and ... I have no need to put myself through so much trauma (laughs) and be so burnt out... There's got to be another way to do that, and I recognize it's part of my own temperament that probably did it, I think it was both an external and internal combination.

Although Bonnie identified the trauma as having both internal and external sources, she was much more diligent in taking personal responsibility for her experience than she was to attributing it to external sources. For example, although she identified a "pressure to be constantly working" due to the volume and type of work expected of counselling students, she was unsure whether the program could have structured it any differently. She thought, on the other hand, that perhaps she could have taken fewer courses. Similarly, she was careful to identify how her own issues contributed to her difficulty with external expectations:

I've never really done well with having other people be in charge, I like being in charge of my own growth. Yeah, I've always done my own schooling at home, so I'm not used to having that input from other people and I think I probably don't respond to it as well.

Another instance of how careful she was to identify her personal triggers came when she spoke of evaluation :

I think I'm pretty critical anyway so (laughs)... I find it really hard ... my own criticism tends to go up when I know someone else is critiquing me and I don't mean that in a negative way, for them that's what their job, that's what they need to do. But, I find my own anxiety goes up and I become overly critical to the point where I can kind of shut myself down, so I need to always be aware of that, and to I try and deal with that, but this term is so much easier because ... I can have a comfortable level of criticism and allow it be a little bit slower paced, my growth.

Bonnie viewed internal and external stressors as interacting to create difficulties, but spoke in more detail of how her own issues contributed to the stress she had experienced the first semester:

I set myself really high standards and felt that I had to be perfect and I had to get it right... and feeling really insecure, not very confident, and having the outside pressure of people telling me what I needed to know, and trying to integrate it when it didn't always feel comfortable, or it didn't feel like I couldn't really find a place for it and ... that always raises my anxiety and so that anxiety becomes really strong and I think that in- incapacitates me from doing as well as I could. Yeah, so it's hard to get out of that.

She believed her own high standards and lack of confidence made her particularly vulnerable to "outside pressure." Bonnie's anxiety rose when she tried to meet the expectations of others, and her performance deteriorated.

Fortunately for Bonnie, as she had anticipated at Time 2, her experience of going out and using her counselling skills in her practicum did increase her confidence and make her less anxious:

more comfortable ... possibly because we're out doing practicums now, and so we're actually using some of the skills and it's making more sense, and I think for me I've noticed that I have the skills ... before, it was a question mark whether I could really have them, or use them, at the appropriate times, and I'm finding they've been there for me.

It was not only the actual practice of counselling skills in her practicum that was helpful, but also the opportunity to once again be a people watcher:

noticing that the people around you, um that you're working with who are experienced ... they don't always do the right thing all the time, either, you know, so there's that, kind of the real world... the

first term ... *I set myself really high standards* and ... everything was so crucial, *in the real world there's a lot more flexibility.*

Bonnie used the counsellors on practicum to learn what was done in the "real world" of counselling rather than just sticking with her idealized standards. As she spent time observing the counsellors, she became more flexible regarding her own expectations.. This increased flexibility and patience made a tremendous difference in her confidence:

I'm feeling pretty confident about what I'm doing and when I don't know what I'm doing, or something comes up that I don't, *it's not a panic situation for me*, I can go and ask, or do some reading ... and realize that *just because it was like this one time doesn't mean that it's going to be the next* ... things happen for the children as well, I mean on a Friday afternoon before spring break, one can not expect the behavior to be the best right? They're already gone, they're on spring break and so ... *I'm able to "this is not a personal stuff," because they weren't on task, and I was having difficulty, I don't take it as personally.* When I think if this had happened at the beginning, I would have been thinking... *"what did I do wrong? I'm not very good at this (pseudo-anxiously), oh no!"* And now I can kind of let that go.

In the second semester Bonnie was more able to stand back and to see that some of the difficulties she ran into could be attributed to external sources. Rather than blaming herself, or taking it as a sign of personal failure if things did not go smoothly, she could see that anyone dealing with a group of young school children, on the Friday afternoon before spring break, would have difficulty. It was a tremendous relief for her to finally reach the point where she was not as anxious:

it's a good feeling, a secure feeling (laughs), you know *finally* (laughs), yeah *takes a long time* ... it's nice to not always be on the edge of anxiety all the time. It seemed like the first term was really about that, a lot of anxiety and this term it's easing off. As time has gone on, I'm finding ... *one doesn't need to be on that edge to be good, in fact it's probably beneficial not to always be so uptight.*

As Bonnie became more secure and confident, she was able to see how her previous anxiety about becoming the ideal counsellor made her more "uptight." This edginess, made it more difficult for her to counsel, and led to less self-confidence. By Time 3 she had replaced this negative cycle with a different way perspective: *"I'm not great at everything that I want to be good at, but I've made a lot of progress."*

Bonnie's fears and doubts of the first term had been replaced with a much steadier confidence in her ability:

[the first semester, I thought] *Do things well* and I think there's a part in that too, wondering if this was *the right place to be*, you know *if I really wanted to be a counsellor?* ... *Whether I could be a counsellor?* All those types of questions were there in the first term ... *they're not even questions for me* [anymore] they're just, I look back at them and remember them, those questions that yeah, I don't have any doubts anymore ... *even if I'm not quite at the level as someone else that's okay, because I know I can get there.*

In the previous term she had been much more anxious about how her counselling compared to other students':

because we're working a lot with our *peers*, I think that there is .. a lot of comparing ... not necessarily mark wise, I don't mean that, but just *comparing abilities* ... "they've really got that

down really well," and "gee, I can't do that" or "I really have difficulty with that," and I'm sure everybody was probably doing that as well, but you know you only know what you're thinking ... and I think so much of it was new, a lot of new knowledge, new techniques, new everything, new situations, so this term is not like that. You've been through classes already a term, so this is not new ... we're not working so much with our peers, we're out doing practicum, yeah so I think this is just quite different.

Bonnie's experience on her practicum taught her that her skills were "there" for her when she needed them. In addition, her exposure to counsellors in the field helped her to reformulate her expectations for herself. When she found that she could rely on her skills and that counsellors did not have to be perfect, she was able to be more confident about her abilities and skills, and to focus less on using her capable classmates as standards to gauge her adequacy. She also faced fewer new situations and, as a result, felt less insecure and off balance than she had the semester before. She was less anxious about comparing herself with her classmates not only because she was around them less, but also because she was feeling more secure about her abilities; even if she was "not quite at the level" of someone else, it was "okay" because she knew she could "get there."

One of the other benefits of Bonnie's new confidence was that she felt more able to counsel "on a very personal level ... rather than kind of somebody who's there but ... doesn't do a lot of putting themselves across." Her previous concerns about adopting a role rather than being herself with clients lessened as she became more experienced in her practicum.

The second semester, Bonnie was also able to feel much more in integrity with herself because she had more opportunity to reflect, and was more internally focused:

this term I think too, is so different from the first term in that there is *chances to reflect a lot more* and ... *I don't think it's because so much that there is less of a course load*, I mean that's part of it, I'm taking one less course ... but *I think it's the fact that you're actually doing it*, and so you can reflect on that as you're ... going around, and you're not being graded constantly. With the first term most of our sessions were videotaped and analyzed by myself, and often by a teacher, or instructor I mean, or a TA, so there's kind of *always that pressure when you're in a session like "oh somebody's going to be looking at this"* ... which always adds to the stress I think.

Bonnie's years in geographic isolation, where she had learned to take responsibility for her own goals and growth, both as a student and as a teacher, had created a strong preference for taking charge of her own development. Unfortunately, in the first semester, her preference for taking charge of her own growth had conflicted with her need for the reassurance of external feedback from professors. This focus on external feedback, at the expense of being able to reflect on her own perspective, left her feeling off-balance and more anxious about what others thought than she had been accustomed to. Once Bonnie was more confident about her ability to analyze her experience, she could return to a more internal perspective. Her return to a more internal perspective in the second semester brought with it a tremendous sense of relief, and a reduction in pressure.

In a similar manner to the first semester, Bonnie was able to build confidence and get a perspective on her experience by comparing her counsellor and teaching experiences. In the second semester she found she could:

spend a lot more time *analyzing myself, but from a different perspective*, not so much from what other people might think, but *what I think*. So I could do my own critique ... like I do when I'm teaching ... at the end of my teaching day I sit and write about how that went, and things that I noticed about myself that I wanted to work on, to set some goals. And, *I can do that in counselling as well* but I guess *there's not the pressure so much, it's kind of internalized, coming from inside me, how I'm going to improve, rather than having someone else necessarily be telling me how to improve.*

Bonnie, by comparing her counselling and teaching experiences, was also able to feel more hope and greater sense of accomplishment. When she was asked how confident she felt about accomplishing her goals she replied:

I'm pretty confident ... I think I'm on the road to that, I'm still trying to figure out a lot of stuff, but when I think I've only been at it since September ... not that much time when I think of teaching. Things didn't become clear the first three years ... I don't remember them that well. I think I was just trying to survive so ... the fact that I already have some idea seems to be a step ahead.

When Bonnie compared how far she had come in her counsellor development with her teacher development over the same time span, she felt more encouraged and confident because she was already "a step ahead."

When Bonnie was able to go inside, focus, make her own choices, and set her own priorities again, the stage was set for her to make new connections between her academic and her practicum experiences:

I do a lot of group work, and there's a lot of similarities to group work from the class I took first term, *and I hadn't been aware of that, and now it's starting to become clearer to me ...* just how it happens might be different but still the same group process is going on. (*And that was a surprise to you?*) Yeah, uh huh, *cause I couldn't connect when I was in class* I thought how would this ever work with kids? *What's the relevance here for me?* I'm going to be working with children ... I went back through one of my texts ... I noticed that they were talking about the um the stages of groups ... and I was finding "yeah, yeah, that's where we're at." And then looking at the roles people play in the group, and recognizing a lot of the roles, *and then started thinking "oh okay ... these are two similarities I wonder what other similarities?" ... I didn't I really didn't think that they'd be the same, as much overlap as what I saw happening in my groups.*

In the first semester she saw little connection between what she was learning in the group processes class and the work she thought she would be doing with children. In her practicum, however, she went back and reviewed the information from the first semester, and to her surprise found far more similarities and overlap than she had thought possible. These awarenesses were only possible, however, once she could relax enough in the groups to pull back enough to observe her experience:

last couple weeks I guess that some awareness has happened, maybe because now ... I'm feeling relaxed enough that I can step back during the session and look at things. Where before, I was always ... felt like I had to be really aware of what going on every minute and that was very draining. And now, I'm finding my energy level, I'm able to maintain that better through the group session, so it's giving me some opportunities to observe that I didn't have perhaps before.

An added benefit to being less on edge was that she spent less energy trying to control the group, and could spend more energy reflecting on the group process. Once Bonnie could observe what was going on in the group, she was able to integrate the actual group process with previous theoretical knowledge.

When Bonnie was asked how much in transition she felt at Time 3 (see Figure 7), she replied "not a lot." She rated her transition as a counsellor to be at "2-3," she perceived herself to be "plateauing." She was "shifting a bit" starting to integrate her learning from the first semester with her previous experience teaching and her recent experience on practicum. Bonnie was "combining and figuring out" what patterns fit for her across her experiences. For her life in general, Bonnie rated her transition as "3-4." She saw herself plateauing, things were also "pretty even," but she anticipated that would change closer to summer.

The connections Bonnie had begun to make between academic material and her practicum work were echoed at a deeper level when she began to integrate her experience with her core beliefs and values. This had not been a dramatic change for Bonnie, but rather

a gentle, a shifting kind of a, allowing things to ... settle down inside me and, realizing that *all along ... I carried these with me, but somehow lost them for awhile* and so they're kind of coming to the surface a bit more and, I think having some time to really *do a lot more reflecting, yeah and make the connection that I wasn't doing before*. Yeah, and perhaps um um *I think I was negating a lot of my own experiences that I ... didn't see as being applicable to what I was doing now, and sometimes it takes me time to see those connections*.

Rather than feeling "lost" and "negating" her experiences, Bonnie was starting to see she carried important insights within her the whole time. This was a time of integration and discovery at many levels:

the theme here is, this is not professional, so much as just like, you know *going back to and discovering myself again*, what I believe, what I think, without necessarily the influence all the time of the university learning and everything, *going back [to] some, you'd call core beliefs*, and by doing that ... *my confidence level is going up because I'm seeing connections between what I've learned at university to my own belief system, but I didn't see those connections until fairly recently*.

Some of the distinctions Bonnie had made between academic learning and her previous experiences and core beliefs, began to blur as she saw inter-connections between these areas of her life. She had not only begun to integrate theory and practice, but to also discover how they were related at an even deeper level to her core beliefs. As we will see later on, this insight had a tremendous impact on Bonnie. Although she was unable to be consistently aware of these inter-relationships, it was an extremely positive experience to discover these connections. Bonnie deeply valued these insights and strove to develop them further.

Bonnie had also begun to suspect that her difficulty maintaining contact with the people that mattered to her was not just a function of being in graduate school:

with children and social relationships, that probably shifts the most for me, because I have found that *I've been so busy this year, and I'm realizing that one can always be really busy, so trying to figure out okay you know how does one set one's priorities so that one has social relationships then?* and

keep up relationships with children who are not necessarily living near you? and yet still have time to do all the things you need to be doing? and it's, it's kind of a tricky one, it keeps kind of shifting.

Previously, it had been easier to attribute the lack of contact with friends her children to the new demands of graduate school. Now, however, as things were beginning to plateau in terms of transitions, she was starting to realize how difficult it could be to do the things she wanted to do in addition to maintaining the relationships she wanted, particularly with her children. The previous semester, when she realized she was not taking enough time for herself, she believed that if she organized her time better (e.g., starting assignments earlier in the term) she would find the time she needed. This time, however, the "tricky" problem of how to balance her work and social relationships was not yielding to an apparent ready solution. Bonnie was still grappling with this question, and was not sure of the solution, it kept shifting on her.

On the other hand, Bonnie was pleased with the way her relationships with professors had developed. Her academic experience prior to the program (as already described) had primarily been through distance education or night classes. Her previous experience had been with a system where she had learned not to expect to negotiate with instructors nor to expect help with resources. At Time 1, unaware of the implicit rules of the academic system, Bonnie had sought only for internal methods to reduce her stress levels. By Time 3, however, she was starting to see ways she could negotiate with the external environment for changes. She had started to feel more confident with professors, and to realize that with she could get help from some of them if she ran into difficulty:

I've been here for a while, so I'm realizing that *things aren't as black and white as what I might have thought they were first term*. I also think by now professors kind of know who you are, where first term, there, there was more tendency to treat everyone the same, you know, assignments due on this date, you must get it in that date. *Where now, I realize you can go as a person, and you know and talk and make some shifts if you need it.*

Bonnie perceived the professors' as well as her own views as having shifted over time. She believed that in the second semester the professors were more open to the student's individual circumstances than they had before, which in turn, made her more willing to discuss her difficulties with them.

As Bonnie had begun to feel confident, competent, and in charge of her own growth, she found it "easier to set priorities and to make choices." She also found more opportunity for reflection in the second semester, which had allowed her to develop a clearer view of her goals in counselling training. She believed the transitions at Time 3 were helping her to clarify these goals:

I see them as *really positive right now*. I think they're *helping me to solidify my belief system, and helping me to make decisions about what I'm going to do next in the way of counselling*, in the sense of do I finish this year? Or do I continue next year? I could finish this year, if I wanted. I'm looking, it's helping me, it's helped me to decide I want to stay another year and continue taking more courses and do different types of practicums.

Although Bonnie had decided to stay another year to continue training, she wanted to pursue her training in a different way than she had over the last year. Bonnie was going to try to actively negotiate with professors, rather than trying to quietly fit into the pre-existing structure:

the transitions [are] making me think a lot more about what I really believe, about counselling, and about my role as a counsellor, so I feel a lot more confident about going to professors and saying, you know, "I would like to do an independent study with you, and this is what I want, this is what I'd be looking for out of it" while I couldn't have said that (laughs) earlier in the year ... so now I think I've got an idea of where I want to go, and how I want to specialize. I still want to stay with children and I definitely, my course load will reflect that, but I would like experience in practicum, at least one practicum where I'm doing more than just working with children, so that I get a little more well rounded.

so I see a lot of next year doing a lot of independent work because they don't offer courses in the areas I'm interested in ... when I have my next break ... I will devise some programs and courses, and then see, go around and see if that's possible.

having that confidence is allowing me to reach out to people who ... I see as being able to help me develop into the type of counsellor I want to be.

Bonnie had developed a clearer picture of her goals and had enough confidence to seek out professors regarding independent studies and practica with her goals. She had developed enough confidence that she wanted to take on, the daunting challenge of working with adults, rather than children. Although Bonnie was somewhat anxious about the prospect of working with adults, she believed the transition would be no more difficult for her than for anyone else making the same transition:

I would imagine if I were put into a different practicum situation, I would probably be somewhat anxious about it, but not, I don't think, to the extreme I was the first term.

right now, I'm feeling pretty successful ... though I think if I'd switched, say to a different type of practicum ... and was working with adults, there would be a lot of learning to do for me again and I think that's true for anybody.

At Time 3 Bonnie felt far more confident and in control than she had since she started graduate school. She was beginning to see connections between her counselling and her core values, and to make plans to achieve her goals. She foresaw some challenging transitions ahead (e.g., working with an adult population) but her experience over the last two semesters had helped her to develop more confidence in her skills. Bonnie had also returned to her accustomed self-directed and independent stance, but this time with change. Instead of trying to adapt herself into the academic system, she was going to see if she could negotiate with the system for the counselling learning experience she was looking for. Bonnie was looking forward to crafting a very different academic experience in her second year than she had experienced in her first.

Resourceful, would be important to me. I feel like in Victoria right now, *I feel out of touch*, I don't know what's out there, I don't know how systems work so I would hope to be able to learn that this year, having a bigger picture ... In the real world, what are the structures? What are the organizations that deal with certain problems? Or *how do I connect* with that? What part, *where am I in that big picture?*

Bonnie also hoped to develop more confidence by becoming more clear about her personal construct of counselling:

I have a *personal construct*, somehow? I'm not sure that that's there, I think it's probably there ... I haven't worked on really describing it, putting it out there to look, I think I'm in the process of doing that.

Bonnie did not believe she could develop her confidence and competence passively, by accepting knowledge passed on to her. Instead, she believed confidence would come from learning how integrate her experience into a personal construct about counselling.

Another one of Bonnie's hopes was to have ethical standards. Prior to Bonnie's entry into the program, her concern about being competent and making ethical decisions in counselling-related activities had been an impetus for her decision to go to graduate school. Ethical behavior was important to Bonnie, she believed she would feel more confident and competent if she had a good grounding in ethics. She hoped she would come to feel stronger in her counselling role by getting a better grasp of ethics, boundary issues, and a greater awareness of what her limits were.

When Bonnie was asked to create a projected SDM at Time 1, she chose to imagine a strongly positive practicum experience:

I see being in the practicum, and feeling like *I can do this, I'm able to do this, I feel good about doing this, I feel very confident. I'm a competent person and receiving that feedback from supervisors.*

She anticipated that this memory would be important to her future self because it would demonstrate her competence:

the whole area of *being competent*, but also that I am able to, *I have the qualities that are necessary for being a counsellor*. Which might be things like *being able to understand others, and to give them what they need in order to change their lives*, and whatever direction that might be for them.

Bonnie also added a second component to this imagined SDM:

a memory would include parts *where I was part of a group*, like part of a .. perhaps a school, or whatever, and that I was *a functioning member* of that group, that would be important, I was functional and, like I say, *competent ... I fit in, I knew what I was doing, I was doing the job I was supposed to be doing, I did a good job ... and that I was accepted.*

In this imagined SDM, Bonnie created a hoped-for memory that integrated two significant issues she had been struggling with at Time 1; the issues of confidence/competence and membership/acceptance. As we saw previously, at Time 1 Bonnie's confidence had plummeted and she felt strongly in needed more confidence. In a similar vein, the parallels between her entry into the graduate program and her first

schooling experience outside the home, had triggered her insecurities about group membership and belonging. In this imagined SDM, Bonnie created an experience where she met both needs, she was competent and she was accepted as a member of the group. An important part of this imagined SDM was that she not only felt competent, but she also got outside validation from the group members. At Time 1, when Bonnie was struggling to fit in, to observe, and learn the implicit rules of an academic environment, in addition to adapting to all other transitions in her life, this imagined SDM gives us insight into some of the hopes that helped to fuel her efforts at that difficult time.

Hoped-for selves: Time 2.

Many of the hoped-for selves Bonnie identified at Time 2 were similar to those she described at Time 1, for example, both caring and warmth continued to be important to her. A notable difference is that Bonnie did not even mention confidence in the second interview, and she only briefly referred to competence, i.e., "skilled ... able to achieve whatever goals are set." Bonnie went through many changes by the end of the first semester: she was no longer feeling as anxious and insecure, she had come to believe it was possible for her to be a counsellor, and she was "beginning to grasp what it's all about." Bonnie had developed enough confidence in her abilities that she no longer spent much time thinking about them.

Bonnie did, however, introduce a new hope at Time 2, she wanted her style to "be flexible enough to mesh with a wide variety of people." This hope for a flexible personal style came at the same time she had begun to explore ways she could gradually loosen her expectations for herself in her role as a counsellor. Prior to Time 2, Bonnie had not been comfortable enough in her counselling role to take the risk of experimenting with her style in session. By the time of the second interview, however, she began to see ways she could be more flexible in her counselling. This increased flexibility eventually translated into the evolution of new hope, that she could develop a personal style that would be fluid enough to mesh with a wide variety of people. Bonnie was no longer as caught up in her anxieties, her predominant hopes were no longer as focused on the acquisition of skills, knowledge, constructs and confidence. Instead, she had begun to branch out, to examine her personal style in the context of the counselling relationship.

At Time 2, the question of setting appropriate boundaries was even more important to Bonnie than it had been at Time 1:

the whole thing about boundaries is becoming more of an issue, so I would like to be seen as someone who knows, who's able to set boundaries, but does so in a fashion, and I'm not sure how this is yet, but makes me approachable, but also makes other people aware, too, that I'm a person that's with a limited amount of ability to always be out there, and that I need some time for myself. I think that awareness, somehow, of that boundary would be important, and I'm not sure how you'd go about doing that.

Bonnie's hope of being able to set boundaries while still remaining approachable mirrored the transitions occurring in her life at that point. It was the end of the semester, and she was feeling extremely dissatisfied with the disproportionate amount of time she had devoted to school work. Her recreation and relaxation time had virtually disappeared. Bonnie strongly desired a balance between being approachable and taking care of her own needs, and was uncertain how she could achieve that balance. These concerns were also reflected in the helpers she identified as models at that time:

there is quite a variety of styles that the instructors had, I don't mean teaching styles, but how they interact ... one extreme with the "these are my office hours, and that's it!" ... the other extreme of pretty [much] saying ... "if you need to talk to me, here's my phone number" and feeling like its okay to knock at a door, knowing that they probably are busy, but if it's important enough they can, they'll take time ... *I see people who are both ends like, use the skills ... but keep it kind of distant, to use the skills and keep kind of warm.*

I'm more attracted to the ... skills and keeping it kind of warm, but there's also a concern that I've wondered for that person, how much they can put out before they get burnt out? And how do they make sure that they have time to do the other things that they have to do, besides tend to this one specific group of kids? (laughs) ... and if the people are a little more distant, are [they] that way through experience?

Bonnie's value of warmth, caring and support in the helping relationship bumped up against her practical concern of whether she could give that kind of support without eventually burning out. She wondered if the hope of being warmly supportive might conflict with her hope that she would have time for self-care. Bonnie hoped that her future experience would not teach her that in order to take care of herself she had to be more distant. At Time 2 she was still optimistic about the possibility of developing both hoped for selves: the warm supportive helper, and the helper that could take care of her own needs.

When Bonnie was asked to imagine her future self looking back and creating a SDM, she chose an existing memory rather than inventing one (as she had at Time 1):

a phone call listening to other people, trying to figure out what their process is, and helping them along with that ... just a few days ago, doing something like this for our group paper, we had to ... write a paper on our process in the group and ... one of us having a really difficult time doing that, and so we sat with down the tape recorder and just talked ... so she's using that tape as kind of a way to .. remember things now ... I would ask her questions ... [for example] "do you remember this time, when in the group...?"

And of course it worked for me, as well ... just going through that process I got, "oh yeah, you know that's right, that's what was happening," so that memory's ... something I would look back on, I think.

Bonnie thought this memory would be important to her future self because "it was really good, and that it was something I wanted to do and that I enjoyed doing and they're weren't any strings attached." Bonnie saw herself benefiting two ways from this experience, at an "emotional" level as well as at a "learning" level. She was careful to point out that helping her classmates was not just altruism on her part; it was something she got emotional enjoyment out of doing as well as something that helped her

own work. As we will see in the section on self-defining memories, this pattern of reaching out to others and making connections by helping them (and being helped herself) is remarkably similar to the way she connected to her classmates during her transition at high school. During the time between her first and second interviews, Bonnie chose to go out and initiate activities which would help her to meet her goals of feeling more competent and accepted, and to fit in. Bonnie's choice of helping others reaped her several benefits: the satisfaction of helping others through their difficulties, a greater sense of her own agency, and closer connections with her peers. Although Bonnie had not yet reached the practicum of her projected SDM at Time 1, she had still found a way to meet some of the goals she had hoped for at that time.

Hoped-for selves: Time 3.

At the time of the third interview, near the end of her practicum, when Bonnie was feeling much more confident about her ability to be a counsellor, she had the least to say about her hoped-for selves. In contrast, she had considerably more to say about her hoped-for selves at the start of the program, when she was the most uncertain and anxious about whether she belonged in the program and whether she could make it as a counsellor.

At Time 3 Bonnie had shifted even further away from the concerns regarding competence and confidence that had been her focus at Time 1. Instead, Bonnie's hopes had become even more specifically focused on the counselling relationship:

someone who's really *people oriented* (laughs) and *empathic*, and *caring*, but also someone who is *really interested in them as a whole person*, and someone who wants to be *an explorer* and discovering hidden aspects. Someone who's *a good listener*.

Bonnie's response at Time 3, made no mention of competency, per se. Her focus, instead, was on the type of approach and relationship she hoped to develop with clients. At the end of pre-practicum she had been concerned about adopting a flexible style, whereas by the end practicum her focus was on the type of role hoped to develop in the counselling relationship. Bonnie's hopes had become more centered on *who* she could be in the counselling relationship rather than on *whether* she could develop the skills and confidence to be a counsellor.

In Bonnie's projected SDM at Time 3, she again used the memory of an experience that had actually occurred. This recent experience had such tremendous impact on her that she was still actively trying to process it, and anticipated she would continue to for some time:

the memory would be of ... *coming to the realization that there's a connection in my counselling*, so looking at the types of activities that I've kind of shifted into, in the last couple weeks, and ... *when the light bulb went on for me and said "ah ha! there is a connection here!" and "what does this mean for me?"* and possibly, at the moment when I was brainstorming I put *a light bulb* on the paper, and I started brainstorming ... I put, what I did in my classroom, and what ... I've been doing in my sessions with groups and ... [I'm] *starting to see what these two things meant*.

Yeah, *how they mesh together, what ... commonalities? ... therefore, what are the beliefs I have surrounding these two things? And I think for me, part of that was that I was able to make the connections, that I was able to grasp the whole for a few minutes. I find that really hard to do, I can for a short period of time and then it kind of dissolves and then ... I come back to it later, and sort of grab it a bit more ... that was a crucial time for me this term.*

and I can even see it in ... my lifestyle in the past, the way I raised my kids, how I was, you know my childhood, and you know, start to see some threads.

it was kind of like a core belief I have about people, and how they work, my own theory I guess ... this is my own realization (laughs) you know, like for the first time ... I've done that ... I sort of did that a bit ... towards the end of my teaching but then I don't know that I connected it with all the other aspects of my life.

It is even in the couple papers I wrote before Christmas, it was there as I went back and read them, just recently and went ah ha! I had a little glimmer here, but I wasn't aware at the time, that that what was happening, and when I wrote my theories paper I wasn't happy with it, and I thought it was awful but it was because I wasn't, I hadn't quite, I didn't have the total picture. I had another part of it, which was the idea of people being able to solve their problems and ... being able to come up with ideas and problem solve and find solutions and make connections, if they're just given the tools to do that. That was part of my essay, but it was just kind of unconnected to anything, it was just kind of out there, and now I can see what that was, what I was trying to get at.

I'm beginning to get that feeling like I've got lots more to say about it, but it's not quite there yet, and I think that's why I need a break.

I can feel like I'm on the edge of it, but I can't seem to grasp it, makes it very frustrating for writing the paper but I know that, well at least I'm assuming that what happened to me at Christmas will happen again in April when I'm able to sit back and just not be thinking about it ... then it will come together.

When Bonnie was asked what would make this a self-defining memory to her future self, she replied:

I think it's the light bulb (laughs) the light bulb going on, and beginning to see that just like we've learned in class, that there are connections. Well things just don't happen in isolation, that I don't happen in isolation, that all parts of me are connected, and are making me what I am right now, that I just haven't quite, can't quite grasp that it's so big.

I know that one can't force, I have that feeling anyways, that one can't force that illumination ... it's happening on some level, and you know it's beginning to kind of percolate up to me, consciousness ... and I guess yeah the light bulb is kind of a good picture for me.

Bonnie was both excited and frustrated by this experience. On the one hand, she found the many connections she was starting to see between the various parts of her life and her counselling very energizing. On the other hand, she was frustrated because she could see only glimmerings of illumination. She was not yet reliably able to see the connections that would keep the light bulb lit. Bonnie was feeling confident, however, that given time and a chance to step back and reflect, she would be able to more clearly perceive these connections:

I can't verbalize it totally yet, and it makes it kind of frustrating, especially when I 'm trying [talk] o you about it. Going aaah! (pseudo yell) and yet I know that it will come, yeah, I'll grab it at some point.

In the transition section, we saw how Bonnie's confidence rose significantly between the first and third interviews and how important the integration of practice, theory, and her core beliefs had been for her in that growth. Bonnie's "light bulb" experience clearly demonstrates how pivotal the integration of her experience and core beliefs had been. Her awareness of the inter-connections between various parts of her life, as represented by the light bulb, was the crystallization of hopes she mentioned at the start of the program when she had wanted to have a "personal construct," and "a bigger picture" of how she fit into counselling. Bonnie's experience of briefly seeing all the parts of her life illuminated had happened recently however, and it was still tenuous. Bonnie's description of the light bulb experience, when she had been "able to grasp the whole for a few minutes," was almost one of epiphany, a revelation beyond her previous experience. The previous connections that she had seen between her teaching and beliefs, felt minor to compared to the interconnectedness of the light bulb experience.

The illumination provided by the light bulb experience helped Bonnie to see how counselling was connected to who she was, who she had been, and what she had been doing, rather than seeing it as something separate and distinct from herself. This new found integration helped Bonnie to become even more confident of her skills and her ability to eventually achieve her hoped-for selves. The metaphor of the light bulb had become a powerful symbol of Bonnie's hopes. This image represented a hoped-for future, a time when the light would remain steady and bright, a time when Bonnie would consistently perceive the patterns of interconnectedness linking her experiences.

Feared selves.

Bonnie's feared selves have many similar themes to her hoped-for selves (see Table 9). For example, she was consistently feared being perceived as cold, unconcerned or closed down to clients. Just as Bonnie had less to say in each interview about her hoped-for selves, she also mentioned fewer feared selves. By the final interview, when Bonnie's confidence was the greatest, she had the least to say about her fears and was the least worried her fears would come to pass.

The types of fears Bonnie had for herself as a counsellor generally mirrored her hoped-for selves. At the beginning of the program, there was a repeated theme of being afraid of being "incompetent," "goofing up," not picking up on something, not having a clue what she was doing, "not being there," or being "totally unaware." By the time of the last interview, however, there was no mention of competence per se (as with hoped-for selves). Instead, her focus had shifted to more of a focus on her role in the counselling relationship. At Time 3, Bonnie feared being "domineering," "judgmental," "limiting in some way," "unbelieving," "someone who doesn't trust the client," or who "doesn't listen."

Bonnie valued caring and warmth in the counselling relationship, and feared being domineering, judgmental or not listening to the client. With time, Bonnie had come to more concretely define the behaviors and attributes she believed constituted incompetence (or at least those that were most salient to her). For example, she no longer feared "goofing up," but rather, not being able to be present in the counselling relationship in the way she valued. Bonnie came to use more specific and globalized terms over time to describe her fears.

It is likely that Bonnie's fears and confidence levels interacted. As Bonnie felt more confident and in control in the program, she also had more time to reflect and to become more clear about her fears. As we have already seen, Bonnie valued being able to organize ahead and feeling in control. The more concrete and specific the fears, the more they afforded her the opportunity to take actions, or make plans to work towards what she wanted, and to avoid that which she feared. For example, her fear of goofing up (mentioned at Time 1) was so global, it could almost be paralyzing, any action might cause the feared outcome. Indeed, she used words like "nerve wracking," "uptight," and "awkward" to describe that time, and she had the expectation that she had to "get it right the first time." A more specific fear, on the other hand, like not listening to the client (mentioned at Time 3), gave her something concrete she could assess. She could, for instance, ask herself "what did the client just say?" and then check it out with the client. She had also, as already discussed, loosened her expectations so that she no longer perceived it necessary to never make a mistake in session. She had developed enough experience and confidence to believe that if she didn't pick up on something the client said the first time, there would be other chances (e.g., if it was important, the client would repeat it again; she could go listen to the tape at home; get guidance from her supervisor, etc.). This change in her perceptions and fears, in turn, helped to further increase her confidence.

There was one theme, however, that came across much more clearly when Bonnie discussed her feared selves than when she described her hoped-for selves. This was the theme of being "stuck," "inflexible," having "stagnated," or being closed down. This fear was a very important concern for Bonnie, one that had also emerged when she described the people from her past who had been models of what a helper should not be. For example, at Time 3, Bonnie described negative experiences with teachers in her past who had adopted an "expert" approach to helping:

not having faith that I will get it, that I will figure my way, and giving, allowing space ... so many times I've been in situations where it has appeared that I am stuck, and yes, I probably was stuck, but there hasn't been the understanding that I could also have the ability to get unstuck ... very much the authoritarian kind of, maybe not authoritarian, more of the expert model ... "this is what you do," or "maybe you're not meant to do that, or maybe it's too difficult, so you should stop." Yeah, that really ... makes me more anxious, also that when I've been told to stop, seems to be to me saying you can't do it. You're unable.

Bonnie feared becoming the expert who did not have faith in people's ability to find their own way out (with support) when stuck. She did not want to become "rigid" and "advice giving," or to lose

confidence in clients' abilities to find their own way out. Bonnie feared the possibility that with experience she would also close down and limit the client through the expert role.

An allied fear at Time 2, was that she would become like a couple of her classmates from university who had gone on for further training as social workers. Bonnie was concerned because she had seen their technical skills improve with training, but she had also witnessed them losing an important part of themselves:

I also found they became very [much] part of the system, and lost some things in the process, lost things like the nurturing part, it became more like a skill, like being a mechanic ... so it was like a little signal to me that even caring people who really want to work with other people and have some skills, have to watch out those skills don't become automatic and lose any power they have.

Bonnie feared that with further training she might also come to lose her nurturing part when she counselled and that, instead, she would begin to mechanically apply the skills she had learning. She had seen how former classmates had lost that balance between skills and caring and was concerned about not repeating that pattern. Bonnie valued and believed in being genuinely caring and nurturing in the counselling relationship and she feared she might one day sacrifice that approach for one that was more expert, mechanical or automatic.

Hoped-for and feared selves.

When Bonnie's hoped-for and feared selves were compared, several similar themes emerged (see Table 10). The first theme was that of being warm, caring or nurturing rather than cold, uncaring or distant. This was the theme that Bonnie most consistently held and valued across time, and one of her persistent concerns was that she not lose the caring side when she had more training and experience. All the other themes were closely related to this first theme, and how she hoped to maintain her caring throughout her counselling career.

Bonnie was consistently concerned about the quality of her counselling skills in each of the interviews. At the beginning, however, this had been through more global hopes, e.g., to be competent, skilled, knowledgeable, and fears, e.g., of being incompetent, goofing up, or totally unaware. As time went on, and Bonnie became more confident, and had more time to reflect, she began to develop more specific hopes and fears about the counselling relationship itself.

Bonnie hoped she could create a counselling relationship where she would reach out to clients, be available and open to their needs, rather than limiting the clients, erecting barriers, or pushing them away. She hoped however, to be able to do this in a balanced way, to be accessible to clients while also maintaining appropriate boundaries and taking care of her own needs. Bonnie wanted to adopt a democratic stance with clients, to have faith in their abilities and to give them space to try things out, rather than being an authoritarian expert who was judgmental and domineered the counselling process.

She also hoped to be able to counsel ethically, knowing how to make the subtle decisions that would protect the client even when the rules were not clear.

Bonnie's hopes and fears were dynamic and demonstrated change over time. Flexibility and adaptability were important to Bonnie, and she hoped to be able to incorporate them into her counselling style. She wanted to develop a style that would mesh with a variety of people. She feared becoming inflexible, stagnant, or stuck in one particular way of responding to all clients.

Bonnie prized time to reflect because she valued integration, growth and development. As a teacher, she had worked hard to grow and develop in her own teaching style, which she had done through journaling and self-examination. The overwhelming number of changes at the start of the program meant she had little time for the reflection and journaling she had become accustomed to when she worked as a teacher. With little time for reflection, it had been hard for her to develop a clear picture of her hopes and fears. In addition, she found herself distracted as she struggled to figure out how (or whether) to incorporate others' expectations into her own hopes and fears. Some of her feelings of being overwhelmed and drowning at the beginning of the semester can probably be attributed to her confusion as she tried to sort through the large number of potential possible selves she suddenly encountered in the transition. Bonnie's lack of a clear picture of where she wanted to be headed (i.e., her hopes), or a specific picture of what she was trying to avoid (i.e., her fears) may have left her less confident at a time when she was trying to negotiate through very challenging transitions.

Bonnie's experience during the Christmas break, when she had the opportunity for reflection and a chance to step back and assess her hopes and fears, was transformational. She entered the second semester with a clearer picture of her own expectations, more confidence and less afraid. During the second semester, when Bonnie had her light bulb experience of seeing connections across her life, there was an even more significant transformation. Bonnie became more energized and excited as she became more able to integrate her values, identity, and past, to create a coherent pattern. The recognition of that pattern allowed her to develop an awareness about her hopes and fears at a much deeper and more integrated level than she had before. As a result, Bonnie felt far more confident about navigating through the transitions that lay ahead. She was no longer drowning, instead she had surfaced and was beginning to find her direction.

Self-Defining Memories

Bonnie's self-defining memories provide insight into many of the important themes in her life. Several past experiences have helped to shape her current hopes and fears, as well as some of her underlying beliefs and values. In addition, her SDMs illustrate some of the strengths and difficulties she brought to her counsellor training experience.

Bonnie did not choose to repeat any of her SDMs over time, although one memory she shared was peripherally related to a previously told memory. All of the SDMs Bonnie chose to share were helping memories (only half of the SDMs were requested to be helper memories). As we will see in the descriptions of her SDMs which follow, there is a great deal of consistency within the themes of her memories.

At Time 3, when Bonnie was looking back at the experience of having participated in the research, she described the task of coming up with SDMs as "hard," and "quite challenging," but also saw it as worthwhile, because it stretched her to look at things differently. One of the SDMs in particular, the very first one she generated, had an impact on her because it enabled her to see connections in her life she had previously been unaware of. This memory, the "stage manager" will be the first of Bonnie's SDMs to be described.

Time 1: The stage manager.

I do a lot of stage managing, with student productions, and it's more like an image after the production's over, just having *everybody surround me*, and it's *very warm* and very, *lots of hugging and sharing*. It's more like an image that has *a lot of positive feeling attached to it*. Like a lot of work involved, and we all went through this work together, the whole crew. And then it's kind of like *reaching a point where we're all kind of together* on it, *we're all one* with the production, it's working, *all our energy is devoted to it and we're helping each other ... and causing each other to get higher, and higher, with the energy level kind of peaking* and then when the show was over, there's that *explosion of .. personal kind of warmth that everybody exudes and we share that*. And that seems to be *an image that I carry of what it can be like to help others ...* because with being stage manager you're not really in the production but *you're orchestrating the production* and I found that, *I just loved that feeling*.

I understand it won't (laughing) always be like that. I think *what the thrill is ...* for me as the stage manager, *is seeing almost like a self-fulfillment happening, or self actualization of individuals ...* often this is one of their first efforts on stage, and *they go out and they do something that they never thought they could do*, that's completely contrary to what they are in the classroom. They might be shy, or might be a rather serious person, who goes out on stage and does something very funny ... they're *able to explore some possibilities for themselves, and being able to do it*. And *my part* in that *is just providing the support*, not only the *physical support* of the props being in the right place and all that, but also providing *the little words as they go on and that will help them*, because I'm right there when they go on stage and I usually have something to say to them that helps them, I hope, go out there.

And for those who just go out, and do it, at least *it's the first little step* and that it might take eight more times of doing that before they're able to really experience what it would be like to be somebody else out there. I really see that kind of as *an image of what I see the counselling could be*, or maybe *what I would like to achieve*, knowing that it's not always possible, and not all productions end up like that ... I've been doing this ... for twelve years ... *maybe part of the reason why I wanted to go into counselling ...* I've been thinking about that over the last little bit ... what is it that's brought me to counselling? What is it about the group that can be exciting?

and *I didn't make the connection until fairly recently* why stage managing was always really important to me. Even when I'm extremely busy taking courses I always end up doing one somehow, *it's a real need I have ... I knew there had to be a connection* but I never really made it

until I started into this program and *started to associate some of the different parts* you pointed out, you know, *the different facets and how they were all orchestrated to getting to a certain point. I think that's a really good image and it helps me. I know that that's what I was doing but it was rather on an unconscious level.*

When Bonnie was asked what she would want someone else to understand about her from the experience, she replied:

that I enjoy working with people, but it's not important for me to be the one on stage, to be recognized. And that I enjoy watching others grow, and ..that I see growth as either a slow process or as a rather jubilant kind of ecstasy (laughs) happening, that it could be either. It's on a continuum, depending where that person is at, and how big a step they can take, that's comfortable for them, but still kind of stretching them. And that I think the idea of the stage, that's helpful.

This was a powerful memory for Bonnie, one that brought many important themes in her life together. When she read the transcript of this interview later, she remembered sharing the SDM, and revealed that she made connections in the interview that she had not been aware of before. She was able to understand some of the reasons why both stage managing and counselling appealed to her. Bonnie could see how the fulfillment she felt when she helped the children grow and stretch on stage, was very similar to what drew her to counselling. She enjoyed the feeling of being backstage (literally when stage managing, and metaphorically when counselling), helping to orchestrate change, and providing whatever support (physical or emotional) was needed for the children to actualize new parts of themselves. Bonnie also valued helping the children to grow and stretch at their own pace, whether slowly, or ecstatically. The connection she made between stage managing and counselling was important to her, because it helped her to get a better understanding of why she was wanted to go into counselling and what she wanted her counsellor role to be.

Bonnie's description of the SDM suggested another important connection between the experiences of stage managing and counselling, one she appeared to be less aware of. The initial part of her description was rich with words evoking a sense of warmth, connectedness, and sharing:

having everybody surround me ... it's very warm ... lots of hugging and sharing ... a lot of positive feeling attached to it ... we all went through this together ... causing each other to get higher and higher ... that explosion of personal warmth that everybody exudes and we share ... I just loved that feeling.

The feelings of personal warmth and belonging to a closely connected sharing group were clearly very special to Bonnie. When she identified what was important to her about this SDM, however, she focused primarily on the satisfaction of helping others grow. Although she did not single out the importance of these warm feelings of sharing and belonging when she discussed the SDM, the energy with which she described these feelings demonstrates that they were, nonetheless, tremendously significant for her. It is likely these feelings of sharing, warmth, and inclusion were also important components of both the stage managing and counselling experiences. They also continued to be important

in the other SDMs she shared. As we will see in her other SDMs, both these themes (helping others to actualize their potential, and the importance of affiliation/inclusion) were repeated.

Time 1: The special student.

In this SDM Bonnie described her experience of working with a special student. She first began working with the student in her first year of teaching, and continued to maintain contact with her over the 12 years since that time. Bonnie's last contact with the student had been in the month before Bonnie began graduate training.

[I was] working with a girl who was in my grade 3 class, who was about 13 years old, and a native student ... she'd been shunted around from place to place. And as I worked with her, *I realized that, while she had a very low I.Q.*, she had been tested, it came out quite low, that *she was able to learn specific things, like she was the top speller in the classroom* ... she could read but she, and I thought for such a long time that she could not comprehend, but when I had her answer comprehension questions, what she would start to do is she would read the sentence from the story that had the answer within it, she was unable to rephrase that, *but she could pick up the point that answered the question*, and *I worked with her for about three years and then sent her on to a special program in the high school*. And the memory is part of that process, but also ... *when I attended her graduation from high school and realized that I'd been a real focal point*. And that *I had helped her reach that point, getting her into the program because she had not been diagnosed correctly*, and so she was not eligible for any program, coming from a small town we just don't have different programs available ... *then being there at her graduation, and to have the first dance*, and we shared the first dance, (half-laugh) she was a girl, that was, it was okay, it was really, you know *we were both almost on the edge of tears*, it was a very moving moment and the fact that *we kept in contact all the time* she was out of my classroom, up until I moved. So that to me, *that was being able to help. Having a little bit more expertise to find out what was out there for her, and being able to do some diagnosis, and what she needed and what she was capable of doing rather than focusing on what she wasn't capable of doing*.

I like that part ... of the process too. *Being able to look at resources* and finding out what was available and going with her to interviews, and sort of *being with her as a support*. Cause her parents were unable, her mother was really unable to cope with her all the different systems that you had to go through.

I felt very proud [seeing her graduate], it sounds *like she was my daughter*, I knew how much of a struggle it had been for her and I knew that I had been helpful in that struggle and that she looked, as she was walking across the stage, like she had an identity for the first time. That she was somebody, and she had plans for the future. She went to College ... *she had some sort of vision beyond just staying at home*, which was kind of where she could have headed; staying on the reserve and just going back into the mode of being looked on as someone who wasn't very intelligent, who couldn't get it together, who had to be taken care of.

You could see it in her face. She was just all there that was what was really moving. My mother was with me and she was really moved too and she had no idea who this person was, that she just said "Wow you can see that girl she's just beaming" and you could see it from rows back, *I did it!*

When Bonnie was asked what that memory said about her she replied:

Probably the *nurturing part*. *Partly why I like working with children and because maybe, it's an extension a little bit of the mothering role again?* That again *taking a back seat*, I'm not all that comfortable being the one on stage, *I like orchestrating and I like setting things in motion and*

watching people go through the process of discovering who they are, and some sort of reaching goals they set themselves, I'm quite willing to be supportive. So I see myself as nurturing and resourceful, a guide sometimes, if necessary... someone who is concerned, who keeps in contact, and doing a lot of the phoning and checking up, following through.

This memory, like the stage managing memory, was one that evoked strong feelings in Bonnie. The memory is a pivotal experience, one that helped to define helping for Bonnie. She had been able to see something in this girl who had been shunted around the system, that others had overlooked, or misdiagnosed. Rather than focusing on what the girl was unable to do, Bonnie had used her expertise and caring to discover the girl's capabilities and needs. Not only did Bonnie have the vision and awareness to recognize the girl's special strengths, she had also continued to work with her to find her a place where she could further her education. Bonnie had the commitment and caring to keep in touch with the girl even after her teaching duties ended. Bonnie felt an almost maternal sense of pride when she saw the girl she had worked, supported, and maintained contact with, graduate. When Bonnie had seen the girl's beaming face at graduation and they had shared the first dance together, Bonnie had been moved almost to tears. It had not been until the graduation that Bonnie had fully understood how much of a "focal point" she had been for this student. Bonnie had been instrumental in helping the girl get to the point where she had an identity and a vision for the future; the girl had been able to off to College rather than being once more shunted aside.

Bonnie thought that the special student SDM was probably her most moving helping experience. There are many things that made this memory particularly important to Bonnie. There is, first of all, the size of the change she was able to help bring about for the student, who went from being someone virtually ignored by the system, to a person with an identity and a future. It was an even more dramatic example than her previous SDM of Bonnie's ability to recognize strengths, "orchestrate" resources, provide personal support, caring, and encouragement to enable the student to discover who she was. In this SDM she not only helped the girl to stretch towards new goals, she actually helped her to see that goals, themselves, were possible.

There were other similarities between the stage manager and special student SDMs. For example, Bonnie perceived herself in both memories as being resourceful from a back seat (or back stage) position. In both of the memories she saw herself adopting a nurturing and supportive role to children, helping them to move towards goals that they, themselves have set. Another commonality between the SDMs was that both were associated with a strong outpouring of positive feelings, after they had worked together to accomplish a goal. Bonnie's feeling of being moved almost to tears when she realized she had been a focal point for the beaming student at graduation, was similar the explosion of personal warmth she felt when a show was over. Again, in the special student SDM, we see that sharing, warmth and inclusion were important aspects of the memory, even though Bonnie did not emphasize their importance when she discussed the SDM. In this memory, like the previous SDM, we find that helping

others to actualize their potential, and that the feeling of being close and valued were strong themes in the memory. In the following SDM, starting school at 15, we will learn more about Bonnie's struggles to fit into and to adapt to, an academic institution for the first time. We will also see why this SDM also had particular significance for Bonnie as she struggled to adapt to graduate school.

Time 2: Starting school at 15.

[narration much more choppy than other memories, many ums and hesitations edited from text for readability] *A really big memory that seems to be coming up more, since I've come to graduate school ... is going to high school for the first time ... and how I felt there... walking into a high school ... there were many sororities in it ... people dressed very nicely, but all the same, it was very uptight looking back on it and walking down the hall, and not knowing anybody, or not knowing what people do in school ... feeling like a stranger in a foreign land, and I think why that memory is coming back to me, is because now I'm also going through the same type of experience, but it is not as intense as that. But it's maybe bringing back those memories, and the feelings I had of not being good enough, or belonging, not knowing your ropes and trying to understand rules that were never stated. It was very difficult and it took me a few months to feel like "okay, I'm getting a grasp of it" and realizing that I had a lot of strength inside me, that I didn't really let it get me down, I just keep hanging in there. and ... I still was pretty shy in class, and I still am in class, but I've learned how to, I learned some of the rules ... I also was .. an observer, and I noticed the people who were at the top tended to be in, in this was probably quite specific to this high school, because of the sororities it was ... cliquy. So the people who seemed to be at the top, also did well academically, were also cheerleaders, looked good, and very snobbish. And then, there seemed to be this vast these vast amount of kids underneath this, who felt second class. And I found that quite interesting, that there seemed to be more of them than there were of this top bunch; why were they putting up with it?*

[I then started to] do things with other people, like those "second class" (half laugh) citizens, and making friends with them, and forming things like study groups, was something I also did then. I did quite well academically in school, and it came very easily to me in high school, because I had all the word skills down ... I've I had to be independent from very young I wasn't used to people telling me to get assignments done, I just assumed they were due the next day, so I would just do them (laughs). And so I had a lot of those skills, but I noticed that my classmates didn't have those skills, so teaching people how to study, and working with people, tutoring and just doing it after school. It was a good way to make friends, and it also was part of me, I really liked helping, and I really enjoy teaching. So, I got to do all those things, and it was a good way for me to get another foot hold in, in the school.

Bonnie's entry into the graduate program had prompted the resurgence of her memory of starting high school. The similarities between Bonnie's first classroom experience at age 15, and her first full-time on-site experience in a university program, caused her to begin re-processing the high school memory:

I have been sharing that memory, I noticed it come up on the paper that I did, and I'm beginning to talk about it with my peers (voice quiet) of what that was like. I think ... why it keeps coming back, is realizing how everybody feels that, sometime or another, they don't belong, that they don't understand the rules, but they know there are rules and what are they? (voice very quiet). And most of us at some point in our life, I think also feel that, we wondered what our place is. And so, it was good experience from that point of view. I've gone through that, and it's kind of neat to revisit it, being older, and going through the same process (voice louder) but having that memory and ... those experiences, makes it a little less frightening than it would have been.

Even though the experience had been a difficult one for Bonnie, looking back she was able to perceive some "good" aspects to it. When Bonnie described the experience, she was able to speak from a somewhat removed stance, seeing her reactions as normal parts of development, things that "everybody feels" sometime, or that "most of us" wonder about. She also saw herself getting value from the experience of helping and teaching other students.

Although at the time of the interview Bonnie was able to perceive some benefit in the experience, it had clearly been much more devastating when it occurred:

Yeah...I hadn't realized until late, you know now, or certainly within the last few years, looking back at that was kind of what got me through those years, I think [helping the other students recognize and develop their strengths]. I mean, *they weren't comfortable years for me, I would have preferred to have stayed at home and continued working actually (laughs) .. realizing that teenage girls at that age are incredibly snotty and catty about the stupidest things of course, clothes, hair (laughs) what you say (laughs) all those things.*

We see a hint of some of the pain and loneliness she must have felt, trying to fit into school for the first time, surrounded by "incredibly snotty and catty" teenage girls. The experience had been negative enough that at the time she would have chosen to continue alone with home schooling rather than endure the discomfort of those years. By the time of the interview, however, Bonnie had begun to transform the experience, to find it valuable, because without it she believed the graduate program would have been "really overwhelming."

Another advantage Bonnie found in this high school experience was that it taught her a valuable way to make personal contacts in a new environment, i.e., through the formation of study groups and helping others with their work. In graduate school, as in high school, it became her entree into social groups.

Bonnie was, however, mystified about why her peers chose to reach out to her:

a lot of people phone me when they're having difficulty on their paper, not that I'm doing any better, or you know, or anything like that, it's not that, and that certainly wasn't the case all the time in high school ... more or less, just to have somebody, I think, to talk to ... I'm doing this last paper, while writing a couple people phoned ... just to check over their outline, that they just have some one to talk, and I don't think that's happening with everybody else, I don't know.

I just really became quite aware of it because of the paper I wrote, and then noticing in the last week you know I probably get three, four phone calls a day from other people in the group and why would they phone me? I mean they're not necessarily people that I've hung around with a lot either, you know. It's not like I'm in class with my hand up or coming out with wonderful...

...you know, it's still a li-t-t-le bit of a mystery to me.

Bonnie was at a loss to explain what others saw in her, and why they looked to her for help when she did not perceive herself to stand out, or be more accomplished than other classmates. This puzzlement was something she had felt in high school, and she continued to feel in graduate school. Bonnie was bothered by her lack of understanding of what others thought of her and how she fit in. When she had started high school at fifteen, she not only had to struggle to learn the implicit rules of the environment,

but how others perceived her and she could fit in. Bonnie's younger years had been spent in a remote location, with no peer group to interact with while she was growing up. She had only limited opportunities to develop her social identity in when she was younger, and she was to some extent, struggling with it again in graduate school. Bonnie suspected that her desire to be able to step outside herself and understand more what others perceived might even been part of her motivation to enroll in counselling:

so I think it has something to do to with why I'm in the counselling program (laughs) too. And ... I wish I could, *in some ways it would be nice to get a, to be up here and looking down. You know to get outside oneself and look* but I can't do that. I took a group class this year, and that was kind of helpful, to get other people's perspectives ... who I am. I mean, that's always helpful for me, and I think part of this has to do with the fact that I didn't go to school, I didn't go through that process, and where I lived was very isolated.

Nevertheless, Bonnie did enjoy the process of helping others. In this SDM we see that, consistent with her other SDMs, she valued helping others to stretch and grow as well as the closeness that developed between them. Bonnie was beginning to see a pattern in the way she developed these helping relationships, and although she knew she enjoyed them, she was not yet really aware of why she developed them:

I'm not sure why that's happened, but that seems to be a pattern that I've experienced before and I really like doing that, I find that really fun and it's a neat way to really get to know other people ... the people have to be pretty open to say "you know, I haven't a clue what I'm doing. I need some help ... what would be a good way of outlining this paper?"

It's nice ... so that when we get together again, in class, or whatever ... *I know that person a little better*, and it seems like *in class*, it's one type of behav- *it's hard to get to know people, and a lot of people are very busy*, of course they work, and go to school. And so they're in and out, you know, they don't hang around a lot or don't get the opportunities to say have coffee together or whatever.

It's happened before, and it also has to do with the part that likes to teach and nurture .. it's like getting a little present ... It's also a chance where the other person opens up, too? and I get to know them a little better.

In this SDM, like the other SDMs, we see how important both the teaching/nurturing and the connection/affiliation aspects of helping were to Bonnie. This was the same pattern that Bonnie would come to choose to reenact when she reached graduate school. Helping others gave her the opportunity to make contacts that could develop into friendships, and the satisfaction of seeing others realize strengths they didn't even know they had. Each time Bonnie was able to help someone in that way, it became like "getting a little present," something very special and heartwarming.

When Bonnie was asked at the time of the interview to identify what she found important in the starting school SDM, she replied:

Well, (laughs) I think that part of it has to do with ... *the teaching, how that is really important for me. The underdog (laughs), how we supported the underdogs .. helping, or wanting to work with*

people to fulfill their potential? to even recognize that they have potential. And that ... they also have the strength to work within the system to get what they need out of the system. That if I could do it, they can do it, that type of thing ... and they do know a lot more than what they think ... they know how the system works and so that there's no reason why we couldn't apply to other parts of their life as well, that knowledge.

Once again, in this SDM, like in the special student SDM, we see how Bonnie strongly valued championing the "underdogs," people who (like herself?) were disadvantaged in the system. In this SDM, like the stage managing and special student SDMs, there was also a focus on helping others to recognize and fulfill their potential. Yet another commonality to these memories was that, as she put it "I think I do a lot of leading from kind of behind ... I do take leadership roles a lot, but ... it's not always very evident." This kind of quiet leadership from behind was something that Bonnie was just coming to recognize in herself, and to associate with her current identity. As mentioned earlier, she was still rather puzzled by the way others (e.g., her peers in the program) seemed to perceive something special in her, and would look to her for guidance or support. She was, however, coming to acknowledge to herself it was "definitely happening," even if it still remained somewhat of a "mystery" to her.

There were remarkable similarities between Bonnie's entry into high school where she had felt "like a stranger in a foreign land," and her entry into graduate school, which she likened to the way "somebody from another country" might feel. In both of these experiences, Bonnie entered a larger, unfamiliar environment, from a more remote locale, where she had been accustomed to working independently and self-sufficiently. Although the feelings she experienced when she entered graduate school were less intense than when she entered high school, the lack of self-confidence and doubts she had about belonging were similar. In both situations, after an initial period of people-watching, Bonnie built up her self-confidence and her social connections by starting study groups. The contacts she established through those study groups enabled her to gradually begin to satisfy both her need to nurture/support and to connect/belong. Her leadership role was one where she, once again, could lead from behind, helping others to recognize and reach their potential.

Bonnie's experience at the start of high school helped to prepare her for many of the challenges she would face in graduate school, and gave her techniques she could use to make connections with others. Unfortunately, another aspect of that previous experience was that these same similarities may have made her more vulnerable to automatically hooking into the same strong fears and doubts she had experienced in high school. These similarities could have made her more fearful and uncertain at the start of the program than someone who had not been through such an emotionally and socially difficult experience. In Bonnie's case, however, the initial feeling of being drowned and overwhelmed by the experience of starting graduate school was relatively short lived. As we have already seen, about mid way through the first semester, she began to access her strengths and previous experience, and to work towards her hopes, rather than being driven by her fears.

At Time 3 we will see how many of the same themes of connection and helping others that were predominant in her SDMs continued to be repeated. We will also see how Bonnie began to develop a clearer picture of the way she wanted to help, and how she began to integrate her past experiences more fully into her goals for helping.

Time 3: Creative connections trip

I'm thinking of a particular class I've had where.. I did a lot of experimenting and the class ... I can narrow it down to, [we] went to [city in North America for special creative program] where we went to the World's and ... we were in a plane and it was kind of an exciting moment because most of the kids had not been on a plane. There was 7 of us, and we went down, and when we got there was this sign saying you know welcome to the world's finals in the airport ... Kids were coming from all over the world to it, from China and Russia and from Germany and all over the States ... I got to spend a whole week with these children ... they had a skit and they were going to do some creative problem-solving, but I think what, oh, I just remember *the closeness that we all felt, we'd worked together since September*. I'd had these students in my classroom, I think this was my third year with them, and what I'd liked about is *it was a very collaborative ... it was no longer really necessarily in a teacher role*. I don't remember ever having to do any discipline while I was there, like in the sense of saying "don't do this," or "please you know you need to be quiet" any of that, they were just so, really *just kind of worked with as a whole* and because it was creative problem-solving ... *one of my goals in life is to be as creative as one can be*, not necessarily being artistic or anything, but *just using one's mind and looking for connections* and this is what this group did. And it was fun to be ... with kids and see ... *how they were beginning to make those connections to the world ...* and how like I was able to understand their frame of mind, they were able to understand where I was coming from because we were thinking somewhat on the same lines ... *there was a real closeness*. We all slept in the same room, so it you know got to be, *it was almost like a giant pajama party for seven days* (laughs) or five days and I guess, *for me what was important about that, was not just the creativity but seeing them integrate so much of their learning* in the year. I mean they were able to talk about what an ... allegory was, what a metaphor was, starting to look at symbolism around them and, *using those terms in their everyday talk* and we're talking grade 6 level ... but they were using them in a very real way not just for classroom activity, *they were taking them out and transferring them to a the real world and that's really important to me, to see that part of the teaching, not just what goes on in the classroom*.

Bonnie's memory of how close she had felt to these students, and the excitement of seeing them be creative in life as well as in the classroom made this an extremely positive SDM for her. In addition, she was excited about this memory because it provided her with more insight into what she valued in counselling. Just as Bonnie had hoped her students would be able to make connections and transfer their learning to new situations, she, herself, was able to make a connection between what she valued in teaching, to the counselling process:

So it's really important for me to see that transfer ... and I look back, and I see many other activities that I do ... as a teacher, and what I'm finding ... is I'm taking those same ideas that I use in teaching, and applying them to a counselling situation when I'm working with a group, and doing the same type of, almost sometimes the same activities, to a lesser extent ... I'm taking some of those activities and using them, and finding that they're really successful and that kids are seeing how they transfer out into the real world. So making that connection seems to be really important, and it's one that I just become aware of, I mean I've always really enjoyed working with the kids ... and making the transfer has been important, I've always been aware of that, but I've not seen how that's going to fit for counselling and it's just within the last couple of days that I've made that connection that

what's happening for me ... I'm not really happy if I just have a session with kids and I don't see them seeing the relevance, out there. Okay so that will make it easier for Tommy to get along with Johnny fine but what's the bigger issue than that? ... So, when I think back on ... that trip with them ... a lot of my beliefs are tied up in it about how I want to work with people.

KJ: And some of those beliefs would be?

There needs to be ... a chance for people to ... tap into their creative abilities, that they may be unaware of ... I'm talking about even making connections, that type of creativity, problem-solving skills. Some being able to be aware ... those abilities that everybody has to some level, and then to start applying them out, in various parts of their lives. Another part of that, too, is the confidence that comes from doing that, the ability. For these students come from a small town, to go to a world presentation, and to perform in front of a couple hundred people, and on stage and be confident about what they're doing, and believe in it ... the idea that everybody has the right to strut their stuff (laughs), that we all have something worth showing.

For Bonnie, who stated "one of my goals in life is to be as creative as one can be ... using one's mind and looking for connections," the realization of how her beliefs connected across both her counselling and teaching had a tremendous impact. Previously, she had seen counselling and teaching as more separate activities and her discovery of this important link between them brought her a sense of relief and excitement:

There was a certain sadness connected with counselling for me, when I first started doing this practicum, that I realized being a counsellor, I wouldn't be able to do those types of things that I was able to do in my classroom. And I thought "oh that's, you know, really sad," because those are so important to me. And then starting to find, and it was purely by accident that I was doing it, I was not thinking of that, but I started doing some things and then, it was only within the last couple of days that I've looked back and went "oh! but that's what I'm doing, isn't that interesting." ... in a different way, because you only have a short time frame ... I've been using some of the cooperative activities and having the children work in small groups, and then having them process it. Which is what happens when they do their spontaneous problem-solving in [in the creative thinking classroom group] it's not just getting the problem solved, but it's how one works together ... and that's part of what I try and do in my small groups [counselling].

It is a different format and I'm still working with that, it's pretty crude right now I'd say, but I once I pick that up, when I was doing my journal on Friday night, after my week of counselling ... I kind of came to that realization like "oh, okay, this is what I'm doing. Okay so now, now that I'm aware of it, how can I make it work even better than what I've been doing? ... what types of things do I need to be processing with them?"

Before Bonnie made these connections, she had been sad because she thought counselling would mean she had to abandon the creative problem solving work that had meant so much to her. A huge sense of relief accompanied her realization that she could continue this type of work counselling, albeit in a somewhat different format.

One of Bonnie's hopes for her students was that they not only see connections and be able to creative problem-solve, but to transfer those insights into the real world. Consistent with her own values, Bonnie not only looked for connections between her creative problem solving activities in the classroom and counselling, but she also sought for ways to apply that insight, "now that I'm aware of it, how can I

make it work even better than what I've been doing?" Bonnie was going to look for ways to actively incorporate creative problem-solving and its transfer to everyday living situations into her counselling process.

When Bonnie was asked what this SDM said about her as a person, she replied:

I like being a guide, seeing myself as a guide, not somebody who necessarily knows the answer, that I'm still, I think that part of my fascination for that ... type of creativity and working together, cooperative groups, is that I'm also trying to figure it out for myself ... and so I want to share some of the learning I've made.

KJ: It's part of your journey, and...]

Yeah, it's part of my journey, so it is very personal to me, but having the activity, keeps it from being really contaminated by my own personal stuff. The activity is important to me, but I don't have to bring my personal stuff to the activity ... I can let them work, I can help them, facilitate their working together.

KJ: You can now almost give them some of the tools that might help them on their (yes) journey in that part, without having to give your journey to them.]

Right, yeah, yeah, and, and it's interesting, like I know these kids, they've kept in contact with me, they phone, and they're in grade 10 now, and they're doing really well, and ... it's interesting to see how confident they are, so maybe that confidence is part of it too, knowing that I grew up not feeling confident and, you know trying to find ways that I would feel confident, and you know being able to pass it on to students.

KJ: So it kind of helps them to grow in confidence and helps your confidence too? Is that what I'm hearing?

Yeah, yeah, kind of both because I feel like this is something that I've got to offer, so it makes me feel like, okay this is good thing, it makes me feel like I'm being helpful, and I have some things to pass on. But I also learn by watching their process as well, about myself.

Bonnie believed that part of her fascination for creative-problem solving and cooperative groups came from her desire to figure out these things out for herself, and another part came from her "want to share some of the learning I've made." She perceived some of this interest was personal, and she tried ensure her groups were not contaminated by her "stuff." Bonnie's early years in isolation, away from groups of children, made her feel she had a lot to learn about group processes, and gave her a particular sensitivity to the challenges of group processes. She grew up not feeling very confident and looking for ways to increase her confidence. Part of Bonnie's interest in counselling was to pass on to children ways they could build their confidence, so they could more self-assured than she had been at their age.

Another part of Bonnie's interest in these groups came from how they helped her to build her own confidence. One way the groups contributed was through good feelings they generated, she liked feeling useful and having things she could pass on to the children. Another way these groups helped increase her confidence came from the new insights she gained when she observed the group process. One of the

important insights she was still struggling with, was her emerging recognition of the many untapped resources existing within each individual and of course, within herself:

It's ... kind of nebulous ... exactly what that is, but it's kind of resources that we have within ourselves that we aren't always aware of, that we can bring to looking at the world from different points of view, for instance ... having a unique way of looking at the world that can help you to see things clearly.

Although Bonnie's grasp of the insight was somewhat nebulous, she was beginning to get a stronger sense of the strength that lay in her own (and others') unique view of the world. She was also starting to recognize internal resources that might otherwise be obscured or overlooked in the group perspective. Just as Bonnie had realized when she arrived at high school, no one was a "second class" citizen and like the special student, we all have valuable strengths we can access.

Self-defining memories: Summary

A number of consistent themes ran throughout Bonnie's SDMs (see Table 11). The themes she spoke the most about, and were most consistently represented across SDMs were: the theme of warmth/closeness (vs. alone and judged); and the theme of growth/fulfillment, realizing potential. In addition, the following themes, although not discussed as extensively, were represented across a majority of Bonnie's SDMs: being nurturing and supportive; being independent, and having self-set goals; leading and guiding from behind the scenes; orchestrating things or teaching others; and supporting the underdog, the belief that everybody is worthy. These were relatively stable and enduring themes represented across Bonnie's SDMs and across time.

A few themes, however, were less evenly represented across time. For example, Bonnie's yearning to get a perspective on herself, and/or groups, briefly emerged at Time 2, and then was further elaborated at Time 3. It appears that as Bonnie continued onwards in the program, trying to work through and process her issues, she developed an interest in stepping outside of her own personal perspective, she wanted to see things from an external vantage point. Another theme which was more elaborated at Time 3 was that of collaboration and cooperation in groups. This theme had been very briefly mentioned in Bonnie's stage managing SDM at Time 1, and was later, at Time 3, much more extensively developed.

Although Bonnie mentioned the theme of growth/fulfillment, the realization of potential, in the SDMs of all three time periods, there was a shift at Time 3. At Time 3, as Bonnie was speaking more fully about the importance of collaboration and cooperation in groups, she began to say less to say about growth and fulfillment per se. Once Bonnie had an insight into how much she valued helping others learn how to make creative connections through cooperative activities, she spoke less of the general goal of self-fulfillment. Instead, she began to speak more specifically of the goals she perceived to be self-

fulfilling, like collaboration, making creative connections, integrating and applying learning to the real world. This theme of creative connections and the application/integration of knowledge emerged clearly only during the final interview, after Bonnie had her insight about how teaching and counselling were connected for her. Another theme that emerged most clearly following this insight, was Bonnie's awareness of a link between her fascination with helping others learn to creatively work in cooperative groups, and her own desire to unravel more about the group process.

Bonnie's SDM of her first school experience at age 15, was extremely significant because it provided us with insight into many of her goals. This SDM also gave us a greater understanding of the themes which emerged, or were repeated, in her other SDMs. In that memory she shared her struggle adapt to the cliquey, unfamiliar environment of the high school, and to understand the implicit rules of group dynamics. Through that SDM we began to see why warmth, closeness and acceptance were so important to her. After so many years alone, with no peers outside her family to play, interact, or form friendships with, she had hoped to finally make the interpersonal connections previously unavailable to her. Instead, she had met with the judgments of snotty and catty teenage girls. She learned that in the socially stratified environment of the high school, students were divided into top dogs and second class citizens. Bonnie resisted the predominant way of labeling students, and instead, worked with students whose strengths had not been recognized (a.k.a. the underdogs), to help them realize more of their academic potential. In the process of helping these students she began get to know these students better, to form friendships, and to create more of the interpersonal warmth and closeness she had been seeking. In addition, she got validation of her own worth, and that of the other students. Bonnie's benefits from this type of helping were, as they would be at other times, many-fold: she had the satisfaction of seeing others grow, and become more self-fulfilled; she, herself, grew more self confident; she learned more about group processes; and lastly, it gave her the opportunity to form the personal connections she wanted.

Bonnie's early years of independent learning had given her a strong sense of internal control and a preference for self-set goals. She placed considerable emphasis on her own growth and development, and consistently searched for ways to better understand: herself, her values, why she was counselling, and her goals. This preference for independence and self-set goals was also reflected in importance she placed on honouring the choices and pace of those she helped. Bonnie also had a strong belief in each person's worth, and had personally experienced what it was like not to be one of the "in" crowd. She was alert for individuals whose potential had been overlooked (e.g., the special student), or who had not been given the opportunity to stretch and grow in the ways they could. Bonnie sought out, and created opportunities to work with others in ways that would help them to discover new aspects of themselves and to try out new things (e.g., stage managing), and to make creative connections they could apply to the world (e.g., creative connections group).

Throughout the memories she shared, Bonnie chose to assume a quiet leadership helping others. Even at her shyest, when she began high school, she still chose to initiate study groups, but did it by "leading from behind." Later on, when she was teaching and stage managing, she still preferred the back seat or to be back stage helping, rather than being the one on stage herself. Bonnie was reluctant to draw attention to herself in groups and preferred to be an observer of the group process, learning more about how their functioning. At the same time however, Bonnie had creative ideas, strong organizational skills, and leadership abilities that others quickly recognized. Bonnie's lack of confidence in her grasp of group dynamics had prevented her, until relatively recently, to realize how much others respected her. Bonnie's experiences in the graduate program were helping her to start get the sense she not only belonged in groups, but actually strengthened them. The very strengths and potential she was so quick to perceive in others were much more difficult for her to see in herself.

Summary

Pre-program: Preparing.

Bonnie came into the counselling program having made many preparations for the transition prior to even applying to graduate school. The graduate program in counselling had been a long sought goal, one she carefully prepared both her family and herself for. The energy and focus she brought to this transition were available because of the many preparations she had made. Before Bonnie started the program, she had spent a lot of time planning ahead, trying to anticipate difficulties she might encounter. Although she had been able to anticipate many of the demanding changes she would need to adapt to when she started graduate school, she had not anticipated the impact of her losses (e.g., as a mother, daughter, teacher, wage-earner). The bulk of her preparations had been for what she thought might lie ahead rather than on the impact of what she would be leaving behind.

Program entry: Drowning.

When Bonnie actually arrived in the program, the number of transitions she faced was overwhelming. She felt like she was drowning in all the changes she faced. Admission to the program had necessitated a move from a small northern remote town to a much larger and unfamiliar city. It was also her first full-time academic experience in a university setting. The transitions she experienced varied from huge role changes (teacher to student, parent to alone, breadwinner to unemployed) to the ever-present daily hassles of being in an totally unfamiliar environment (e.g., getting lost; not knowing where to park or shop; figuring out new implicit rules; preparing new types of assignments using different resources, etc.). For Bonnie, who was used to being independent, competent and self-sufficient, these transitions brought about feelings of insecurity and doubts about her abilities. Her sense of competence and confidence both plummeted and she struggled with her worth as a graduate student. This brought

about some unaccustomed changes for Bonnie. For example, with her first practice client, she found herself initially feeling much more in need of, and dependent on, the professor's feedback and guidance (external locus of control) than she was comfortable with. She also found herself being much more anxious and inflexible in the counselling role than she was comfortable being.

For Bonnie, there was an additional difficulty in this transition; its uncanny similarity to her first experience in a school setting at the age of sixteen. The similarities between the two experiences caused old issues associated with membership and belonging to re-emerge for Bonnie as she struggled with the uncertainties of a new social environment, its implicit rules and expectations, and how to fit in. In graduate school, as in high school, Bonnie responded by using very active methods to adapt to the situation. Early in both situations she responded by taking quiet, behind the scenes leadership role, helping to form study groups and reaching out to make contact with classmates.

The groups Bonnie had helped to form served several useful purposes: this closer contact with her peers helped her to see her fears and uncertainties were shared by her classmates; she was able to feel useful and able to help others; and she, too, was helped by the study groups. In both situations she also used her people watching skills to observe and learn the implicit rules in the new social environment. In graduate school, however, Bonnie also began to use her people-watching skills to learn how others were able to access resources and to obtain support. Initially, her strong independence and self-reliance had caused her to assume that she would have to be similarly independent and self-sufficient in graduate school. Gradually, as she observed other graduate students, she began to question this assumption, and to begin to access support for herself from various resources.

Bonnie's strengths of self-reliance and independence were, at least initially, strengths that may have been overdone, that led her to being unnecessarily isolated from resources in the program when help was available from professors, librarians and other students. She was, however, quick to learn from the model of her peers, she began to try new behaviors, accessing much needed supports at a time when she was so overwhelmed. Even in this time of extreme transition, Bonnie initiated informal study groups, demonstrating both leadership and problem solving. At the same time, she was also busy organizing and anticipating, trying to marshal her own resources for the future. For example, she was trying to plan how she could learn the library system and to use computers, to prepare for the papers and course demands she knew lay ahead. Even when Bonnie was clearly feeling overwhelmed by the changes around her, she was still aware of, and busy planning for, anticipated future needs.

It is difficult to know if, perhaps, Bonnie's ability to organize and anticipate may also have been, at the start of the program, strengths that were somewhat overdone; did they overload her when she was already over-extended? It is possible she may have been able to buy herself a little emotional energy for the demands of the present (finding her way in the city, meeting classmates and professors, etc.) if she had been, temporarily, less focused on the preparing herself for future demands. On the other hand, although the cost of this anticipation and planning were high at a time when she was feeling overloaded;

in the long run did it provide her with a much needed sense of control and confidence in her abilities to handle future challenges?

End of pre-practicum: Settling in.

By the time Bonnie had reached the end of pre-practicum, she was feeling much more comfortable in both the academic environment and the city of Victoria. This was a time she identified as settling in. It was a time of increased confidence, independence and flexibility. Bonnie was starting to believe in her skills and to experiment with developing her own personal style with clients. She no longer felt a desperate need to get immediate guidance and feedback from her professor when she worked with practice clients in her pre-practicum. Bonnie was eager to try things out on her own, to arrive at some of her own insights, and to experiment with the counsellor role. She found herself more flexible with clients, and able to let the clients be more self-directive; a style more consistent with her previous teaching style than the more directive role she had adopted at the beginning of the semester.

As Bonnie became more self-confident and less anxious about her performance as a counsellor, her focus became much less task-oriented. She began to struggle with questions about the counselling process rather than focusing on particular counselling skills, as she had been earlier in the semester. Instead, she began to think more about the process of counselling and the choices she was making. The question of balance and boundaries, were particularly important to her, and she was struggling with her desire to be warm and supportive of the client, while also remaining on task. She was also grappling with how to have enough energy left for herself while giving as much as she wanted to clients.

Bonnie's skills of being able to anticipate and organize were still very much in evidence at the end of her pre-practicum. Her focus, however, had moved from a particular and concrete problem-solving approach, to one that was more self-reflective, searching for ways to get what she wanted from her counsellor training.

Bonnie was stimulated by the wide variety of backgrounds her classmates came from. She was energized and excited by being able to connect with people who wanted to look outside their lives and who were open to new perspectives. Bonnie found this variety to be more fulfilling than the narrower scope afforded by many of her previous colleagues. She also found the richness of this broader perspective helpful in her process of self-examination.

Bonnie had begun to more closely examine her personal needs and what she might choose to do differently in the next semester. She anticipated that the Christmas break would provide an even richer opportunity for self-examination, and hoped it would help provide her with greater insight into how she could approach the upcoming semester with more balance.

End of practicum: Surfacing.

Bonnie's hopes for greater balance in the next semester were born out. At the end of her practicum, looking back at the semester she had just experienced, Bonnie not only perceived it to be a time of more balance, but also a time of surfacing. No longer did she feel as if she were drowning in a sea of overwhelming transitions; instead there was time for reflection and integration. Bonnie became more aware of, and more firmly grounded in, her core beliefs. Her experimentation with her counsellor role, begun at the end of the previous semester, had begun to evolve into a meshing of her personal and counsellor identities.

Bonnie also perceived connections she previously had been unaware of. She was relieved to find connections between the group work she was doing as a counsellor and her previous work as a teacher. Her discovery that both types of work involved helping others to see creative connections, and to begin applying them in their lives, was an immense relief. Bonnie had missed the creative group work she facilitated as a teacher, and she had valued helping students to integrate these insights into their lives. With Bonnie's own insight into the connection between counselling and teaching, she was able to see how both were connected to her values and beliefs, and that she did not have to give up on something she valued to be a counsellor. This helped her to approach counselling with a new enthusiasm and energy, less conflicted than she had been when she was grieving over the loss of that aspect of her teaching role.

Another connection Bonnie was starting to make was the link between theory and practice. Although she had previously been a diligent student, she had been dubious of the applicability of some of the theory she had been learning. Much of the theory related to adults, whereas she had anticipated she'd be working with children. As Bonnie proceeded in her practicum, and she spent time going over her notes and texts, she began to see how the theory was relevant for children as well as adults (e.g., the principles of general group dynamics). She still had doubts and uncertainties about her own role in group dynamics with peers (a legacy from her late start in school), but as she became more experienced in this area, she was gradually acquiring more confidence. It is interesting that the very area Bonnie has been most challenged by has also been the one she has gravitated the most attracted to, and the one that has, so far, been the most rewarding for her.

Bonnie was also feeling more secure in her identity as a graduate student and as a counsellor. One of the ways she accomplished this was by differentiating between situational difficulties and those caused by personal inadequacies. Bonnie no longer automatically assumed responsibility for the difficulties she encountered. She was beginning to see that many of the difficulties she encountered were common to other students and counsellors, and to evaluate herself in the context of the situation. Another way Bonnie had begun to feel more secure was through the comparisons she was making. At the start of the program, when she was most uncertain about her competence and abilities, she had compared herself to

professors, or more experienced counsellors and students (upwards comparisons). In contrast, by the end of the practicum Bonnie was comparing herself to peers with similar levels of experience (lateral comparisons), and was able to see that even experienced counsellors don't always "get it right the first time." Bonnie was using her people watching skills to compare herself to more realistic, rather than idealized, role models. In addition, she had also begun to compare her current progress training as a counsellor, to her previous, slower, progress training as a teacher (downwards comparisons). Bonnie felt encouraged, and much more confident in her abilities, when she examined her progress as a counsellor in the context of her previous teacher training, and used less idealized or experienced counsellors to compare herself to.

As Bonnie became more confident in her abilities and more familiar with the academic environment, she also began to think differently about her academic experience. Previously, she had assumed the conditions set out by professors and the department were fixed, and unchangeable, and that any changes that were to be made would have to be within herself. As she observed other students, and developed more confidence, she began to see other alternatives. By the end of her practicum, she was beginning to entertain ideas about how she might take more responsibility for structuring a different academic experience, one more in keeping with her personal goals. Bonnie was thinking of ways she could actively negotiate with her professors for directed studies or counselling experiences that would more closely match her personal goals, whereas previously she had difficulty being that assertive with professors. She was also starting to think of ways she could stretch herself further, rather than continuing to build in previously strong areas. For example, Bonnie was contemplating taking on the challenge of a practicum where she would be counselling adults.

Bonnie was not, however, only examining how she could restructure external conditions, but also her own internal patterns of choice. Throughout all phases of this transition it is clear Bonnie preferred to take personal responsibility for her experiences, but the nature of this responsibility shifted. At the start of her graduate training she had focused on particular tasks she could undertake to prepare herself for the transitions she anticipated (e.g., learning the library system, how to operate computers, etc.). By the end of her practicum, however, her focus had shifted, and she was beginning to more closely examine how her personal issues and choices were influencing her experiences. One issue she identified as potentially getting in the way of her progress, was her strong sense of independence. Bonnie had begun to see the cost of too much independence, and how it could cause her to overlook important supports available to her in her personal and professional growth. Another issue she had begun to examine was her chronic lack of time. Bonnie was coming to realize her shortage of time might be linked to more than just the amount of academic work expected of her. She was beginning to see a link between her own high expectations and drive, and her lack of time. In addition, she was beginning to realize how some of her own triggers, like self-criticism, and expecting a lot of herself, had added to her lack of confidence, and an over-reliance on external feedback at the start of her training.

Overall, as Bonnie was able to step back and reflect more on her experience, she was able to integrate more aspects of herself into her counsellor training and to have more confidence in her counselling skills. She moved from a focus that was more microscopic and task-oriented, to one that was more macroscopic and process-oriented. With this change in focus came a greater self-awareness and a stronger link to her values and goals. Throughout her training she demonstrated a strong preference for independence and looked for ways to take personal responsibility for changing her situation. As she neared the end of her practicum, however, she began to look at ways to modify these strengths so that she could also access support from others and to examine the context of her situation. She no longer assumed that her only response to difficult experiences was to change herself, she also began to look for ways to actively modify her environment so it would be a better fit for her. As Bonnie progressed through the program she also changed the context she used to evaluate herself. She moved from comparing herself with more experienced and idealized counsellors, to more realistic comparisons with peers, and experience her training as a teacher. Lastly, Bonnie began to develop a greater insight into how her personal issues influenced the choices she had been making, and the different choices she might make in the future.

Bonnie had used an analogy to describe her experience in the graduate program, likening it to the feeling of being under water, drowning, not sure if she could make it, and then later managing to surface. Bonnie was not only able to surface, but also to orient herself more strongly in a direction consistent with her values and beliefs. She was looking forward to striking out on the next part of her counsellor journey with more energy, enthusiasm, and a greater insight into herself.

Case Study: Ann

Transitions

Pre-Time 1.

Ann's journey to become a counsellor started many years ago:

I was very interested in people, and my friends talked to me ... and I liked to listen, I was quite absorbed, and so when I was sixteen, I thought maybe I'd become a psychologist but, was really afraid that one of my clients would attempt to commit suicide, and that I wouldn't be able to handle it. I really didn't know if I was able to separate myself, when I was sixteen, so I didn't go into it, I went into education instead. But in education I was very aware that there was more to the student than Shakespeare, that I was delivering in class, I always was aware of the complete person, and it was a real struggle for me to teach when I knew that there was other aspects in their life that were very real. And I graduated ... and it was really difficult to get employment. I was \$30,000 in debt, and so really needed to get to work. And so I went anywhere, and at that time I had a baby, two years old and a husband and so we went to the reserves to teach.

Although at the age of sixteen Ann had been interested in becoming a psychologist, her fear that she wouldn't be able to handle a client who tried to commit suicide had kept her from pursuing that goal. She chose to teach instead. Ann's awareness of the "complete person" rather than just the academic aspects of education had caused her to struggle with her role as a teacher, and her beliefs about students' needs. To her surprise, she soon learned teaching was not safe, either, from suicides and other traumas:

it became very apparent to me that teaching them English ... that wasn't where it was at, in this particular community, it was an isolated community, 98% were alcoholics and in my homeroom class I saw the young girls get raped, and then come [to school], well I didn't see that, but I knew that they did ... and it was happening all around me, and I wasn't able to address it, I wasn't supposed to, in fact the elders wanted me to teach [the provincial] curriculum. I wasn't supposed to, and I couldn't [address it] and so I think that probably I was ... maybe shock's a strong word, but in extreme distress the whole time. Really questioning the model of education, I looked for alternative methods. So that's when I learned about experiential teaching and group work ... and really became enthralled in that, and that reinforced the people type skills that I liked when I was sixteen, but it was in an educational model. But still, a couple of my students attempted suicide, and so that question came up in me again ... what I learned about myself, is that I could separate myself ... over time. Well, when I was on the reserve it was hard, because I was living there with the people. That was difficult. But over time I learned that I can separate myself, and that was the big barrier, could I separate myself? And I just kinda put counselling on the back burner, because I was really absorbed with my life.

Even though Ann was "in extreme distress" while she was on the reserve teaching, she was gradually, over time, able learn how to separate herself from some of the emotional pain surrounding her. Meanwhile, she actively sought ways to use experiential techniques and group work to legitimately introduce the life skills she valued, while still adhering to the curriculum of the province.

Through her experience on the reserve (and other experiences which will be further discussed in the SDM section), Ann found she could, albeit with some difficulty, handle the emotional impact of suicides. A necessary first step towards counselling had been to unequivocally prove to herself that her concern for clients would not intrude into her personal life:

I'll take it home to some degree, but that I wouldn't take it home to the degree that it would effect me, in my personal life, in mental health. I really needed to know that... some things will happen, but I know inside myself, that I can separate it ... I do my absolute best when in the classroom, and if they choose to drop out, if they choose to attempt suicide ... it's okay with me, in the sense that I've done what I can do, and that's it. I'm very clear on when my responsibility stops. And I needed to know that, and I needed that to be reinforced for years before I could ever think of doing this.

Thus, an essential pre-requisite to consider counselling as a career choice, had been to demonstrate, over the course of years, that she could reliably recognize where her responsibility for another person ended. In addition, Ann had begun to gradually feel more confident about her ability to function in a crisis.

By the time Ann had begun to realize she could, indeed, set reasonable limits on the responsibility she took for others, and had the skills and confidence to deal with crises, she was "absorbed" in her own life. For the next while marriage, teaching and raising children occupied her time and attention.

Ann left her job teaching on a reserve, and eventually ended up teaching at an academic institution where she would be eligible for an educational leave. She confided to a counsellor in the community (who knew nothing about her aspirations) that she was thinking of applying for an educational leave:

out of the blue he asked me if I ever considered counselling ... he said he could see me in that role, and thought that I could be effective. And I think ... that was probably when I decided that, yes, I would pursue it, because up until then, I always seemed to focus on what I was weak at, and I thought it was a cop out to go with my strength ... so after talking to him I thought I would do a shift then, and work on my strength, and work on the very thing that followed me for years.

After Ann received this feedback, she proceeded to systematically interview the seven M.Eds. in her town, to get their perspective. Each time she spoke with a counsellor, she found her goals were reinforced. For some unknown reason she had believed it a "cop out" to train in an area of strength. The initial encounter with the counsellor and the subsequent repeated interviews with other counsellors allowed her to shift her perspective to the point where she could see herself as a potential counsellor. Although Ann had been gradually been gaining confidence in her skills and ability to help people over the years, there had been a gap between that growth and actually being able to perceive herself as a counsellor. Ann needed the combination of her experience as a helper and the repeated validation of others to get to the point where she could finally believe it was time to pursue her long cherished goal of counselling.

Ann's sense of worth was strongly linked to a career that could provide her with the opportunity to honour her value of helping others:

my fundamental value is working to better people, to invest in people ... I get my self-worth from contributing to people, and I have self-respect from that as well. But if I'm going to do anything in this world, it will be to contribute to people.

Ann believed she had already contributed to the welfare of others and made a difference through the groups she had run as a teacher, but she was ready to take on the further challenge of helping through a counselling role.

Time 1.

Ann was concerned about the large number of transitions she would face when she moved down to Victoria from the north. For that reason, she chose to arrive in Victoria early, and enroll in a summer class:

I think the amount of ease I can shift with my location, affects my performance in the classroom, in fact that's why I went to summer school. *To come to terms with the many, many changes.* When I first came to Victoria, I was aware of the sirens, I was aware of, Victoria's small, people tell me, **and they say its slow!** (with emphasis) Well I was aware of how fast people drove! and the noise! and I was surprised how much I was aware, but I was aware of that! So I came here about 5 weeks before my classes started, because I needed time to get used to the location. I needed to know a little bit about where the university was in relation to the rest of things in Victoria, *I needed to get settled ...* I also needed to take a summer course, *to show myself that I could do it, that academically I could perform,* because really *I didn't know if I could or not, I had no tangible proof.* So that's why I took a summer course, if I hadn't done all that... I don't think I would be as open and ready to learn in my classes, because my energy would be still going into "I don't know where the food store is." That kind of thing. So I'm *able to focus* in the classroom, *very, very intensely,* because I don't have to worry about how my children are looked after, because *we had already set that in place,* and we tried it out for 5 weeks, and it was okay. We had a, *it was a test run,* and things went okay, so I could really, really focus, and now I can make the transition into the program, and put a lot of energy into that, as opposed to making those other transitions.

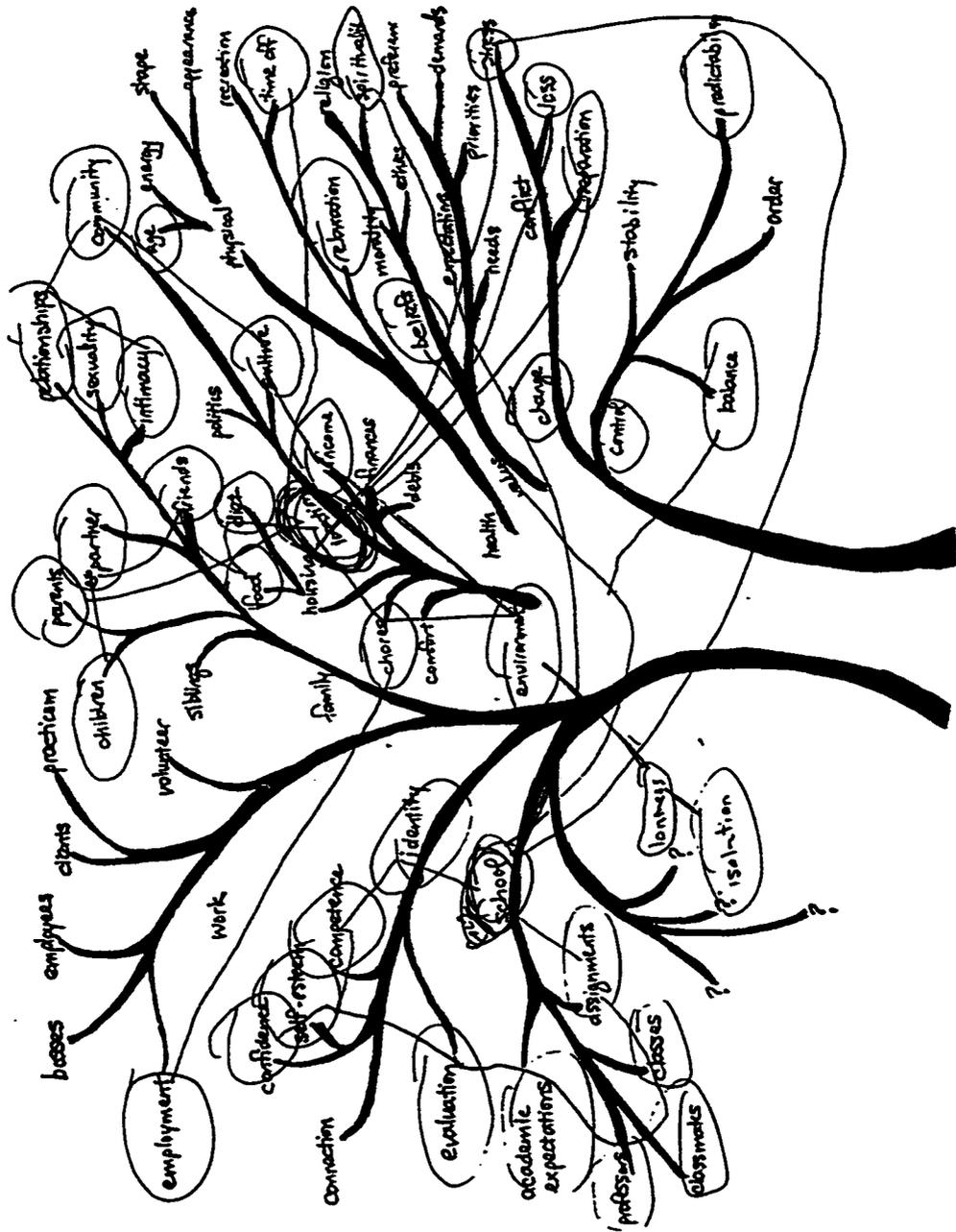
Ann's decision to come to Victoria before her program began in the fall had allowed her to approach the transition in stages. She was able to adapt to the city of Victoria and to learn to locate things at, and in relation to, the university. In addition, tried a summer course, to get "tangible proof" that she could, indeed, perform at the graduate level. Lastly, Ann was able to let go of many of her worries about her children and how they were being looked after. She was not completely reassured however, because a call from home had the power to immediately pull her back into concern about them:

occasionally I'll get a call from home that's *quite upsetting,* and it *immediately pulls me out of my head space, of school, and I'm sucked back into the energy of (my hometown)* even though I'm down here, I'm very much up there. So that's happened, well that's happened once, very much so, *very heavy, hard time focusing, hard time making through the day,* so I know they're connected.

Ann's continuing concerns about her school-aged children made it stressful for her to be apart from them, and brought up strong feelings of separation and loss.

Even though Ann had tried to minimize the impact of the transition by approaching it in stages, she was still "really frightened" when she began the program in the fall. When she was asked at Time 1 how much she was in transition (see Appendix O and Figure 8), she responded:

Figure 8. Ann: Transition Tree at Time 1



Oh heavens! *A helluva lot!* (very loud) *A heck of a lot!!* So much! oh,! ... I was *really frightened*, because I didn't know where my skills were at, I knew that I would be unwise, etc. But *even though I intellectually knew that, I couldn't seem to prepare myself*, so the first the um, the first tape that I made, that whole *energy level of being watched*, and now um.. *I don't have time for my anxiety, or maybe I'm just in a constant state of anxiety and don't know it!* (laugh). Um, I'm being, I'm being *challenged*, it feels like *at all fronts*, you know the intellectual, my own personal insecurities ... that there's so much change happening, *so fast* ... it seems like *I've lost that old familiar self*, even though I know it's there. Prior to coming here, there was so much change in my life, so quick, that my old little securities were taken away from me ... so my core is still there, but all this other stuff is so new to me, that ... *sometimes I find myself saying it's happening too quick, too fast, I'm overwhelmed.*

Ann tried to minimize the difficulty of her transition to graduate school by approaching the changes in stages, but she still found herself at times feeling frightened or overwhelmed. She was so challenged, in such a variety of areas, that she was uncertain whether she was feeling constantly anxious or constantly energized. It is possible that her skills and confidence were so challenged that she was right on the edge between perceiving the experience as a potential threat (something she couldn't cope with) and perceiving it as a challenge (something she could cope with).

Although Ann felt overwhelmed by the speed and amount of change she experienced, she was also careful to identify core values which she believed would remain constant:

it seems like ... this is my core here, *the part of me that I know won't change, unless something terrible happens* ... so I have a real strong core of what I don't think would change. And then I have *all this other stuff, that is kind of floating*, and all that other stuff is being challenged, and changed.

Ann believed there was a "little corner inside me, who's always Ann," and this was reassuring to her during a time of so much change. In the same interview, however, she qualified this statement "but it [my core] probably will change, I'm not naive in thinking that the other stuff won't change it, but it'll be congruent with what I'm already like, in existence. There'd just be more of it." Clearly, Ann's experience in the program was causing her to question and challenge her perceptions of herself; previously stable aspects felt like they were "floating." She was encouraged by the belief that even if core aspects of her changed, they would remain "congruent" with who she knew herself to be.

When Ann was asked to rate how much she felt in transition, she replied:

a large part of me is very solid, I think, that I'm not wanting to change. I would say probably, if I were to reframe that question, *there's part of me that I won't allow myself to change*, so I'm not going to take into consideration that, but *the part of me that I will allow myself to change* so the part that is open to change ... I'd say *about a 9*. But if I take into *consideration the part that's not going to change*, and I won't allow to change, um *maybe 5.5*, so that other part between 5.5 and 10, is that very solid part that I won't allow to change, because I really like it.

Ann's belief in a core part of her that would remain solid, and unchanged in essence, amidst the transitions she was experiencing reassured her. It also allowed her to believe she had control of something she valued, the part of herself that she would not allow to change when so much of her life was in flux.

For the most part Ann welcomed the challenges to her self-perceptions that the counselling program brought. She saw the process as "fun, because there's so much energy there, it's like I'm on the cutting edge of myself." Ann was becoming more aware of herself through the work she was doing, and previously opaque areas were becoming more transparent. She characterized this experience as being "like I'm a plastic bag, a bread bag, so that there's painting and stuff, so that everything isn't exposed, because that wouldn't be appropriate." Although Ann valued the insights and connections she was making about herself, she was far from comfortable with the pace of these changes:

I see this program as being, like I'm on the table ... *it's always connected to a part of me ... this theory is connected. I mean, there's something I identify with*, and so I would be listening to a lecture, and then *I'd get a throwback to one of my children*, or some sort of incident ... *I'm always making connections, and moving, and I'm not still. And I don't have time to be still, because I have to move again*, I have to make another tape, and I haven't quite gotten over the last tape yet, but no, you know, so it's like (sounding like a rhythmic machine) *bang bang bang bang bang bang bang bang bang--bang bang bang!*

K: So it just sounds like virtually everything, except that little core part of you, that you don't want to change, and you hope never will change, everything else feels like it's kinda up for grabs.

Yes! yeah!

K: It's good change, but many changes.

So what happens to me is, *I'm okay with it, and then I start to freak out*, but not really, but *in mind I do*, (loudly, in a high pseudo panicked voice) "*oh no! It's too much! It's too quick! It's too fast*" (normal voice) and I go through that for, oh I don't know, not very long at all. Um, maybe *half an hour or something like that, and then I get right back into it*.

At times Ann would become so overwhelmed by the rapidity of the changes that she would "freak out," and then return shortly later to focus on the tasks at hand. The speed and magnitude of Ann's changes kept her on the edge of feeling overwhelmed much of the time.

The impact of Ann's transitions became even more evident when she spoke about their impact on her goal of becoming a counsellor:

when I'm working with people, and they're in transition, I will have a better understanding of what it's like when someone's *life is turned upside down ... I'll know what it's like to be in shock*, or know, *when change is happening so fast, and you can't control it, and how do you cope with it any way?* If things are so *chaotic, what can you grab on to? and hold on to and be stable?* I have a personal experience with that. I could go through these stages of grief, for instance, but I know *what it's like to grieve*, and I know what it's like to be *lonely*, and what it's like to be *in isolation*, that's all to do with transition ... I have experienced *pain*, I have experienced *loss*... and I've had *children*, and have experienced *being separated from them*. So sometimes I think I'm [mid-thirties] and *it's okay if I die now, I've experienced life enough!* (laugh)

Ann appears to have been almost saturated with change. Her life was "turned upside down," and she had "lost her old familiar self" and its securities. She felt in chaos, searching for control and something she could grab on to that was reassuringly familiar and stable. In addition, she was lonely and

experiencing the loss and grief of being separated from her children and community. Her emotional response was one of shock. Although she jokingly remarked she could die now because she had experienced life enough, it was perhaps, also a warning she was close to her overload point.

Ann was facing many transitions that were stretching her to her limits. One of the transitions was the move from the north where her children, ex-partner, parents, environment, culture, community, and relationships had been. There were also significant role changes. She was now single, isolated (for the year of her program) from her children and, and a student, herself, rather than a full time teacher.

Ann found the transition from teacher to student to be unexpectedly challenging to her sense of self-esteem and confidence:

there's that whole other theme of what it's like to be in school, *to be evaluated*, and all the assignments, and classes and professors ... *My performance is somewhat connected to my self-esteem*, even though it's (half laugh) *connected more than I would like it to be*, and *that's connected to my confidence*, my competence. *In the north I had a different way to measure my competence*, which affects my identity around school [Before] I was asking my students to do it, you see it's an entirely different shift. I was *making sure the environment was stimulating for them, as opposed to being stimulated* *it's a real flip*.

Ann underestimated how much her self-esteem would change when she shifted from the teacher to student role. The ways she gauged her competence shifted with her role change, and she was uncomfortable with the way she was letting her self-confidence be determined by her performance in class. Ann had anticipated the difficulty she would have with separation and loss issues and had taken steps to try to minimize their effect in her life. She had not, however, anticipated how much her self-esteem would be challenged by her switch to a student role.

Ann's work schedule had also changed from when she was in the north: "it's incredibly different ... I don't have coffee breaks and that kind of thing anymore." Even though Ann stated she didn't "have time to be still," she still found she was far more able to focus on her spirituality than she had been at home, where she had "kind of put it on the back burner." Shortly after she entered the program, her thoughts about death underwent a significant change. Previously, her fears about death and her concerns about how she would handle suicidal clients had kept her from counselling work. At the start of her program however, she met people who had worked with terminally ill clients, and this had dramatically altered her perceptions. To Ann's surprise, she found herself attracted to the idea of working with people who were dying:

22 days ago ... I thought that ... where I could get myself work, would be working with people who were living ... when I came here, the people who work with the dying, at first my response was (choking noise) "aaaahhhh." I never thought of that, why didn't I think about that? ... and now I seem to be *seeking out people who work in this area*, and am *really intrigued* ... really shifted, these people have made a *tremendous impact* on me! And I think now ... that it would be very *gratifying for me to actually work with people who are terminally ill*, because it's one thing to impact on the living, but for me, there's nothing, like *if I wanted to contribute to humanity and people, there's nothing more primal that I can contribute*, than to people who are dying in their life *if I had a*

choice of where would you like to make the impact, it would be at the end of someone's life, because it's so basic and knowing when I was sixteen, I identified death as a barrier.

In the past, Ann had perceived death to be a barrier, something to avoid in her work with people. Very shortly after her arrival in the program, her perceptions had shifted to the point where she believed work with the dying could be "gratifying," the most primal way she could contribute to humanity. Ann was quite astonished to find herself being drawn towards this kind of work: "all of a sudden, I seem to know these people who are in this area, and I'm seeking it out, I'm making that reality happen for me, and there must be a reason." When queried, she was "not quite ready to say" that working with dying was a goal, but she was looking at this possibility:

when I look back at ... *what brought me here, what kept me from here is could I deal with it [death]? Could I separate problems from work to, or any problems with death seemed to be a barrier for me. So I see it as a theme, so I'm surprised, very, very surprised.*

K: It seems like you're choosing to go through it, rather than around it all the time..

Yes, yes, and even though I don't really sit down, and plan how I'm going to talk to people who work in this area, I'm doing it.

Ann was surprised by this change within herself; to discover that at some level she was actually seeking out what she had previously feared. Even though she chose to wait until she was certain she could handle suicidal clients before applying to the counselling program, she had not been aware of her readiness to approach death from such a totally different perspective. Ann had grown and changed far more than she had realized over the years. The size of that change became visible to her when she found herself drawn towards what she had previously most feared.

Ann's confidence in her ability to handle the transitions associated with the program fluctuated with the kinds of assignments she was working on. Initially, her greatest anxiety had been about making counselling tapes for her pre-practicum course, but this had begun to change:

[it's] not predictable to me anymore, so there's parts of me that I don't know how I'll respond. So what happened is, we were talking about one thing [in a counselling session], and another thing, all with that theme ... an each time we went to another theme, it got deeper and deeper ... this was not planned, the person was going, and it was very real, and I could have backed out, and got intimidated, like I did with the first tape. I was going in and out, in and out, you know, my fear, and then being with the person, my fear, but instead, I was totally absorbed! It was so exciting for me, and later I realized, I wasn't in doubt at all. I was in the whole time. So even that's unpredictable for me. So I guess I'm not able to predict how I'm going to react, as successfully as I used to be able to. I'm not sure if I need to predict anymore, so it's like there's a part of me that has been so anxious, so worked up, I just don't have the energy for it anymore.

K: Kind of giving up on some of that anxiety, (Yeah) almost tired of the anxiety, and you're letting go of (yeah) it.

Yeah, that's right. So here we go, another assignment, my gosh, *I don't know if I can do it, but I'm doing it anyways.*

It is difficult to know if Ann had become saturated with anxiety and didn't have room to feel any more stressed by the experiences she was undergoing, or whether perhaps she had become resigned to the situation, and chose to cope with it by just going through to the other side. Ann may also have been gradually developing more self-confidence, learning to trust her ability to be with a client, and becoming less afraid of fear itself. She was not sure how she managed it, but she was beginning to feel less anxious and fearful when she worked with practice clients. She was able to focus more on the task of listening to the client, and to be less preoccupied by her fears about her performance.

When Ann was asked to identify what was helping her move towards her goal of becoming a counsellor, she identified becoming less fearful of change, and concentrating more on the things she could control:

I don't know the way, where I'll be next year ... and I don't like that. And I'm learning to say "that's okay, that's reality" ... I guess it's probably part of the fear of change, not knowing the end. And if I did know the end, I probably wouldn't even like it anyways ... so I think that could come into my role as a counsellor, that this is what I can control here, and I'll concentrate on that.

Ann was learning to live with the unpredictability of change and to be less invested in trying to control things she had little control of. There is an element of pessimism in her statement that she probably wouldn't like or want to know "the end," but she did not let this overwhelm her. Instead, Ann was trying to concentrate on the things she could control. Ann was starting to trust herself more, learning to let go of her need for predictability, and taking the risks that would allow her to grow in new and surprising directions:

instead of fighting, I'm accepting where I'm going, and instead of saying "I always have to know how I'm going to respond," I'm accepting that sometimes I'm surprising myself, and that's what I'm here for, I'm here to experiment and to grow.

Ann also found the support system she built up for herself when she came to Victoria was very helpful. When she arrived, she made the "calculated" decision to have really "positive, growth-enhancing people" in her life. She chose to hook up with a person she had a relationship with over the summer and to connect to the "positive people" in his "community of support." Ann's choice to seek out these positive people brought some significant supports into her life "some wonderful people, who are very strong in themselves ... healthy and solid individuals who are ... well connected with the community." Ann saw this support network as less "natural" than the usual supports she developed gradually over time. Nevertheless, she did feel "a real sense of support," one greater than she had experienced before. Ann used the opportunity provided by her move to Victoria to establish an even more positive system of support than she previously had in her community.

Although the move from the north may have helped Ann to consciously seek out the types of people she wanted in her life, i.e., positive and growth enhancing, it was not without significant costs in the area of loss and loneliness. Ann struggled to accept these feelings of loneliness, to see them as natural and normal reactions to her situation:

and also *be at peace with my discomfort*, when I first came here *I was quite lonely*, and going on walks and identifying it, saying *"this is what it is, and I'm going to feel it, in order to experience it, and live. Why wouldn't I be lonely? There's no reason why I wouldn't be lonely!"* And so now, *I still get sensations of loneliness, and I don't like it, but it's okay.*

Ann strove to accept her feelings of loneliness, and to recognize that although they were unpleasant, she did not need to get fearful or upset about experiencing them. As we have already seen, Ann not only chose to manage her feelings of loss and loneliness by validating them, she also actively sought out positive people she could connect with and get support from. Ann believed it was not only important to have a strong support system, but also to establish boundaries within those relationships: "another thing that I do, is that I'm able to set boundaries, really strong boundaries, of what I'm able to give, and what I'm not able to give." These boundaries helped her to maintain a balance so that her social network would be a support rather than a drain of her emotional resources during this time of transition.

Although Ann clearly identified her social relationships as helpful during these transitions, she was confused about how to balance school work and relationships. The conflict between her workload and personal life created difficulties for her:

(sigh) *I have a conflict with my workload, and my personal life. I know I can't work everyday, every moment of the day, I know I'm not wasting my time, I know I'm using every moment I have wisely, but I still am not able to get all my work done.* So, and talking to other classmates, who are in other years, I know that you don't have to read every optional article that someone puts down, *part of me wants to say that maybe I'm spending too much time with personal relationships, but I know I'm not,* (quiet) *I don't think.* So I think that there are some support networks that I can see as maybe being temporary, people who are in my life temporarily. *And part of me thinks "well if they're in my life only temporarily, maybe then I shouldn't respond at all, cause they're not going to be in my life for a long time."* *But I don't think that's necessarily what I want to do.* So, I guess *I haven't found the balance of my work load, and my personal life yet,* so (sigh) *part of me wants to say "well my personal life gets in the way, but I don't think it is, I just haven't found that balance yet."*

K: It's kind of juggling between how much to give to each one (yeah) it seems to be what's getting in the way, you go back and forth on that; "well maybe I should be dropping some people, or some connections with people," and then you go back and "but no, I can't work every hour of the day" (yeah) you're kind of flipping back and forth on that?

Yes, that's right, and I know that, *that I really value people, and it's the people that ... sometimes will help me go on.* The relationships, the people that will help me keep things in perspective, *so if I lose them,* (quietly) *I know that this won't work The very thing I think is supplemental, is really essential, and I know that.*

K: Most of the time. Some of the time you flip on the other side and go "oh but I can't get this all done."

That's right (laugh). So I dropped a course, to kind of balance things out, a little bit more. It was really hard for me to do, so that's one thing that helped me in my transition, and I'm okay with that.

Although much of the time Ann perceived her social relationships as helpful, she found she did not have the time to maintain the supports she wanted and get her work done. She reached out to classmates from other years to check out her personal expectations against their experience and found out it wasn't

necessary to read all the optional articles. When she struggled to find more time in her life, her immediate response was to question the amount of time personal relationships took. Even though she stated personal relationships were not taking too much of her time, she immediately qualified that statement with doubts and uncertainties. Ann had to struggle to recognize that the very thing she thought "supplemental" was really "essential" in her life. Despite her initial inclination to question the necessity of personal relationships, when she did reduce her load by dropping a course. The decision to drop the course had been a difficult one, however, and one she made only when she perceived no other option to be available.

Ann's expectations for herself were quite high. Initially she expected herself to read every optional article, it was only with the reassurance of classmates from other years that she began to question that expectation. Similarly, when she spoke about how she used her time, she acknowledged she could not work every moment of the day, and yet she also wanted to use "every moment" she had wisely. When she described her goals and expectations for counsellor training, it was with an almost single-minded intensity of focus. Even though she valued people, it is within the framework of her counsellor training that she assessed the value of social supports and interpersonal relationships; they are what will help her to "go on" or to "keep things in perspective." When she struggled to balance her priorities, she focused first on her workload, then on her interpersonal relationships. Intellectually she recognized the importance of relationships in making things "work" for her, and yet when there was so much work to do, she had to deliberately keep reminding herself how essential they were. As we will see, Ann will continue to struggle with the issue of how to balance her personal life and work load, but it will be with decreasing intensity as she moves through the program.

Time 2.

At the end of her pre-practicum, Ann saw herself as having undergone significant changes since her first interview. She believed herself to be "at a different place:"

I circled less things [on the transition tree] and I'm far more settled with the newness, and what that feels like inside me, which is very different from before this year had started. So, I've accepted it, that feeling inside of me, about so many of the transitions and now it has become, when I wake up tomorrow, this is how I'll feel, and I've identified it, I've experienced it ... Before I think I was, not resisting it, but experiencing it, and looking at it, and saying "oh wow, I've never felt this way before, whoosh this is really new!" It's not new anymore.

...whereas the first time I talked to you, I was (laughs) just so un-uneasy with that newness feeling inside me that I'd never experienced before, and I didn't like it because I didn't know the end, and now I'm very comfortable with it. I still don't like it, it would be nice to know what it would be like, but I've accepted it completely now, and have embraced it and really feel content with it, even though I don't like not knowing all the answers. But I feel a far greater sense of contentment sitting here, and understand what it's like to go through counselling sessions now, when I talked to you before I really didn't know if I was able to do it, what it would be like, I was apprehensive, and now I'm not apprehensive, and even though I think of the practicum, and what that would be like, I know I can do

it, *I know I've got the stuff that it takes to do it, and that it really is going to be okay, so I know that now, it's like I've proven that to myself, so that's fine.*

Ann felt much more able to accept uncertainty, unpredictability and newness than she had at the start of the program. To some extent she had become used to, even "comfortable" with the "newness" she was experiencing in her life. There is a paradox inherent her feelings: she was very clear she did not like "not knowing all the answers" and not knowing the end, and yet at the same time, she was also "content with it," and embraced the experience. This kind of comfort with the uncomfortable appears to have come with the belief that she had "the stuff it takes to do it." Ann had proven to herself that she had the ability to "be okay" in a time of turmoil and change, and as a result was not apprehensive about the challenges she might face in the practicum ahead. Although she was feeling much stronger and confident in her abilities at the time of the interview, the earlier part of the semester had been much more difficult for her.

At the time of the second interview Ann perceived herself to be in a lull between much more active periods of transition:

I feel like I just ended the first part of a lot of transition, and it's kind of a little break, a little island. Then, when second semester starts, I'll be in a lot of transition, because I'll be in practicum. But right now, I'm being extremely immediate right now, it's like I swam to the first island ... and I'm kinda, like okay I'm on the island, and I see the next part of the ocean there, and that's when I go on practicum and I know that ooh, there'll be lots of transitions.

Within this "island" of time, approximately the last eight days, she saw herself as being about a "2," on a scale from 0 to 10, regarding her transitions as a counsellor. She had changed her life to focus on the papers required for the semester: "I made my life sooo simple, so I don't really see myself in transition, because I'm so focused and I've chucked everything else out." Ann had essentially put her life on hold for this final portion of the semester. She saw this lack of transition as a temporary anomaly, a break in the constant change she had been immersed in. Ann rated her transitions in the first half of the semester as a "8.7," which gradually lowered to a "7.2" as she "became more settled and became more comfortable" with the process and with herself.

Ann was in considerable transition in her personal life at the time of the interview and rated her transitions a "9." She saw herself to be in transition in practically "every aspect" of her life (see Figure 9). Ann divided the transitions she was experiencing into two general groups, one of which was how she would choose to define and build her "community," and the other, questions associated with income, employment, and school. She saw herself making much more active choices about her lifestyle and the type of community she wanted to live in than she had before. Her relationships with her parents, friends, and children, as well as her culture and community were all in transition, as were her sexuality and intimacy. In particular, she was "choosing, implementing, and experimenting with boundaries." She was exploring these boundaries, and trying to set more consistently strong boundaries with the people in her life.

Ann saw herself as also being in transition academically. She thought the basic academic standards for performance were the same, but that the work load was much more demanding. She found that things were taking her much longer than she had anticipated, and she was feeling very worn out and tired:

I'm also *really tired of evaluating myself*, and exploring myself (laughs), and writing about myself. I've *really put my heart into evaluating myself all through this semester*, and now that I'm at the end, I've gotta do it in a major way, and I think *it's like the vessel had been emptied, I've already poured myself in the paper*.

.... and now, I have to jump through the hoop of putting it on paper, just to *jump through the hoops, it's not for my growth anymore*, because that has happened throughout the semester with the journal writing, and all that other stuff. *We've already learned the lessons* and you know I don't mind learning some lessons as I write, but basically all the way through I debriefed, and wrote *I have learned the lessons and now can it stop here please?* (laughs) *Why do I have to write them down and record it?*

Although there was a part of Ann that intellectually understood the need for academic papers, and the documentation of the "lessons" she learned, another part of her felt "emptied" by her previous efforts to evaluate herself. Like a marathon runner who had put a massive effort into the first part of the race, she was having difficulty finding the energy for this stage of the journey.

Ann believed she had made tremendous changes in her counsellor identity. The transitions of the semester had a "profound effect" on her:

...my perception of myself as a counsellor, is different than my perception when I went into the program, and the mediating force was the program, or the transitions, so they had a profound effect.

K: And how is it that you see your perception of yourself as a counsellor changing?

Part of my self identity, now the word "counsellor" is in it, before I wasn't confident enough to say that, and now I am.

K: You mentioned "people-helper" before, that was the word you used, that'd be more acceptable than counsellor, because now you let "counsellor" creep in a little bit, or-

Uh huh .. Uh huh. Yeah (softly), that's *quite new*.

Not only was the word "counsellor" part of her identity for the first time, but she also saw herself as having acquired a variety of counsellor skills:

body language, listening skills, immediacy, confrontation, effective appropriate confrontation, sensitivity, reading people, that kind of thing. Technical type[s] of skills, like cognitive therapy approach for instance ... techniques like the genogram, how we can use that in a counselling session, so that whole cluster.

In addition, over the semester Ann also passed some important self-tests of her counselling abilities.

One of these had been her concern about whether she would be able to handle a client who cried:

... another client, *she cried every session*, and that was *a good test for me* to see how I would be with tears.

K: It was one thing you were worried about?

Well, it's *something that I used to be more worried about* last year, when I wasn't in the program, and my students would cry. I mean, over time I felt more comfortable with it, but she wasn't a student, so *it was a different dimension*. So, yeah, it was my first time with tears, and *I was pleased that I was okay with it*, even though I didn't have any Kleenex (laughs).

Another self-test came when Ann counselled a woman with a fundamentalist Christian background:

another thing that was really great for me, is that one of the barriers I thought I would have is someone who was a fundamental Christian, because that *connects to my background ... I thought that maybe I would be tempted to rescue someone like that ...* [the client] was really connected with the church ... and I thought "whoa," so I was a little *nervous ...* the first session she tells me ... "so and so, if they died they'll go to heaven," and this automatic thought comes into my head "*you've got to be kidding!*" (laughs) You really believe that? (incredulous) You seem like such an intelligent person." And so ... it got right in there, there was absolutely no control, and I would just continue.

K: That was just the thought though?

Yes, yes, I actually was like wham (smacks hand into fist) there it was! .. and *I watched myself on the video, re-a-l-l-y carefully that time*, cause I wanted to look for body language, or any clues, and *I didn't see any*.

K: To see if your mouth had dropped (anything) down (Ann laughs) or anything.

Anything, anything. I was very aware of my body language at that point when the thought was happening, but *I didn't see anything* and *she was really able to risk with me* in very, I think, *quite deep level*, so there was *nothing there at all*, which *I was very pleased about*.

For Ann, however, it was not sufficient that she had been able to counsel this Christian woman. She was bothered by guilt, and concerned about potentially misusing the power in the counselling process:

I felt a *little guilty about thinking that thought*, and I thought about *all the power* that I would have over this, like if for some reason, if I would have said something ... that *could have just crushed her?* You know, I thought "gee there's a lot of power here!" I was *very aware of the power*, and that I was feeling guilty. Then I went and I talked to, I told the story to another student (laughs) and she told me something that *really* (laughing) *encouraged me*. *It was wonderful!* It was a situation where a client was going off in non reality (laughs) and then the counsellor (laughing so hard she has a hard time speaking) what a thought, now maybe I shouldn't tell you this (laughs), but I think it will be okay.

... the counsellor said the thought in her mind "*no fuck face, not that*" (laughing very hard) it was *so encouraging* to me that ... some of my classmates are prim and proper, they don't really let their defenses down, and say what's really happening ... that was *so encouraging* (laughs) after I hear that thought that "oh, okay, you know, *this is okay*."

K: Yours felt kinda mild compared to calling the client fuck face, right?

(laughs) Yeah, I laughed and laughed over that ... (laughs) but yeah, that's right, *mine seemed really mild* (laughs) and if that happens in the future, and I'm sure, you know, that these kinds of thoughts will just happen, and like, I guess that's okay, I mean one of my classmates said, you know when you become a counsellor, it's *all of a sudden you can't be human, and of course that's not true*.

.... I noticed a lot of classmates, well a couple of classmates, were very hesitant to tell me anything, risk at that level, but one did!

K: And that was really impactful for you, it sounds like.

Yeah, it was really *quite validating* for me, that this is okay.

Although Ann had set out to test whether she could counsel a fundamentalist Christian woman, once she found she could, she changed her expectations. It was no longer sufficient to be able to counsel this woman, but also that she not have negative thoughts pop into her head during the session. Fortunately Ann had the courage to share her guilty feelings with a classmate. Ann's admission of vulnerability to the classmate had prompted the classmate to share her own, even more negative thoughts with Ann. These shared experiences helped Ann to re-examine her own expectations, and to see she could be "human." Ann could perceive this incident in a humorous light because her classmate's experience helped her to recognize the absurdity of her idealized expectations, which had helped her to lighten some of her expectations for herself.

For the most part Ann's experiences in her first semester of training were very affirming of her counsellor identity. She characterized it as having been "a very positive experience" and a "growth enhancing experience." There was, however, one glaring exception:

there were different people giving me feedback, and they had different styles. Sometimes I sit with other people's *style of feedback* better, yeah, their style, no their content, their style. One time it was *really difficult* for me when I got negative feedback, I really had a very difficult time, and once again that was specifically the style, the way it was delivered, and that really shook me.

....usually what happens, is when I get feedback, there's some positive and then what I would call negative. Perhaps, well, I didn't call it that, perhaps they didn't just want to take the time (very softly) to make that positive, phew, but what this person did is ... *of ... 26-7 comments, 6 were positive, the rest weren't*. And I talked to other classmates too, and I found out that *that was the style, it was just overwhelming, absolutely overwhelming*, again, and again, it was 5 pages.

K: Five pages of it?

Yes (laughs), and *it really shook me* (very seriously).

K: Yeah, and what it shook up was your sense of what?

Oh, *confidence*, I, I, I, oh (laughs) it was *really hard for me to go to the next session*. I felt quite, I didn't feel inadequate, I felt maybe *insecure*, it really *made me look at the appropriateness of this program and myself in it*, but also what really *helped is*, I knew what other people, I knew that at least 45% of the class, I didn't speak to everyone, but *45% of the class also had a similar experience* with this same style of feedback, so that really helped a lot because *if it was just me*, it would have been whoa! *I would probably had to make an appointment with my advising, and to go over my suitability to go into the program*.

....after other sessions with other clients, other people gave me feedback, and it was, *I never had an experience like that again* (laughs). So, if I had other reinforcements- what I did was *I looked for*

patterns of anything else that would reinforce my feelings of insecurity and I wasn't able to build a case for myself.

....Yeah, look for evidence to support that ... and there wasn't evidence forthcoming to build a case. So that was the *crisis* for me.

Ann's experience with this negative feedback came within her first month of the program, when she had just started her training and was very uncertain about her abilities. It could have had a devastating impact on her counsellor identity. Fortunately once again, Ann chose to share her experience with others and found out her experience had been shared by several classmates. When Ann discovered her experience was not unique, her worries were somewhat diffused. Ann was able to place her experience within the context of the situation, rather than personalizing and assuming she was unsuitable for the program. Even with the feedback from others, however, she still searched throughout the semester for evidence that might support the negative feedback she had received about her counselling skills. At the end of the semester, after all the growth she had experienced as a counsellor, she was still powerfully affected by the experience, and carried it "in the forefront" of her memory.

As mentioned previously, however, the bulk of Ann's experiences over the semester had been very positive. The most striking transitions had been in the areas of "self-care" and her knowledge of herself.

I'm far more able to look after myself, and pace myself better, and not be everything to everyone? I feel stronger now than I ever have in my life before, like it's the apex of my development, that I know myself the most that I have ever known myself, that I'm the most connected. I'm the healthiest now that I have ever been, in my emotional health, my mental health ... a very powerful sense of self, certainly since I've come to this program.

Ann believed herself to be at the "apex" of her development, and more emotionally healthy than she had ever been. This growth however, had not been coincidental. She had very deliberately chosen to construct her world in a way to facilitate this kind of transition:

I don't watch TV, or read the newspapers, and I'm not connected to the world ... I have my blinders on, and when I need to take breaks I go to the ocean, or something like that. I haven't complicated my life (softly), I kept my life quite simple in that respect, and that's helped a great deal. I take the time for self-reflection, I take as much time as necessary. Another thing that has helped me is .. looking after my physical body, quite a priority because I don't want to get sick (laughs). And speaking to people who aren't in the program too. I guess trying new things, not only in the classroom, but outside the classroom.

Ann clearly chose her priorities and made her personal development her primary focus. She chose to make her life simple, connecting with nature when she needed a break, and making sure to take time for self-reflection. When she did connect to the external world, it was at the individual level through the people she knew, rather than at the global level that the media offered.

Ann viewed her connections with classmates, people outside the program, and her children, as extremely important supports:

my classmates help me to validate the normality of my experience, certainly the beginning of the semester that was more important than now, but still even now .. it's *so validating to hear them suffer* (in a small sheepish voice) *with me* (laughs) *I like to hear it so much.*

K: To know you're not alone.

Uh huh, it *really helps* a lot! Let's see, and the people that aren't in the program, it's good to get their perspective, too, because sometimes it's different and that just *puts a different light* on things, and *stimulates me to think in a different process*, so that's reinforcing, *my children help ground me* a great deal. They *help me keep things in perspective*, so that *when I don't want to do this any more* (laughs) *I think about them.*

K: How do they help you keep it in perspective, or grounded?

Because when I feel like I don't want to go on anymore (laughs) ... I *really made a sacrifice being here because I'm separated from them*, and *if I were to choose to stop the process, I would have lost those months*, in the sense that I wouldn't have, you know, got my degree, I suppose, *so they help me to go on.*

K: Almost like you don't want it to be for nothing that you would have sacrificed that time with them?

Right, yeah, and it's all right to have the self-growth and all that other stuff, but they helped. *When I'm feeling tired, and you know, I don't want to do this anymore* (laughs), *I think of them, and it gives me, helps give me the stimulus to kinda jump through the next hoop.*

K: To get it done and go onwards, rather than (yeah, yeah) stall, and to not go any further.

Yeah, I'm kinda in that place right now where, *I just don't want to continue right now, with this final push* of these papers that I'm working on ... I'm *tempted to sway* from it, but I have this work to do, and they help me keep this in perspective and they give me, *sometimes I think I need a reason outside of myself, to continue to work* because I'm (quietly, and a little sadly) really tired right now.

....so they help a great deal, they don't know that, but they do.

Ann's connections to others helped support her in a variety of ways. Although she felt somewhat sheepish about liking to hear about the shared sufferings of her classmates, it was a source of encouragement and validation for the "normality" of her experience. Even though she found this validation less important than at the beginning of the semester, it nevertheless, still served an important function. Her connections to the people in her life outside the program were valuable because they provided different perspectives, and helped her to examine the context of her experience from another vantage point. Most poignant perhaps, was her bitter-sweet connection to her children. On the one hand, Ann's thoughts of her children helped motivate her, and to provide a reason outside of herself to persevere at a time when she was tired and lacked the energy to "jump through the next hoop." On the other hand, Ann found it painful to be separated from her children.

Ann perceived the faculty to be "extremely supportive," and available if she wanted help:

if I had a concern ... *I feel welcome that I can come forward* with it, and sometimes that's what I need, and I don't even need to voice the concern necessarily, but I know that I can ... it's *really*

important for me ... I would have had a hard time if that wasn't the case. The philosophy of the program is extremely congruent with my philosophy and that helps (softly) a great deal too.

Both the perceived support of faculty and the congruence of the program with her own philosophy, were additional sources of support for Ann. It was important to know the professors were available, even if she didn't choose to approach them.

Ann's approach to self-care at the time of the second interview was multi-faceted. She focused on a variety of methods to help her through this demanding period: keeping her life simple; maintaining her physical health; fulfilling her need for self-reflection and novelty; and maintaining a variety of social supports. As we saw at the start of the program, many of these were deliberate strategies she intentionally implemented in anticipation of foreseen demands.

There were, however, some interesting changes in Ann's responses since the first interview. For example, when she was asked at Time 2 what kinds of things were hindering her in her training to become a counsellor, she answered without hesitation:

the amount of courses I'm taking ... I think I should have taken on less I should have taken four. I'm not able to do as well as I could of if I had a lighter work load, because ... work load is my number one barrier to my performance, but I'm in it too far now (laughs) so I will continue.

This response contrasted dramatically with her first interview, where she struggled with the importance of a personal life, and decided to reduce her workload only after she reassured herself she was using every available moment wisely. At Time 2, she immediately identified work load as the barrier to her performance but chose to stay with her current load because the semester was almost over (approximately one week remained). By the time of the second interview Ann was aware of the importance of social supports, whereas at the beginning of the semester she had needed to consciously remind herself how essential they were.

Ann still recognized the importance of careful lifestyle choices, and knew if they were unbalanced, they could cause her difficulty. She chose to maintain contact with her classmates and friends outside the program, but was wary of the complications she thought would be associated with romantic involvement:

if I get caught up in my personal life too much, if I got involved with someone romantically, I think that would really hinder, so I'm careful not to do that (laughs), and I don't know how realistic that is, (laughs) but so far I've been successful, then there's always that tension, because I have that need, but it's a little bit of a withered state for me ... companion needs met to some degree, so they don't take away from my academic skills, but not too much, so that you know that I have time for academics I would say that that's probably the most vulnerable area that would sabotage this, but I won't let it sabotage it, I would have sacrificed too much, but I'm always monitoring it.

A part of Ann recognized, and wanted to satisfy her need for companionship. She realized her vulnerability, and determinedly monitored herself for the signs of sabotage she believed a relationship would bring. This decision allowed her to maintain her academic work as her number one priority, without having to divert her attention from her studies. The cost of this decision was the tension of her

unmet physical needs. Ann's determination and her willingness to make sacrifices to achieve her academic goals, illustrate the strength of her resolve to become a counsellor.

It was difficult for Ann to be on her own, separated from her children, and she found it got in the way of her counsellor training:

being single, being without my children, being alone, living by myself. I realize I'm [mid-thirties] and the only time I lived by myself, was one month in my life, and now, I'm living my myself, so that helped me keep it in perspective, why I'm in transition with that.

...however, now I'm far more comfortable with it than I was in August or September. Now, I quite like aspects of it, but before I didn't like any of it, it was too new, there was too much.

....that still happens, but not to such a degree. I am quite pleased of ... the transition I have made .. but I'm still aware that living the life I've chosen that when I go home at night, you know, I'm the only one in the place ... I'm very aware of that, but if that wasn't the case I don't think I could do my workload, so I have chosen this, but I don't think it really stops me, I'm just ... aware that gee, I don't like this, you know, it would be nice if I could connect with the person right now, but if I connected with them, then it would take away from my studies.

Living alone was particularly challenging for Ann because she had recently separated from her husband, and had never lived apart from her young children before. This was also the first time she had lived by herself. There are echoes of loneliness in the empty house at night, but she was more "comfortable" with those feelings than she had been at the start of the program. Ann had even learned to like some aspects of living alone. When she did get lonely, she tried to remind herself of the choice she had made, and to see the benefit of focusing on her studies without the distraction of a family.

Another difficulty Ann recognized was her tendency to over commit, which she identified as her "number one" struggle:

my lifestyle though ... I tend to over commit and get too involved ... so think that if I don't monitor myself then it is likely that my life could get busy without me realizing it, and before I know it, I would be feeling stressed ... so that's always been a battle with me.

I will have to monitor that closely, and when I'm not able to monitor it, it is a very good sign that I'm in it, I'm in over my head ... so I think that I would have to set up a system for myself where I check in with myself daily and have some quiet time alone ... and once that happens, then I'm able to listen to myself, the messages are very accurate, so I don't have a concern about not being able to hear my voice, if I can't hear my voice, then I know I'm too stressed.

Ann knew she could become so involved in her work that she would not take time to listen to her internal messages. Once she did check in with herself she had great confidence in the accuracy of those messages, but feared becoming so preoccupied with her work she would ignore her stress levels. Ann was well acquainted with her lifestyle preference of over committing and becoming too involved, and she resolved to provide herself with daily time for quiet introspection. As we will see at Time 3, Ann's ability to successfully monitor her level of involvement will be mixed.

Time 3.

At the time of her third interview, Ann identified many of the same transitions as her previous two interviews, but saw herself as more "settled" and "comfortable" in the process. She was "into a comfortable routine both internally and externally" and felt "far more at ease" in her various roles.

Ann circled fewer branches on the transition tree (see Figure 10) than she had in previous interviews and felt less in "turmoil and change" than earlier. She thought that many of the items she did circle were far less intense than they had been. Ann believed she had made considerable progress in the area relaxation and balance:

I feel really *quite comfortable* with that, and that's not very much of a transition, *I've done work in that area, now I'm just kind of refining it, whereas here [points to earlier tree], it was like whoa, I was doing the work!*

K: It was raw.

Yeah, well, there it's *raw* [points to Transition Tree for Time 1], and here [points to Transition Tree for Time 2] I was doing kind of *medium work*- well, some of it was raw.

Ann enjoyed comparing her Transition Trees, and likened it to a "report card" for herself. She was amazed at the changes she had made in such a short time period:

I see *less activity each page*, and with that I see *calmness and peace* ... it's like a map for me, it shows me what's happened. If on that day September 24th, you said "this is where you're going to be [points to Transition Tree 3]," *I wouldn't have believed it*, nor on this to this [points from Transition Tree 2 to 3].

K: So if, somehow you had a preview of your upcoming trees, you would have totally disbelieved that that could have happened.

That's right, yeah. *In such a short time, I would have said "it's not possible,"* I don't know how I would have gotten there this [points to Time 1] was so intense for me, this was ... *the most intense time in my life, that I can recall, well with transition.*

Ann found it affirming to see the visual evidence of the changes she had wrought during such difficult transitions. She was also encouraged to see she had already progressed further than she previously believed possible.

Although Ann identified the transitions at Time 3 as far more "gentle" than they had been earlier in the program, at times her fears would still peak:

sometimes ... I'll be going along my day, and thinking about something, then all of a sudden "*oh! I don't know if I can do this anymore. What's this all about?*" and then it just leaves. *It doesn't happen very often, it's not a concern* for me, but occasionally it's like (mini howl) "*wooh, what's happening here?*" (laughs) *Kind of takes my breath away.*

....[before there was] that high energy of (in a small pseudo anxious voice) "*ugh, oh, there's so much changing here, my goodness, there's so-*" it was up there, but now *the energy level has come down, but there's little peaks of kind of fear.*

Ann was more comfortable with the transitions of Time 3, than she had been during the earlier more intense, high energy transitions, but she still experienced transient peaks of fear strong enough to take her breath away. Ann rated her transition as a counsellor as "the lowest since I've been in the program, but still very high ... probably a seven." Thus, even though Ann felt far less in transition than she had when the transitions were "overwhelming," she nevertheless at times still found the experience daunting. Her transitions at Time 3 were only comfortable when she compared them to the excessively high levels of change she had previously experienced in the program. She also had become somewhat more accustomed to living with fear and uncertainty.

One of the ways Ann had learned to deal with her fear and uncertainty was to step outside her experience, to examine her responses to transition:

[I'm] quite comfortable, the classroom situations that used to threaten me ... in the beginning of the first semester are now my comfort zone when I was beginning my practicum, there was a transition where that was not comfortable for me, cause I didn't know ... I was learning the routine and all that stuff ... I realized that what I was experiencing was very similar to what I experienced the first month at university, where I didn't know the routine ... and during my practicum, the first little while there, I wanted to go back to the classroom, cause that was my security now, and I thought "gee that's interesting" because I remember my first month that wasn't a security for me, I didn't have a place of security, it's the place that threatened me.

Ann's recognition of similarities in her responses to new situations reassured her. She saw she tended to react to transitions by feeling threatened, and this realization helped her to understand why she wanted to return to a place of security at the start of a new experience. With this understanding, Ann had begun to feel less lost in her fears, and more able to step back to see the "interesting" aspects of a new situation rather than just its threats.

When Ann encountered something new, she saw herself moving through a kind of spiral cycling process:

the newness, and then getting used to it, and then here I am experiencing something new again within myself, and knowing that I can do this, and this will be fine, and when I've become comfortable here, believing that I won't just stay there, but that I will move on again, so there seems to be spiral type of experience, where I've experienced something new, and then somehow I slip back and forth, back and forth, and eventually I get comfortable with it, to go on to the next step, so there's just a spiral going up and down, or sideways, but the process is the same for me, and I'm sure it will be in the future, too.

Ann's self-reflection had helped her to learn more about her reactions to change. She recognized that she tended to initiate change when she started to become too comfortable in a situation. Once the new experience started, she observed she had the tendency to slip back and forth until she was ready to go on to the next step. Ann had reached the point where she had a fair degree of confidence in her abilities, and could reassure herself that she would move forward, and things would eventually work out. Ann's ability to step outside her experiences to analyze her process allowed her to develop more patience with herself, and to feel less threatened if she found it a struggle to adapt to a new situation.

Another pattern Ann identified was her tendency to be unaware of the magnitude of changes she was making:

on a day-to-day basis, I realize I'm putting out, and putting out, and putting out, and I don't realize how much I'm changing and growing until something like this happens, until I think "yes ... my comfort zone is the place that threatened me a few months ago, wow!" ... I can't tell how fast I'm becoming used to places that were previously anxiety provoking.

.... not realizing how much I'm changing until something happens, and I don't realize how fast I'm accommodating newness, until for instance, I go back to my place of permanent residency.

Ann became aware of the size of these changes only when found herself doing something radically different from her past behavior. Several of these behaviors were surprising enough to challenge her previously held image of herself. One such behavior had been her choice to role play and counsel her professor in front of her classmates:

that's something that I would say I would never- I could not have done in December, I would have said "no, I couldn't have done that" and so being able to do that, even though you know that was difficult for me to do I hadn't seen any classmates do that, they always role-played the client, as opposed to the counsellor ... so that's an indication that's real tangible, and an indication of how comfortable I am with, I guess performance, and that's what it is, you know, counselling, performing, evaluation.

This experience provided her with a welcome opportunity to compare how far she had progressed since December. It served as a tangible indicator of how much more comfortable and confident she had become in the areas of performance and evaluation.

Another occasion when Ann's behavior challenged her previous image of herself occurred when she stood up to her supervisor:

I'm doing things that I never thought I'd be able to do, like ... telling my supervisor in a diplomatic way that I'm not comfortable with what my supervisor is suggesting that I do, and be able to state the reasons. And also saying to myself "frankly, I don't care what my supervisor says, I'm not going to do that, because I don't think it's right." It didn't come to that, but I was fully prepared to, and I felt that I was able to present my case, reasonable, respectful, and I had valid reasons why, and there wasn't a problem. But what I learned about myself is, and where I see myself going is ... even if I was challenged and raked over the coals, so to speak, that I would never back down and dishonour myself like that, if I really believed in something.

Ann astonished herself by standing up to "someone in authority, who had more years of experience, education, and in the field like that." She was proud to discover that when she strongly believed in something she could reasonably and respectfully stand up to someone she respected. Similarly, Ann found that when she dealt with authority figures she was able to take better care of herself, and set boundaries:

before I didn't take care of myself as well as I can now, before I would say "well this is a challenge, this will be something to stretch myself," but now, I'm able to say "these are the parameters where I'm willing to stretch, and if I go over, then it's not appropriate self-care," and I wasn't in a position to decide where appropriate self care was...

K: It sounds like there's been a bit of a switch where now you feel more in control of the boundaries on that self-care, whereas before you kind of let someone else stretch it (uh huh) and "oh okay, I'll stretch cause they say I should stretch here."

Or because *I value the self-growth so much*, I'm willing to do this.

K: Even though part of me is going "no."

Right, so where *so- finding that balance of, part of me, part of me says no to anything that I feel even slightly threatened about ... so where do I find that balance of where it's too much*, and where I'm willing to? And I've been able to do that.

Ann felt good about arriving at the stage where she could listen to her own judgments, and had the confidence to set limits when someone tried to get her to stretch beyond where she was willing to go. Although she found it difficult to balance her instinctive fear of anything threatening and with her desire to grow, she did believe she had achieved that balance. She had decided she was going to assume personal responsibility for her balance rather than letting the external world, or some person in authority decide for her.

Ann was far more comfortable in her various roles, and believed in herself much more strongly than when she started the program. She started a significant role shift in September, which she had just begun to resolve at Time 3:

being independent ... not connected with anyone ... I'm not sure what that role would be, role of self, I suppose. Which took quite a bit of work for me to become comfortable with my role and define my boundaries, and how I wanted to be as a person who's not connected to anyone ... I didn't know what that would be like. And when I started to experience that sense of being alone, not having any responsibilities, my academic responsibilities are nothing compared to those other role responsibilities that were demanding all the time ... instead of fighting what that feels like, feeling a sense of grief and loss about those other roles, my life has become so simple, incredibly simple ... it was hard for me to accept how simple it was ... I guess I missed my other roles ... it produced a different feeling in me ... it challenged my self-concept, my identity, and something shifted inside of me ... and it was something new that I hadn't felt inside me before. I guess in my, I don't know what to call it, my spirit, I suppose, and because I hadn't felt that before, I didn't like it. And now, it's still with me, that ... feeling of "this is Ann outside of being a mother with children living with her- this is Ann, just period" ... Now that I know what that feels like, I've come to terms with it, and have accepted it completely and fully. Whereas before, in even the second session, I still hadn't done that, there was that newness in me, I still hadn't come to terms with that.

Even at Time 2, Ann had not come to terms with her new "role of self," but by Time 3 she was, for the first time able to conceive of a self that was just Ann. This Ann was independent of the previous roles she previously used to identify herself. She had started to much more solidly connect with the part of herself she called her "spirit." Ann's sense of self gave her a steadiness and solidity which, despite her grief and loss, enabled her to accept rather than fight her feelings.

Ann's independence and lack of familiar surroundings and people for the first time had helped her to achieve this sense of self:

this is who I am, without the props, because I came from my family to a marriage, there was not a time when I was alone, without any props, without any demands, and so now I can see who Ann is on

a stage with no props ... there have been *no major surprises*, that it's nice to see that *yes, I am consistent, and who I thought I was* ... I've had a chance to actually *actualize myself* in a way that I thought I would be if I was in this position.

Ann's experience of learning who she was without "props" was instrumental in her development of a separate and strong sense of self. Although she had not discovered any "major surprises" about her identity, this experience had allowed her to connect to her sense of self and feel "actualized" in a way she had not previously experienced.

Before Ann entered the program she had believed her identity well developed. Her experiences in the program, however, had helped her to develop a qualitatively different sense of self:

I've had intellectual understanding of who I am, so before the program, I could sit down and say "these are my values, this is who I am," and they are correct and accurate. Now, I can see myself act on all of that, and so it's a difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge. And that feels really good, it feels it's like right in every cell of my body ... and I've been able to act on that, so I've been able to set, for instance, really firm boundaries and it flows over with confidence in myself, I'm really believing in myself in a way that I've never ever been able to before.

Ann felt a tremendous sense of rightness within "every cell," a sense of wholeness and solidity that came with the realization that her actions were consistent with her values. She had moved from an intellectual understanding of herself to an integration of both her head and heart. She felt more confident and believed in herself more than she ever had before.

The part of Ann that could step outside and watch herself react to new experiences marveled at her "new found power." At the same time however, a part of Ann felt uneasy about this strength:

my energy has shifted ... I have a different energy about myself, and an energy that's kind of scary because ... there's a part of me, and this is like, I'm really digging now into this gray area that I haven't really come to terms with yet, but because I had this shift in energy, where I do feel quite strong and settled and confident, part of me feels like "oohh, I'm going to get caught, I'm too cocky, I'm brash, or bold," or something like that, and I know I'm not though. I know that I'm a critical thinker, and I just don't do things impulsively but, I guess what I'm doing is adjusting to the new strength I feel internally, and I guess it's like, having something that I wasn't allowed to have, and almost feeling a little bit guilty that I have this new self-confidence. That somehow, this is not the way it's going to be, that it's going to be taken away, or I'm not sure what this is, but there's something happening there.

Ann's reactions to her new strength varied from feelings of fear and guilt, to a sense of pride and amazement. She was confused because her past had taught her she was not entitled to the feelings of strength and power she was starting to feel. A number of factors contributed to Ann's unease with her sense of personal power. Her early experiences in a fundamentalist Christian church had very clearly specified the only approved roles for women. Women learned their purpose in life from an approved male spiritual leader, and there had been little room in her church for women to evolve their own independent thoughts, beliefs, or values. The beliefs Ann held at Time 1, had been so radically different from those earlier beliefs, that she had been concerned they would interfere with counselling a Christian fundamentalist woman. Although her beliefs had changed since those earlier days, a part of her was still

influenced by those early experiences. That part of Ann felt guilty, and afraid her power would be taken away if she became too strong. Intellectually, she no longer held those beliefs, but emotionally part of her felt guilty and afraid she would "get caught."

There were also community and societal influences outside the church, which helped contribute to Ann's unease with her new independence and strength. Ann had gone straight from living with her parents into the roles of being a wife, mother and teacher. Swamped by the demands of those roles, she had not found the opportunity to explore the "role of self" until she was in the program away from her community and family. Ann had not yet, however, totally "assimilated" these new feelings:

I feel quite actualized and I guess it's hard for me to say because before coming to the program, I'd say "oh yes, I have healthy self-esteem" but not like what I'm talking about now and I guess I'm not, yeah I must not be used to it still. It's still happening, it's very recent ... I guess I haven't had time yet to assimilate it and I'm watching myself react to that new found power, I suppose.

Ann had grown up in a small northern community hearing very traditional and explicit messages about the roles women were expected to adopt; women left school, got married and had children (but not necessarily in that order). Ann had feared being trapped, like many of her high school friends, by a teenage pregnancy. The adjectives "bold," "brash," and "cocky," which Ann shied away from, were likely terms she heard in her past to discourage women from becoming too powerful or too strong. She had worked hard to get to university at a time when there had been few professional women to act as role models in her community but had gone straight from living with her family into marriage. It was not until she was in the graduate program, in her mid-thirties, and away from her family and community that Ann began to come into her own sense of identity and power. At Time 3 when she began to wonder "am I being cocky here?" she was able to go inside and "know intuitively that is not where I'm coming from." She was able to relegate her fears to the back of her mind, and reassure herself she just needed time to become used to the feeling. At the time of the interview, Ann's new sense of power still felt "like a privilege, as opposed to a right." Intellectually, however, she believed she had the right to feel strong, and that eventually she would also come to feel comfortable with that strength.

Ann saw potential benefits to her fear of becoming too proud or cocky:

because I am concerned about that, and I don't want to be that way. When I did confront my supervisor, I think very carefully, and I choose my words ... I take my time it really keeps me on track ... and my words are genuine ... if I'm so comfortable ... and I'm not nervous ... or just a little bit threatened, then I won't be as prepared ... I'll become too confident, and I won't deliver it well, so this just gives me a little bit of edge to make sure, it's like a check and balance ... so actually instead of seeing it as a bad thing, it will keep me on track.

Ann valued deliberately choosing her words with care so she would not accidentally wound or offend someone. She wanted her fear to give her the "edge" to act as a balance for her new confidence. Ann did not want to risk losing the respect she had for others, and was able to reframe her fear of becoming too confident into an ally in her effort to remain careful of others' feelings.

Although at Time 3 Ann saw herself as at the "peak" of her "internal development," she foresaw further testing ahead:

it's like I'm looking in a pool, and I think "okay, *I've come to the bottom of the pool*, I'm not ready to go on, I'm comfortable with this bottom of the pool, and I'm ready to *play it safe now*, because I just need to be at the bottom of the pool." And then, something else will happen that I don't go off and look for, *and there's a whole other ocean down there* that I never ... thought ... so *finding this other vast area is fine with me*. And I think at the *beginning of the semester*, I would say "okay, this is me, and this is who I am," and then I would have glimpses of this other area that *seemed like a bottomless pit, and that concerned me*. And *now that I've explored* what I've explored in the first and second semester, *I get hints of this other vast area, and that's fine ... it doesn't bother me like it did that first semester, because I'd already gone through it*, and I've already seen my process, I've already watched myself, and *it was a very fulfilling, satisfying, painful at times place, but it's an okay place*.

...I'm expecting that because *I feel so solid in myself*, and who I am in ... my self image of myself, and that I'm *able to define myself, and keep to looking after myself* ... that I don't think that there's going to be anything unpredictable, just like when I first came here from the north ... *there wasn't anything unpredictable* ... maybe the subtleties, and I think what will happen is I'll be put in environments where *I'll have to continue to really trust myself, and believe in myself* ... that's a *really positive thing*, if I can take care of myself and don't get too busy and give myself time. So I think it's more of the same.

Ann's newfound belief in herself gave her the confidence to look into the "bottomless pit," and to perceive it as a challenge rather than a threat. She was confident that although there would be painful times in the process ahead, she would eventually be able to make it fulfilling, just as she had with her experiences in the program. Ann was learning to trust she could manage the challenges ahead, provided she continued to take care of her needs and make time for herself.

Ann believed that the combination of self-care and trusting herself and had been instrumental in her transition to become a counsellor:

I think in the forefront is *self-care and honouring myself, that's critical trusting myself and trusting the process* ... I'm becoming *more comfortable* with, *I'm not going to know everything*, and *I've gotta jump off the boat and swim now*, and I am swimming, and my head is above water, and *it's okay not to know* and it's actually a good thing for me.

She was also starting to have faith that even unknown waters could be handled if she remembered to trust herself and took time to care for herself. The predictability of her external environment had become less important than the belief in herself she brought to the situation.

Ann had learned to trust herself and was feeling more self-confident, but she was also developing a more human image of herself. This image contrasted sharply with her earlier pristine expectations for herself. She perceived her experiences in the "muck" to have played a vital role in her transition to become a counsellor:

it's really *broadened my base of, a human being*. I *tend to be ideal* ... when I was younger, I was *encouraged to be self-righteous*, in the church, and because I hadn't experienced some things, I *wouldn't be able to identify with people* ... I feel now, that *I'm seasoned* to some degree, so *I have fallen off my horse a few times* (laughs), I have *mucked around in the dirt, gotten dirty*, and so ... I feel like I've experienced a *far richer part of life*, and for instance when someone screws up, so to

speaking, I think that I'm *far more tolerant* of that than I would have been as a younger person connected with the church. *I have acted in ways I never thought I would act ... I have matured ... I guess basically I'm far more human ... I know what it feels like to go through change. I know what it feels like, in my mind to be stripped,* and to really be taken to a place where I had to look at *what I wanted*, as opposed to "who am I?" ... I probably am in the place where I am the *kindest to myself*, so to *lighten up*, so to say ... if I decide this is not the way that I like, and it doesn't fit with me, *okay I will change that ... and it's okay not to know ... and I know what it's like to feel so much newness inside yourself, that you can barely ... recognize yourself*, but of course, it's there ... so I'm very comfortable with that ambiguity, and that mucking around I would like to think I'm *less judgmental*, and *more compassionate... I feel seasoned, I've never felt seasoned before.*

Ann had learned to be kinder to herself, to embrace her humanity and the experiences that "seasoned" her. Instead of feeling the shame that the church would have taught for mucking around in the dirt, she saw those experiences adding to the richness of her life. She felt more compassionate towards others as well as herself, and believed this made her a better counsellor. It also helped her make changes in her own life. Her idealism had gradually lessened, making it easier for her to accept the newness and ambiguity that accompanies change.

Ann valued the extra depth her life experiences had given her. She was at times however, frustrated by the gap between her actual age and the age people perceived her to be. The teachers on Ann's practicum often mistook her for an undergraduate, and were surprised to find out she had already taught for a number of years and had children of her own. Ann was irritated that their assumptions people about her age often caused them to underestimate her capabilities:

I don't feel old, but when I look in the mirror ... I don't see myself as a young innocent person, I feel like I have been around the block. I have [with exaggeration, mock solemnity] sinned (laughs) you know, I have! ... I feel a separation from ... how old they think I am, and how old I feel ... they think I'm way back and ... I have so much more than that to offer ... I guess a lot of assumptions are made about me, by how I look, and how I look is not how at all I feel I feel like sandpaper inside, that they can't see, there's some roughness there that I've kind of refined, and learned from.

Although Ann was frustrated that her youthful appearance belied the "sandpaper" experiences she had learned from, another part of her was humoured that the growth and development she had undergone were apparently invisible to the people around her. People only began to appreciate her maturity after they spent time with her and she shared some of her experiences with them.

Ann was comfortable in the program and liked the way she was developing personally and professionally. She planned to take a few more courses before the end of summer, but was already starting to gradually ease herself towards closure:

it just won't be one day everything will be over in my academic world ... the courses will become less academically demanding and my final course will be really light, and that will be good, it's really a gentle way for me to ease myself out one way for me to take care of myself, is easing out. And I think that will be healthy for me, but already, I'm surprised I'm doing it, I'm starting the process, kind of saying good-bye to this experience. Coming here is a symbol of that, this is the last interview, the beginning, middle and the end.

She was surprised to find herself thinking about and preparing for the end of her training. She also, however, saw it as healthy and something she needed to do. Ann had very mixed feelings about the

program drawing to a close and knew she needed time to prepare for the many changes that would follow. She knew she would not be able to focus as intensely on her personal and professional development when she returned to her family, job, and community. One part of Ann was looking forward to the opportunity to return to her old life, be reunited with her children, and to have time to assimilate information from her graduate training. Another part of Ann dreaded leaving the intensity and excitement of the university:

on the one hand, I somewhat *don't like my intense schedule*, but on the other hand ... *it's not that I'm addicted to it*, but ... *University drives something in me that's there, wanting to be driven*, and I really like it! So I'm thinking ... when my workload decreases, I'll have time to do some other things, but they won't be that intensity, and *I'll miss that intensity, even though I want a break*.

I want some time now to assimilate information that I haven't had time to. But it has been, and is, very exciting for me, and part of me will miss that excitement, to the extent that I'm experiencing it now.

Ann simultaneously looked forward to and feared the end of her training. She also had ambivalent feelings about the intensity of the drive and focus she brought to her training:

in the university environment ... I'm around skilled people, skilled people, skilled people! *I'm always striving forward*, forward, so sometimes I lose perspective ... *like I'm whacking, I'm whacking, I'm whacking! I'm reaching, I'm reaching, I'm reaching!* ... and because I am so motivated and driven ... university kinds of feeds that, and sometimes that's *not good, because I am so driven*. I lose perspective of where I have come in university, *I really get down on myself*, and I think "why am I doing this?" I got an A-, not an A ... like *why am I so disappointed?* ... *If I don't qualify for Ph.D. program, will it be the end of the world? What does that mean about me?*

Ann found it difficult to keep her perspective and balance in the university environment because part of her liked feeling driven. She recognized how easy it was to lose herself in that drive, and to allow too much of her self-worth to be determined by academic performance. Ann was trying hard not to let too much of her identity be determined by her grades, but was a struggle, particularly when she was surrounded by so many skilled people.

While Ann was in Victoria, she wanted to take advantage of as many of the opportunities for professional growth as she possibly could. She was worried that when she returned to her community there would be a lack of time and mentors in her community to continue the growth she valued. She knew when she returned to her community much of her energy would go into settling the looming divorce and custody issues. Ann was also going to try to make the career change from teaching to counselling. She was aware that the life transitions she would face when she returned to her community, combined with the scarcity of resources and supports, would likely necessitate putting some of her cherished professional development goals on hold. The transitions Ann anticipated when she returned to her community made her particularly vulnerable to losing her balance while in the program, and to perhaps succumb to becoming a little too driven and to allow too much of her identity to be defined by the academic world.

One of the consequences of Ann's decision to focus so intently on her training was that her world continued to be very small, with few "mainstream" interests and activities:

I am so caught up in my day to day process and I realize that, and I realize my life isn't balanced, and as this semester goes on, there's part of me that feels even more (half laugh) unbalanced. However, I am still able to connect with the [clients], which is really important to me, and people, but I don't listen to the news, I don't do a lot of things that I guess mainstream society might do. I've really pulled back, and as I become more and more academic to get my courses done, my world is very small. And so, I don't take time to take stock as much as I would like to, because I have to read the next article, write the next paper.

Ann realized her life was not in balance, and that her focus on her academic goals had excluded many other areas of life. Ideally she would have liked more time for contemplation, but was satisfied to continue with the imbalance as long as she could still connect to clients, and get the academic work done. This struggle to balance a life within the context of counsellor training emerged in all three of Ann's interviews. A part of Ann enjoyed the intensity of her quest and opportunity to focus so single-mindedly on her training. Another smaller part however of her, however, was uneasy about how restricted her world had become. Ann was uncomfortable with the lack of balance in her life caused by her academic focus, but chose to continue to make counsellor training her priority.

Possible Selves

Ann mentioned several hoped-for and feared selves at each of her interviews (see Appendices P and Q). Many of the themes for these possible selves were mentioned at more than one interview (see Appendices R and S). The number of Ann's possible selves increased slightly over time, but this was not a dramatic change.

As Ann progressed in her training her hopes became less focused on developing her professional skills and more focused on ethics, her ability to adapt and change, and her personal characteristics. As Ann developed more confidence in her basic counselling microskills, she anticipated her greatest challenges would arise from personal factors. In subsequent interviews Ann began to place a greater value on her ability to adapt and change, to be self-aware, to be more accepting of herself and to be better able to take care of herself.

Ann's fears had a similar pattern to her hopes. She became less concerned over time about her counselling abilities and more concerned about her ability to take care of herself. Ann wanted to make sure her needs would not interfere with her judgment while counselling. Initially her fears were that she would not be alert, astute or quick enough to counsel effectively. Later on, particularly at Time 2 (when she was tired and struggling to find the energy needed to complete her work), she was less fearful about her ability to understand the client, and more concerned about her ability to take care of herself. She feared that if she did not have a balanced lifestyle it would be difficult for her maintain the energy and concentration levels she needed.

One of Ann's largest changes was in the way she viewed helpers (see Appendix T). Initially, when Ann spoke of helpers she clearly differentiated between the two types of helpers; those who had been positive models, and those who had been negative models. By Time 3, however, the distinction became much more nebulous; the helpers she spoke of had both desirable and undesirable aspects. At Time 3 Ann no longer expected helpers to fall into good or bad categories, instead she saw them as individuals, each with a variety of skills and personal characteristics, some of these characteristics she would admire, and others she would not. Ann had moved from a simple dichotomy to a much more complex and confusing way of conceptualizing helpers. She believed this to be a more realistic way of viewing helping, and was struggling to better understand it.

Time 1

At Time 1 Ann hoped to be a counsellor with wisdom and vision. For Ann, being a wise counsellor meant: following the pacing of the client, being quiet, knowing when to challenge and when to let the client be, facilitating growth, and knowing how to invite the client in. She also hoped for the vision to be able to help others feel hope, identify what they could control, and make connections they could apply to the other parts of their lives. It was important for Ann to live a lifestyle congruent with her values, and to work well even with people whose opinions differed from her own. She hoped to always be learning and growing, and willing to admit when she did not know something. Ann also wanted to be able to set boundaries and stick to them. Her strongest themes at Time 1 were the desire to develop the kind of counsellor skills she wanted, to be able to help clients make positive changes in their lives, and to have congruence between her lifestyle and values.

At Time 1, when Ann imagined her future self creating a self-defining memory, she envisioned developing a progressively deeper connection to herself out of the difficulties she had experienced over the year:

this was a difficult year, emotionally demanding, always in a state of change, and a certain level of anxiety, that's just up all the time, sometimes it peaks, sometimes it doesn't ... looking back I would say that this ... was a difficult year, in a sense that I challenged myself but it was a very exciting year, I'm going to be in the future now, talking back. In that year, I looked at life more fully than I had ever looked at before, that I experienced the sunshine in a far more sensual way, than ever before ... the basic raw elements, and the very basic core of living. I was able to reconnect and experience, in a deeper way, and life in many ways was very simple ... I was able to be far more comfortable ... with things ... I felt very much alive and sensitized. More stimulated than I had ever been, in all level, and therefore ... very basic things being so much more pleasurable, but the greenness looked greener than green, it was before. That I was able to experience life at a deeper level ... than I ever had suspected, the quality of life improved substantially.

.... a very deep connection with myself, that I would be comfortable with myself, no matter how much change happened. That even though my life wouldn't be as predictable as it was up to these [thirty something] years, that I would be comfortable with it, which at the beginning of the year, I would see myself being uncomfortable with it and by Christmas time, far more comfortable, and at the end, I would be okay with it, or be familiar, feeling the not knowing.

Ann was anxious much of the time, and she anticipated the program would continue to be emotionally demanding and difficult. At the same time however, she thought the experience could prove to be exciting and challenging. Ann thought her future self might identify it as time she experienced life “at a far deeper level” than she had suspected possible. She hoped to become more alive, sensitized, stimulated, and able to connect to the “basic core of living.” Gradually, as she became more comfortable and connected with herself, she hoped to learn to be “okay with” with the uncertainty and the constant change. Ann wanted to connect deeply enough with herself that she would be comfortable with herself “no matter how much change happened.” As we saw at Time 3, in the Transitions section, this projected SDM at Time 1 was amazingly predictive of her later experience.

The self-defining memory Ann hoped to create from her experience in the program illustrated where she thought her efforts could be most successful. Even at Time 1, she clearly thought the path to success lay in her ability to connect more closely to her experiences and to her sense of self. As we have already seen, a predominant theme throughout Ann’s transitions has been the importance of taking time for introspection and connecting more deeply to her sense of self. This proved to be an extremely effective strategy for her; one which at Time 3, did eventually help her to learn to be more comfortable with ambiguity. Although Ann consistently recognized the importance of introspection and taking time to take stock of her situation, as we have already seen, she was not always successful at keeping that goal her priority. It proved very challenging to balance her time between the heavy demands of her academic work and the time for internal development. In many ways Ann was however, ultimately able to convert much of this hoped-for self-defining memory into a reality by Time 3.

An early experience that helped shape Ann’s image of what a helper should be, occurred when she was in a student in grade twelve psychology course. The instructor for the course was a female psychologist, “first really exciting person” she met. This psychologist had a significant impact on Ann:

it was the first time I ever met a professional woman, in our small town they were all men, and she had a Ph.D.! And I was overwhelmed by that! And I just thought that was incredible ... She would tell stories of when she was, I guess doing a practicum some place ... where she was working with the mentally ill, and she would tell us stories of what that was like, and I was so intrigued by her role model as a helper, that made a tremendous impact. My friends used to idolize singers, and that kind of thing, and I idolized her, she was my hero, so to speak, and that was her context ... I was absolutely fascinated with her perspective, and how calm she was working with mentally ill people ... I was brought up to be afraid of people who would be in institutions, but I wasn't at all ... I was very fascinated by the mind that maybe didn't work. So I think probably the first impact was a fascination for how actually people could work with people who were mentally ill, as opposed to be afraid of them.

The calm stance the woman psychologist was able to maintain, even when she was once threatened by patients in an inpatient setting, was a strong contrast the stories Ann had heard growing up:

in my background there's a lot of superstitions, witchcraft stories, and stuff like that, and this was an entirely different perspective, and I mean stories like the little boy was retarded, so they'd tie him up to a stake in the ground, so that's how they could keep track of him, you know like he was a little animal. Terrible stories like that.

Ann was drawn to this perspective, it was much more consistent with her beliefs than the superstition and fear she had been taught growing up. Ann had kept her fascination with this type of work a secret, and had not told others about her interests:

there would have been a *tremendous pressure on me, not to pursue that kind of occupation*, not to pursue people who might be in that area. It was *just unacceptable!* No question about it, unacceptable, and I followed the rules, and I didn't tell anyone.

The impact of this woman psychologist on Ann was two-fold. First, as a calm intelligent psychologist, her perspective on how to treat people with psychological problems challenged the superstitious fears of Ann's community:

she was intelligent. *Very intelligent*, and I always prize intelligence, it's something that I *respected highly* that's why, when I sensed that *she respected these people, and they weren't animals to be chained*, and she was intelligent, therefore *she had validity*. *So I was able to shift from all my role models, and stories to her.*

Secondly, as a woman professional, her presence revealed to Ann professional roles she had been unaware of:

I didn't know Ph.D. women existed. I mean, I knew there were women doctors; sometimes the community even had one! Sometimes, that's it though! That's it ... well maybe elementary school teachers, but that's all. *It just never occurred to me that women could do these things!*

For Ann, a whole new world of possibilities opened up when she learned women could get doctorates. She also got validation for her interest in people with psychological difficulties. Although Ann was fascinated by, and felt drawn to that kind of work, she chose to keep her interest a secret because she was aware of how negatively her community would view that interest.

Ann's experiences in her community also help to explain why she was so hesitant to go into counselling as a career. Although initially attracted to psychology, she chose to go into teaching until she could prove to herself she could emotionally handle suicidal people, and could successfully keep a boundary between her work and home life. Ann had been drawn towards working with people with psychological problems but chose to work through her concerns and fears before choosing to embark upon training in that area. A counsellor acquaintance's remark that he could see Ann as a good counsellor, had served as a catalyst by validating her readiness become a counsellor.

Before Ann came to Victoria for the counselling program, she met few counsellors in her home town she "actually had a lot of respect for." Once she was in the program however, some of her classmates and a professor "made an incredible" impact on her because of their background of working with terminally ill clients. As mentioned previously, in the Transitions section, these counsellors caused Ann to re-examine her previous fear of dealing with death and clients. Instead of her previous fear of clients dying, she began to be interested in working with the dying, and see it as a way she might like to "contribute to humanity." Like Ann's encounter with the woman psychologist in high school, her

experience with counsellors who worked with people who were dying caused her to reexamine her previous fears, and to approach an area she had previously avoided.

Ann's fears at Time 1, when she was starting out in the program, were primarily about her counselling skills. She was afraid she might not be quick enough to understand what the client was saying, she would be too directive or challenge too much, or that she might either misjudge or be conned by the client. Her greatest fear was that she might actually damage clients, cause their family to fall apart, or that the client might damage some one else. Although her fear of damaging a client was not as predominant as it had been earlier, when it had caused her to avoid counselling entirely, it was nevertheless, at Time 1 her "largest fear."

Time 2.

At Time 2 Ann mentioned more hopes about wanting to be able to recognize her mistakes, be immediate, maintain appropriate boundaries and work things out with clients, than she had at the start of the program. She also spoke more about hoping to continue growing, learning, and consulting with others. Ann mentioned fewer hopes about developing professional skills and competencies. The hopes she did mention were about being supportive and giving clients the space they needed.

One of the largest changes in Ann's hopes was her increased focus on self-awareness, congruence and self-care. As we saw in the Transitions section, at Time 2 Ann was extremely tired, weary of the struggle to keep up with her course work while also maintaining the levels of personal and professional growth she expected. Her hopes reflect her increased awareness of how important it was to pace herself, take better care of herself, and learn not to persecute herself. For example, Ann hoped that when she made "mistakes" she would "recognize them, and take appropriate action and then be able to let it go, and not persecute myself." Ann had started to recognize the importance of not only being aware of how she wanted improve, but also the way she judged herself. Ann had started to distinguish between self-awareness and self-prosecution.

When Ann discussed her fears, she continued to be concerned about imposing her values and beliefs on clients or telling them what to do. She did not indicate, as she had at the beginning of the semester, that she was afraid she might not understand what clients were saying. Ann's fears over the semester had become far less focused on whether she could develop the technical, or microskills, to be a counsellor. Instead, she became more concerned that poor self-care and preoccupation with her own needs might, at some point, jeopardize her performance as a counsellor. At Time 2, shortly before the end of an extremely intense and demanding semester, Ann was feeling tired and overwhelmed. She was aware of how easy it had been for her lifestyle to become unbalanced and for her self-care to slip. Ann feared the effects of an unbalanced lifestyle on her counselling.

Ann's hopes at Time 2 were clearly reflected in the self-defining memory she imagined future self would create:

I guess that *during the transition, I really wasn't aware of the amount of potential that I had, but that after ... I was out of the transition ... that my life ... came together and was concrete and stable.* So that during the transition it seems like I'm not sure, because I'm exploring boundaries ... that *after this high time of transition that I would have chosen those boundaries, and was able to live in a very congruent way, both in my lifestyle and my profession, and it was very solid ...* and that I was continually *able to build a community around me* that was not necessarily in line with how society would ... like because you were a women, you should act this way, because that's how society tells you, but that it would *be congruent with my internal value structure*, that I'm actually defining right now ... I don't know how I'm going to come out yet, but I will have come out, and *it would be very right for me.*

....and my future self would say the self-defining memory would be that ... *there's that basic core in me that always stays the same, but that I was taking the time now to explore some issues in my life, to add on to the core, and start exploring the issues ... that that was worthwhile, like the very things that I'm doing now, even though I can't see into the future, are instrumental to where I will be, in four years from now ... but I can't see that now, but it's critical, what I'm doing now, the work I'm doing.* That's why it's so hard for me to say "this is what I'll be," cause I'm not quite there yet, but I know what I'm doing now is very critical*and all the energy that I put into it was critical because I set the foundations so solidly now, that I'm able to build a very solid structure on it.* I don't know what the structure is, though.

Ann thought she was at a critical time in her life, with the opportunity to create a foundation for the self she hoped to construct. Although she was not sure who that future self would be, she saw herself exploring and adding on to her basic core. Ann hoped her experiences would help her to develop a more congruent personal and professional life. She also wanted to build a community around her that would be congruent with her internal values rather than one that would be defined by gender roles. At Time 1, Ann had imagined a future self who would connect with "the basic core of living," and would be increasingly comfortable with herself. At Time 2, Ann's imagined future self was focused less on connecting to her experiences, and focused more on structuring her life so that it would be in balance and congruent with her values. Ann not only wanted to be self-aware, she also wanted to use her awareness to structure the life she wanted for herself in the future.

Ann's hopes regarding her counsellor development had been strongly influenced by her experiences with helpers. At Time 2 she spoke of three helpers who had helped to shape her idea of what a counsellor should be. Two of the helpers were from her past and been extremely negative models, while the third was a very positive model in the present. The helper Ann spoke most negatively about was a church minister from her past. This minister was the antithesis of what she believed a counsellor should be, a concrete example of the narrow-minded conservative judgments that had been used to control her life when she was younger. Ann energetically described how disgusted she was with his behavior, and the "pseudo-authoritarian parent" role he had adopted with her:

I remember going to the church minister for some advice, it was *pretty one-sided, and it didn't fit with my philosophy*, and in fact *I was told "this is what you do."* And I wanted to believe it, and I wanted it to fit my value structure, but it really didn't, and *it didn't feel good, and it was really an uneasy fit for me*, but I wanted to do the right thing ... so, you know, *I listened to the advice and did it, but it never fit ... I was only allowed to explore in a very confined area that fit the fundamentalist Christian ideology, and I was only allowed to ask certain questions...* and it was *a real struggle for me he specifically told me what my values should be, would be, and are!*

...he didn't ask me where I was with this and when he could tell that I was starting to challenge him, the resistance of this, he cut me off.... he was very authoritarian... I was subordinate and he was the authority, the boundaries were very clear I tried to tell him, but he wouldn't listen .. he would cut me off and say "that's not the point, the point is this."

At Time 2 Ann clearly rejected this minister's values, advice, and approach to helping. Years ago however, when she sought his advice, her feelings had been much more ambivalent. Ann's eagerness to do the "right" thing had caused her, after an initial resistance, to ignore her own values and comply with what he told her to do. This experience clearly had a strong impact on Ann; one of her consistent fears across interviews was that she might impose her beliefs on a client. Ann's concern about whether she could work as a counsellor with a fundamentalist Christian woman also makes sense within the context of her experience with the minister. She still had strong feelings about the way the minister had treated her when she went to him for help, and was determined not to do the same thing to one of her clients.

The second negative experience with a helper also had a significant impact on Ann's views on counselling. A counsellor Ann had been seeing disclosed confidential information to her about one of the counsellor's other clients:

she warned me of the actions of a client who happened to be my friend, and I thought this was really out of line for her maybe she thought my life was in danger or something, I'm not sure, but I didn't really think my life was in danger (laughs). It's not like gee, if I was going to be with this person, he might murder me. She was concerned, though that maybe there might be abuse, I'm not sure, but she told me that he may be a potential pedophile, and I thought "wait a minute here, why are you telling me this?" I mean maybe if I was, I don't know, "I'm not even a child, like how does this effect me?" Even if I were a child, it would be out of line ... and we were both clients and I was really shocked! absolutely shocked that she would tell me this, I couldn't believe it!

Ann had been appalled by the counsellor's breach of confidentiality, and had no idea what to do with the information the counsellor had shared with her. She believed the counsellor had not accurately assessed her danger, and had seriously over-reacted. Even at the time of the experience Ann had been shocked and had known there was something wrong with the way the counsellor had chosen to handle the situation. This event tainted Ann's experience with the counsellor, and she began to feel the counsellor was caught up in "some other dynamic" associated with the content of the information. After that, the counselling experience began to feel for Ann as if she was "reading the National Enquirer." At the time of the interview Ann was able to clearly identify the counsellor's behavior as an ethical violation:

now I am horrified ... ethically that's way, way, out of line. If she was concerned about me, I was in no immediate danger ... I can understand if ... there was some strong evidence that I might be knifed that night or something, like if he were to say "I'm going to knife Ann" or something like that ... so ethically it was very inappropriate and next semester, I'll take an ethics class and learn more about it! (laughs) definitely she was out of line ... back then I couldn't say that she was ethically out of line, but now I clearly can.

Looking back at the experience, after some counsellor training herself, Ann felt even more strongly about the counsellor's behavior. Her previous shock had turned to horror. Her experience with this

counsellor understandably sensitized her to the ethics of her own behavior, and made her eager to learn more about ethics. When Ann spoke of this experience she sadly remarked "looking back, I guess I really haven't had positive experiences with people helpers."

Fortunately for Ann, not all her experiences with "people helpers" were negative, she also spoke of a recent positive experience with a counsellor. Ann's experience with this unspecified counsellor contrasted strongly with her previous two negative experiences:

nonjudgmental listening, accepting, open type of space appropriate self-disclosure to help connect with me, knowledgeable in the field ... he helped me get inside my dreams so to speak, as opposed to those other people that ... said that "the dream's wrong, go for this dream." He helped to validate who I already was ... he was able to get into who I was and where I was coming from, and helped me push from the inside out, but those other people were pushing me down. He was able to come underneath me and help me rise to the occasion he was really the first one in the counsellor role that really very quickly could get inside me, and the way he did that is he simply listened to me.

Ann felt validated, able to connect more strongly with her dreams, and to move closer to what she wanted. Rather than telling what her what she should be doing, this counsellor was able to align with her in a supportive role through acceptance and nonjudgmental listening. He did not push her down as the minister had. When Ann was asked what her goals as a helper were, she wanted to be like this male counsellor:

because I had this wonderful experience with him ... the picture that comes to my mind ... [would be if] this was the person in their dream [gestures with her hands], that I could come under them and support them and help them rise to the occasion.

Ann had so appreciated his style of counselling that she hoped to adopt his style of working with people. An important outcome of this experience was that Ann had an image of the counsellor behavior she wanted to work towards, and not just the type of behavior she hoped to avoid.

Time 3.

At Time 3, when Ann was nearing the end of her practicum, her strongest hopes were that she would continue to: learn and grow; maintain high self-awareness, and sensitivity towards others; make self-care a priority; behave ethically, and demonstrate competence. She valued learning, and hoped she would be "moldable, bendable, pliable" and open to trying new approaches, particularly when something was not working with a client. She hoped she would be aware of her limitations, recognize mistakes she made, and admit to her errors.

Ann feared she somehow might be "way out" in her thinking process, and not be aware of it. She was afraid she might think she was using "an appropriate technique," being "logical" and "reasonable," when she was actually "way out of line." Although Ann recognized it as an "unrealistic fear," she was also afraid she might somehow be grossly negligent and "have to get supervision or something like that." She thought it unlikely she would ever have to face disciplinary action, but had nevertheless, thought about how she would like see herself to behave if she faced with that situation. Ann hoped she would

eventually be able to reframe the experience and shift it to “an impetus to grow and learn.” Her ability to reframe this fear may have helped her to be less pre-occupied by it, and more able to focus on her growth as a counsellor. If the unthinkable happened and she was grossly negligent, she hoped to be able to see it as an opportunity to develop the skills she needed to be a good counsellor.

Ann hoped to make a positive difference in her clients' lives. She wanted to be sensitive to clients' needs and to have a high degree of self-awareness. She also hoped she would be aware of her limitations and know when a client went beyond her abilities. Ann wanted to be competent, and to make choices consistent with her peers. She wanted to be able to defend herself to her peers if she was “taken to task,” and to be able to demonstrate she used appropriate techniques based on “some sort of principles and structure.” Ann feared that if she did not look after herself well enough, and “check in” with herself regularly, that it would “overflow” into her sessions. Ann was also afraid of the part of herself she labeled “self-destructive:”

sometimes when the client is being really vulnerable with me, I sense the power that I have ... and this thought goes through my mind that I could say something absolutely ridiculous ... it's me, they've said something that comes up from my past ... and I realize, “wow, if I ever said that, that would be terrible ... I have the impulse but don't act on it, and I won't act on it ... what scares me is that it's there.

Although Ann had never acted on these thoughts, she was concerned about even having the impulse. She realized she had to monitor her impulses and stay alert for ways that issues from her past might influence her reactions in the counselling session.

When Ann imagined herself in the future, creating a self-defining memory from Time 3, she envisioned it would be about an “internal place,” a sense of self, rather than a particular sequence of events:

it's more of ... that internal definition of my place, that I live inside me, as opposed to what I'm doing, my job, or my children are at ... it's more of who I am as a person, and then that other stuff kind of falls into place.

Ann perceived herself as having started a “new journey of confidence.” Looking back from the future, she thought would identify Time 3 as the time she had started developing an identity that was based more on her internal definition of herself, and less by her role in the external world. She perceived her experiences at Time 3 to be instrumental in the development of the 50 year old she wanted to be:

the future self is looking back ... the future self had that intact kind of inner place already, and it can see ... how what I'm doing now is building on how I got there. Like, there's a clear connection, and even though I may not know what it's like to be me when I'm 50 years old, certainly what I'm doing now is instrumental in, and intrinsically developmental in ... where I'll be when I'm 50 ... what it would be like is that 50 year old person, or however old ... I'm kind of at the bottom of this one little pond thing, of water and I can see this other kind of ocean there, that this person has explored that ocean, and experienced what I know in head knowledge, has lived it. So the colour is still the same, and the water, the values are the same, the motivations are the same, and it's like when I came here at the first of the year. I knew I was experiencing the change to some degree, and trying to get my head around it, and now I know it, I've lived it. I understand it, it's in every cell of my body. My identity has shifted now ... like I'm continuing my journey of self-care, and becoming solid in myself, and honouring my needs.

Ann believed her experiences in the program had laid the foundation for a significant shift within herself. She was gradually becoming better at self-care, and developing the solid identity she valued.

Ann anticipated that the changes she was making within herself would make it impossible to fit comfortably back into her previous life:

if I go up into [my hometown], *I really can't connect with people*, and I'm ... *very lonely*... [I hope] that I would *have the strength to change my environment*, and *take a risk*, or weigh what I want to do, and how long I'm willing to be in that environment I think *that the next couple of years for me will be really quite difficult* ... *I will leave [my hometown]* ... the reason for my leaving ... will be to *shift in my career*, which will also mean that there will be *changes in location*, and *as a mother with children, where will those children be?* ... So I see that as *really being difficult*, and I think that I see ... *some grey times ahead of me*, and even though it's *exciting* on the one hand, it's *scary* for me, and I see that this is actually happening. Yeah, I think that sometimes I'm *going to get down*, and sometimes I'm going to *feel afraid*, and sometimes ... *there's going to be sadness*, and it *might even be that I can't see beyond this sadness*. So, I guess I'm telling myself, this is what's going to happen to me. I don't see how this won't happen to me.

She imagined there would be some very difficult times ahead when she returned to her community and began to implement the changes she wanted in her life. Part of Ann looked forward to and was excited about these anticipated changes, but another part of her was afraid of the "grey times" and sadness she thought would be a part of them. Ann hoped she would have the strength to take the risk of leaving her community to pursue a new career in counselling

Ann believed her current experiences would help her to develop the future self she hoped for:

....and I think that this whole process of this year, and *all those transitions will serve me well*. *I now know what I can do [slowly, steadily]* and *before I thought I could do it, but now I know* the difference between *head knowledge*, is thinking, and *heart knowledge* is I've been there, I've experienced this.

K: I can do it again.

Uh huh, *if I've done it once, I can do it again*, there's no single reason why I wouldn't be able to.

Ann thought her future self would encounter difficulties as she tried to negotiate through the transitions that lay ahead, and that at times she would become discouraged. She believed there might be times where she would slip backwards, and lose some of her hard-won confidence. Ann imagined, however, that the experiences she was going through at Time 3 might help her future self to find hope when she was in despair:

it's a *continuing process*, and there's *no reason why I can't continue to do it*. And even though, in the *spiral I'm moving forward, I may slip back*, and sometimes that might look pretty grey, but ... *I have been to that grey area before, and I've gotten through it*, and sometimes it *might even seem like I can't see where it ends*. *But it does end, and even though I can't see it ends, to go beyond that, to believe that it will*, when there is nothing tangible in front of me saying that it will. *Because I have been to that place before, and it has ended when I believed that I could see no end*.

She foresaw drawing courage and resolve from the knowledge that she had already made it through a similarly grey time.

As Ann had progressed through the program, and taken on more challenges, her imagined future self became more complex. For example, at Time 1, Ann imagined a future self who would be able to benefit from being able to connect more fully to her experiences. By Time 2, Ann no longer found it sufficient just to connect to her experiences, she was in the process of building a foundation that would allow her future self to live a lifestyle that would be more congruent with her values. When Ann reached Time 3, although she still imagined a future self who would continue to build and become more solid, she also recognized however, that at times she would feel sad, discouraged, lonely, or afraid. Ann imagined her future self would have grey times similar to those she had experienced in the program, and at times would need the reassurance she could get from knowing she had previously made it through a similar challenge. Ann's ability to step outside her experience, and to find ways her struggles might help her future self value may have helped her to believe she was making progress and to find signs of hope when she was feeling beset by challenges.

Ann's assessment of helpers had also become more complex. She no longer viewed helpers as either positive or negative. Instead, she had come to see counsellors as people with a mixture of strengths and weaknesses:

I guess what's happened to me is *I probably have become more realistic and down to earth*, so that *I could admire someone who has counselling skills*, but *also see that there are reasons where I think that ... well, frankly they're just wrong!* (laughs) ... because in this person who's so well developed as a counsellor, *there are other areas in the counselling area, in the broader context, that I really disagree with ... how can someone be so effective in this area, and this other area I see them as really lacking?* Yet I do respect their counselling skills, and I think that probably, objectively, I could go into a session and say "this is why this person is a very good counsellor." That's really interesting for me, because I guess, *in the past if someone was a good counsellor, I was never put in an environment where I would be able to see them lacking, or they never showed anything in a session that was lacking.* Or, if they're not a good counsellor, it's very clear in a session, that's easy. *And now, and I suspect that this is the case for everyone* (laughs) and *I'm maturing ... "yes, you are a good counsellor, and now I can see areas where, gee, I think there needs to be some work ... even [if] you don't think there needs to be work, and that's okay that you disagree with me" ... and I can go away saying "yes, I have learned something here."*

Before Time 3, Ann had not realized she was making the assumption that a "good counsellor" would be equally developed in all areas. She had believed that if she admired counsellors' skills, she would agree with what they were doing and how they were doing it. She saw herself as having naively projected idealized qualities on the counsellors she admired:

if I had a really positive session, what I was doing was *making all these assumptions*, and *placing my own, what I thought was valuable, and ethical, and good, all on them.* I didn't realize that I was doing that ... So I think that *now ... counsellors are people like I am, people, and even though I can respect their skills, there are areas that everyone is lacking in,* and it's really good for me too, it really shook me up to see how skilled a person can be, on the one hand, and still be lacking on the other *before I would just see their skill level and nothing else.*

When Ann looked back at her previous assumptions, she saw them as idealistic. She believed her present perspective to be more mature and realistic. Ann had come to realize that even skilled

counsellors had human frailties and inadequacies. She had learned to discriminate between the counsellor and the person, and that she would likely respect some, rather than all of a counsellor's skills.

Intellectually, Ann had understood that clients often idealize their counsellors, but had not been aware that she, too, had been doing this:

in just a one hour session, I would only see the things that ... I could admire, because they were strutting their stuff ... and it's only because I was able to see other aspects of this other counsellor's life ... I just didn't realize I was doing that, I mean, I know intellectually that it's very normal, for instance in a group situation, for group members to put their counsellor up somewhere, and I guess I was doing that for individual counsellors, as well, kind of being seduced into a lie, I suppose, without realizing it (laughs).

Ann had also come to realize she was unfairly comparing herself to the counsellors on the demonstration tapes they had been watching in class:

when I would watch counsellor on videos, who would we see but like the paragons? like the great skilled masters? and I would think (mimicking an anxious, overwhelmed voice) "Can I ever do that? How did she know to ask that question?" and "Oh, I don't think I'll ever be able to do that!" (voice returning to normal) But what I don't see, is what I'm seeing now, you know, I don't see them screw up there ... I don't see them step back and say "you know, I really wondered what to do there, and I was kind of confused, and didn't know where to go next, so I just was quiet." And you know, I didn't hear any of that, and so I assumed they were all-knowing, and in control, and I didn't realize I was doing that.

It was a relief for Ann to recognize that even the "great skilled masters" of counselling could "screw up," or not know what to do in a session. This realization allowed her to relax her own expectations and to be less anxious about trying to emulate these "paragons" of counselling. Ann had begun to look beyond the surface when she observed someone counselling; rather than wondering whether she could "ever do that," she had begun to examine what counsellors actually did. Like a magician's assistant who could examine magicians from back stage, her awe of counsellors was fading, and she was beginning to believe she too, could come to do what they did. Ann was determined to be no longer "seduced into a lie."

Ann had several experiences which caused her to set more realistic expectations for herself. In one experience a counsellor whose skills she respected, touched her without permission. That experience made Ann question her idealistic view of counsellors, and to see that it was possible for a competent counsellor to behave in a way Ann believed to be inappropriate. Although she had not liked the counsellor's behavior of touching her in that manner, she was glad to have had the experience because it caused her to examine her beliefs about counsellors. Real-life counsellors made errors in judgment and needed to be constantly alert about their boundaries and ethics. They were an easier standard for Ann to compare herself to than the paragons of counselling. Ann did not think that the touch, itself, had been inappropriate, but rather that she had not been consulted about her feelings regarding touch.

Another experience which caused Ann to reassess her self-expectations had been when a guest speaker in one of her classes had unexpectedly winked at her:

this counsellor came in as a speaker, and she made really good eye contact with me, and then *she winked at me*, and I thought, "*is it okay to wink at someone?*" I'm thinking "wait a minute, *Ann, just stop it!*" You know, *it's okay to just lighten up here a bit*. So on the one hand *I'm analyzing everything so closely*, and on the other hand, *it's okay to just kind of lighten up*.

K: Just to be there, as opposed to kind of wearing the solemn professional kind of face, it's okay to be a bit of a personality, or to have some humour? or-

Well, I always felt it was *okay to have personality, and humour*, but I thought, *but winking, whoooh* (laughs) *or touching, and I guess in the right context, it's fine*. So I think what's happening is, ohh, I'm just kind of *getting bogged down with analyzing things ... So lightening up* on the one hand, but on the other hand, *also learning a lesson* that before I touch anyone to say "*what are your boundaries, is this okay?*" and to *really look at ethical areas*. So that there's *two things happening* for me there, *it's okay to be light and easy ... but also, there's a tremendous responsibility, and take it seriously, but not so seriously that I immobilize myself!*

Ann's first reaction to the experience had been shock and disbelief, shortly followed by a self-admonition to lighten up and not analyze everything. She wanted to strike a balance between being "light and easy" and being serious about the "tremendous responsibility" of counselling. Ann recognized she was in danger of "bogging down" and immobilizing herself if she did not take a lighter approach. She wanted to infuse a proper regard for boundaries and ethics, with a greater ease and flexibility when she counselled

Ann's experience on her practicum also caused her to re-examine her beliefs as a counsellor. She found a greater difference between the theory and practice of counselling than she had expected. She had discovered that issues weren't as "clear cut and easy" as they had appeared in the textbook. Making ethical decisions and value judgments in the field were far more complex than reading about them had been. This was particularly true in Ann's practicum where she counselled minors. The decisions she saw counsellors around her making at her practicum setting caused her to question her values:

I still haven't come to terms with some of the ways things are done, that maybe the client doesn't know the full picture ... but just being allowed in this person's thinking process of why they did what they did, and how it was for—I can clearly see it was for the best interests of the client ... for instance the client's taking drugs and if they continue to take drugs, they're going to really hurt themselves, so how to respond to that ... *do I honour the client and continue to allow them to hurt ... their body? Or do I not honour the client in the sense of doing something about that? Especially, for instance if they're minors*, then, then it's like (loudly) whoa! These aren't adults anymore! ... so if a minor is doing something detrimental to their body ... they're putting needles in their body, and they're shooting up with hard drugs, well ... *I'm not going to honour this! I am going to get involved, and I am ... going to stop this*, and coming to terms with that, and maybe manipulating the environment. So ... that even though they trusted me, and gave me this information, that they don't know it was me who brought an end to that activity. So that ... they could come to me and be angry about it, but not necessarily know that I had a hand in ... stopping that behavior, and *that's hard for me because I think, ohh you know, am I being totally up front? But, if I was totally up front with the client, they could be dead the next day, so that's messy for me, and finding my way through that*.

K: So you're still trying to sort your way through that, and some people around you serving as models for how to look at that?

Yeah, yeah, and *at first when I hear it, I think "Oh, wow! That's really stretching things!"* and then to think, "*Well, it's not as clear cut, and easy as in the book.*" ... *This person could die of an overdose ...you can't find a little case that applies. So getting a good dose of reality, and going back*

to what my parameters are, what my values are, what my comfort zone is, and what really is in the best .. view of the client ...

K: And what you see in some people around you is causing to look at those questions in different ways than you would have before?

Uh huh ... I guess I have these values, and one value is telling the truth, and being forthright, and up front, and then another value is serving the minor, and having the best interests ... And coming to terms with that, what that means, putting one value over the other. So even though I value both, one becomes more important than the other, and I don't act on one. That's a conflict for me, and that's where I'm at there.

K: So trying to sort through all these greys and relativism, like before it was "yes, this is truth and justice, and these are my values," (Yeah, yeah) and now ... they're kind of running into each other (uh huh) and they're not as clear cut.

No, and I am comfortable with putting one value, if I act on one value, I might have to, the other value is kind of squeezed and I'm okay with that, except that I'm not used to how it makes me feel, and I've got to let up on myself. I, I, I can't, sometimes I can't act on all my values equally, even though I want to, and I need to let up on myself.

The decisions Ann witnessed other counsellors making had caused her to wrestle with her own values and ethics. Her initial reaction had been to reject some of the decisions she saw as too extreme, but upon further reflection, she found herself reassessing her beliefs. Ann found it particularly difficult to make value judgments when children were involved; her value of being truthful and direct with a client came in conflict with her value of protecting a child from harm. After an internal struggle Ann was able to prioritize her values, and act on those priorities, but this came with a significant immediate cost. Ann was unused to having to sacrifice one value for another, and this brought up feelings that were difficult to manage. Ann recognized the need to learn "let up" on herself and was trying to learn how to make value judgments without so much inner conflict.

Ann's shift to a more complex way of viewing other counsellors' behavior, and her shift from judging them as either good or bad, had a similar parallel in the more complex way she viewed their value judgments. She had moved to a more complex and confusing perspective of moral relativism where she was trying to prioritize conflicting values. Intellectually Ann could understand that one value would sometimes override another, but emotionally she still felt badly when she could not equally honour all her values. Ann's move to a more complex view of her own and others' values and behaviors, brought with it emotional costs. Ann was willing to struggle with her confusion, and to accommodate to the difficult feelings this shift brought up, because she valued this more complex perspective.

Self-Defining Memories

Many of the themes mentioned by Ann in the transitions and possible selves sections were repeated in her self-defining memories (see Appendix U). In particular, the theme of having an independent personality and her struggle to learn to honour and believe in herself as a unique individual, was

repeated across several SDMs. A similar repeated theme was that of feeling isolated and alienated, a sense of being different than her family and community members.

The importance of making a positive impact and helping facilitate other's growth was repeated in Ann's SDMs, and it was something she clearly valued. The importance exploring and understanding of her values, and a strong sense of being intrinsically motivated, were also repeated in her SDMs. At the same time, however, some of Ann's SDMs indicated a need for external validation, particularly from someone who was older and respected. Although Ann clearly valued helping, and knew her goal was to help others, she had been uncertain of her innate suitability as a counsellor, and wanted someone with experience to be able to reassure her that she prerequisite personality and value structure.

Many of the other themes, although strong within a particular SDM, were not mentioned in more than one SDM (see Appendix V). One such theme was Ann's choice of whether to fulfill her needs, connect with her core, and go after her dreams, or slowly die within herself. Another strong theme was Ann's reaction to suicide attempts, and how far she had progressed in that area. Although Ann referred to suicide in only one of her SDMs, the number of other times she mentioned it during the interview indicates it was a significant and ongoing concern for her.

Other themes that were not repeated across SDMs, yet were clearly developed within a particular memory, included the importance of: meaning and doing things for a reason, rather than unquestioningly repeating what had been done before; being calm and in control, rather than anxious and fearful; being diligent and preparing for things in advance; being a fully functioning woman who is able to recognize the power of the choices available to her; and being able to rewrite experiences and to change perspective in order to create a new response to the environment.

Time 1.

The first SDM Ann shared happened the year before she began counsellor training. This memory was about a crisis in her "soul," when she had to choose between reconnecting with herself and her needs, or sacrificing her dreams and gradually dying within by staying alone and isolated in her marriage:

I came to a crisis in my ... lifestyle, and what was happening to, I'll call it my soul; that part of me that's not my personality, but that other part of me, hope, I guess is related to that ... I didn't feel connected to my husband for years, and when we moved to [northern town], which was five years ago, just became more and more disconnected. So last summer, it came to a crisis in myself ... I started to kind of die within, because my needs weren't being met. I was still in the married role ... in a small redneck community that votes Reform, really conservative. It wasn't appropriate for me to meet my needs. Because I was married, it was appropriate for me to be home with my children ... my husband was out and about a lot, so I was very lonely. And I had a choice, I could stay there .. and probably grow bitter, and just say no to myself, that I'm not going to look at what important to me ... It's a very isolating experience, because you really don't have a husband, even though there's a husband there, and the community responds to you like you're married, but you're really not, so really, really isolated. I remember deciding what am I going to do? I could continue this, and be isolated and alienated, or I could do something. My needs weren't being met, so I chose to have an

affair, here in Victoria, actually. During the summer I took a holiday, and it was very calculated, and I decided to, and it was really hard on me, because it's not connected to my values. I mean, I felt like throwing up (half laugh). It was so emotionally hard, I mean, but I really needed to. I guess I needed to start to live my own life, and just look after myself, and I think that's probably one of the better things I've ever done for myself, is to have that affair, because this man .. was a support system for me, really believed in me, and I really needed that at that time. And going through the whole dilemma of not being congruent with my values; my values are not to have affairs. But, I did, and it was a very positive thing for me, a really, really positive thing. Now I know that he was involved with another woman at that time.

K: He, being your husband?

Yeah, yeah ... So I guess for me, I learned that sometimes my values are idealistic, and so ... the memory is making a choice to reconnect with who I am. And what I found out by the man that I had the affair with, is that I could jump back into my memory to when I was nineteen, and I was still there with my dreams. I thought those dreams had died. I thought that because I was around negative people so much, that perhaps I had lost that hope I had when I was nineteen, before I got married, before all this happened. And through this man that I had the affair [with], I was able to go back and circle, or go around that whole piece of my life, and I was still there. And I realized I have the same dreams, I was the same person, and it hadn't died. But I felt that I was right on the verge of deciding. This lady that I work with ... [after] twenty years says "I'll never forgive myself for marrying this man" and I didn't want to be like that. So ... if I didn't get out the way I did, and have that affair, I think I would have chose[n] to stay there, for the sake of the children, and die inside, because it was happening ... that was a very important thing for me to do, to choose to be true to myself. And I guess my husband leaving me was very good, because if he didn't leave me, I probably would have stayed for the children, and it just would have taken longer. So I guess that would be the memory, of deciding "I'm not doing to sell myself up," like the women ... in the 1950's.

....when my husband said that he had the affair, I went out for a drive that night, and I was so happy! I thought "there is something wrong, you're not supposed to be happy," but I was free then. And I had already made the decision to connect with myself. And now I could do it in freedom, as opposed to the confines of him being there.

Ann's relationship with her husband had been deteriorating over the years and few of her needs were being met in the marriage. She had decided it would not be appropriate to start a relationship with someone else in her small community. This decision meant that Ann had become increasingly alienated and isolated over the years and gradually had "started to die within." Eventually, she reached a nexus point where she had to decide whether to reconnect with who she was, or let her dreams and sense of self continue to slowly die. In desperation, Ann decided to have an affair when she was on vacation in Victoria. Although this experience ultimately helped her to rediscover the hope, dreams and energy she felt at nineteen, the act itself was so dissonant with her values that at the time she had "felt like throwing up." Looking back at the time of the interview, Ann perceived her previous values to have been idealistic, and believed them to be less important than the decision to begin living her own life and to reconnect to her dreams. Despite the dilemma of not having been "congruent" with her values, she judged the affair to be "probably one of the better things" she had ever done.

Ann's discovery that her husband had also chosen to have an affair gave her the freedom to pursue her dreams without having to stay in "confines" of the marriage. Although her own affair had helped

Ann to start to connect to the “very core” of her, she believed that without her husband’s affair, she would have chosen to stay with him for sake of the children. Without the “permission” of his affair, Ann’s need to reconnect with her dreams and to “live” again, would have been subsumed under the greater importance of her children’s needs. Ann would have chosen to pursue only the few dreams that would have fit within the shell of her marriage.

Ann’s religious upbringing and the conservatism of her small town had made it particularly difficult for her to reject the traditional role expected of a wife and mother. Even though Ann’s dreams were vitally important to her, she would not have pursued them out of consideration for her children’s needs. Ann’s affair gave her desperately needed support at a time when she felt like she was dying inside:

I was able to really lean on him, and it helped to give me focus, because with him I could connect with the values that had stayed, and the energy that I had at nineteen ... even though for years I lost it, well it seemed like I lost it. I wondered if it had died. But I was able to connect to the very core of me, whereas in my home environment, that wasn’t encouraged.

Ann’s experience with this man who supported and encouraged her dreams, was a strong contrast to the environment she had come from. His support helped her to reconnect to a significant part of herself, and to recover some of the energy and hope of her youth. Ann’s lack of opportunity to explore her individuality while in her marriage and in her community meant that she had become progressively more alienated from herself. Until her experience of the affair, Ann hadn’t known if the vital part of herself with dreams, energy, and vision, was dead or just dormant. Instead, she had learned she had the same dreams, was the same person, and the vital part of her had not died. The hope, energy and joy that accompanied this realization likely helped provide some of the impetus she needed to finally pursue her long-delayed dream of becoming a counsellor.

The second SDM Ann shared at Time 1 was a memory of herself as a helper and this experience also helped move her closer to pursue her dream of counselling. As mentioned earlier, Ann had been reluctant to go into counselling because of her concern about her ability to handle suicidal clients. This SDM of her response when a student attempted suicide provided her with some of the reassurance she needed:

he was in transit, and just passing through, but decided to stay in the community for a little while. And he mixed his medication and drugs, on purpose one night, and ended up in the hospital ... So, the very next morning, I went to visit him in the hospital, and I was concerned about that, because this man was very suicidal, was in the hospital, and I don’t like hospitals. But, I went there, and I talked to him, and the very next day, he came to class, and I knew that he probably wouldn’t have come back to the class if I hadn’t visited him that morning. So I knew that I had made a very real impact, but I was overwhelmed that I had made that impact ... I saw him in the classroom, and I just needed time before going in there, I needed ninety seconds, just to get my head together, because when he attempted suicide, it went through [name of institution] and it went through my class ... (amazed) And there he was! He was right there! ... so what I did subconsciously to get out of the classroom ... I slammed my fingers in the door, and it hurt so bad I had to leave the room. (laughing) And I just had to leave the room, and that’s how I did it! ... I didn’t handle it very well (laughing), but I got out of the room ... I ran the [class] ... and I was really torn, because do I draw attention to it? or don’t I draw attention to it? He was embarrassed that he had done this, so I decided not to draw attention to it ... and then during that day, I wasn’t able to talk to him. He had

left me a day later, (sadly) and he never came back, *and I felt like I had failed somehow*, that he had come back because of the visit in hospital. I'm sure my facial expression showed, *like I came in and there was immediate eye contact with him in the room, and it was just overwhelming for me, I just was caught off guard and didn't have time!* I don't take responsibility in the sense that he didn't come back ... but ... *I guess I was disappointed that I never had the opportunity to connect with him on a one-to-one level, because I think if I did, it probably would have helped*, but eventually he'd have to be weaned of that anyways. So, at that time I couldn't have done anything different. I slammed my fingers in the door on purpose to get out, I mean I didn't calculate it, it just happened at lightning speed. That's how I dealt with it.

....K: It sounds like you were just so shocked, I mean this was so far from anything that you imagined would happen, that when you walked in that classroom, the very next day after you saw him in the hospital when he'd tried to commit suicide. (yeah) It was just like someone had flipped reality over (yeah) and there he was.

I didn't think they'd let him out! (incredulous) I mean, I thought they'd keep him in, and set up some sort of counselling stuff. Because the people knew ... the medical staff knew that's what he'd done. I thought that at least they'd keep him in for a couple of days, he wouldn't just be there on an overnight thing, that counsellors would be brought in, or something, but there was nothing!

K: So here you were faced with what do you do? Here's this guy who you thought would be in the hospital for awhile, he'd get some supports and instead, here he is in your classroom.

...I mean it was really complicated [i.e., concerns about the other students], and *then I had a connection with my own fear* of this, *I mean out of all the things I'm afraid of, it was that!* At sixteen, you know, *that was the thing*. So, you know, he was the reality. The students and their interplay, and then my own fear. And maybe that's why I just didn't say to the other students, I just didn't stop and put them on hold, and go find him, but I think what happened, he on purpose waited until my back was turned before he left the room one minute he was there, the next minute he wasn't! He left the community, he moved!

K: And that hit you in a hard way.

Uhum, because I knew, I knew that through my actions he had come back, and somehow through my actions, I thought that he had left, but I think that he would have left anyways. But it was a very tangible the impact that had made I just didn't think that that visit would make such a difference for him.

This SDM was significant to Ann for a variety of reasons. One reason for its importance was due to her desire to have an impact on others' lives, and to help others. In this experience Ann had discovered she had more impact in her student's life than she realized. A part of Ann was overwhelmed and somewhat alarmed by the extent of this influence in his life and she subsequently believed that she had failed him somehow. Another part of Ann was less harsh in her assessment of herself and believed he probably would have left despite any actions she might have taken. Even though intellectually she knew she could not have prepared herself for his sudden appearance, or handled things much differently, emotionally she felt responsible for his abrupt disappearance. Although Ann believed she had a lot to be proud of regarding the way she had handled the situation, she did retain some lingering doubts about her effectiveness, and her preparedness to handle suicidal clients in the future.

This SDM reflects Ann's unresolved questions about whether she could handle suicidal people effectively. Ann knew that some of her strong reactions to this incident were due to her personal issues associated with suicide. At the same time however, Ann was reassured by how far she had progressed.

Although she still felt threatened by “life and death issues,” she believed she was gradually becoming more comfortable with them. Ann drew a sharp contrast between this SDM and her first experience with a suicidal student:

three years prior to that, when I had my first incident, I don't know if I would have been able to go to the hospital. Well, I didn't (laugh), I didn't even think about [it]! It wasn't even a possibility, cause I guess I was caught up in my own stuff.

Ann was happy she had progressed in her ability to respond to suicidal people. She had even begun to anticipate the next time she would be challenged by a similar situation:

so, when it happens again, for instance, it will be interesting for me to see ... because ... I have made some movement in this area ... but I'm ready now! I'm ready now to try it again. I'm ready now to do another contrast thing. Now, I would like to.

....you can't plan these things right? You can't plan when someone will attempt suicide next, so that's why it's such a pure measure for me ... so utterly pleased about that, because that means it was genuine growth.

Ann liked this SDM because it provided her with “a pure measure” of “genuine growth” in an area where she felt insecure. Unlike other experiences, which might be planned or calculated, a suicide attempt required an immediate response. Ann had been anxious to have tangible proof she was ready to start counselling, and her discovery that she could respond more effectively to suicidal people was very convincing evidence of her preparedness. She could see progress in the way she responded to suicidal people, and had even begun to look forward to the next time she would be challenged by this type of situation. This memory may have been particularly relevant to her at Time 1, when she was at the start of her counsellor training, struggling with doubts and uncertainties about her counselling abilities.

Time 2.

At Time 2, when Ann was initially asked to share a SDM she hesitated, indicating she had “a memory in the forefront that's really strong” but she wasn't sure if she really wanted to talk about that memory. Ann was encouraged not to rush in, to take the time to check in with herself to see if she wanted to share the memory, and then to find another one if she didn't feel comfortable about sharing that particular memory. At that point she began wondering why she had “these barriers about sharing” the memory; she was encouraged to pick another memory rather than worrying about the barriers themselves. Ann volunteered that the memory she finally selected was the third SDM she had considered.

The first SDM Ann selected at Time 2 was her memory of telling her mother she was not going to have a white wedding:

I remember when I was 16, explaining about my non-traditional ways of viewing myself moving in society. (softly) I didn't speak like that when I'm 16, though. And I remember working with my mother and thinking it was very important for her to know that I was not going to follow society's rules just because that's the way it has always been done. So the theme of this self-defining memory would be probably non-traditional incidents like this, a philosophy I have. And when I think back,

the first time I can remember something like this is telling Mom that when I got married, I wouldn't get married wearing white and going through the whole procedure, because for me it didn't have any meaning ... that tradition of the white wedding dress, and that kind of thing. And that was really important for me to explain that to my mother by the time I was 16, because she had pressure, it was very important to her to be the mother-of-the-bride, and go through that stuff. And so she just accepted that that's the way I was, and that has followed me even to when I worked at the [academic institution] ... I remember there, running into a few little problems because I didn't understand why we had to jump through the hoops for paperwork ... I needed to ... know why, where they fit in this system, that was really important ... it was really important to know why things had been done the way they've been done. Not to be a little trouble maker, but to understand the system, and then ... what happens in my mind is that I evaluate the system and weigh the pros and cons and see if there's a more efficient, effective way to serve the student population. In the same way I see that as looking at society and evaluating society and the rules, and seeing where I fit with society or at the [academic institution]. So that cluster of memories would talk about my value system.

.... being intrinsically motivated by my own value system. It really isn't a need to buck the system, but if it doesn't fit with my values ... I have a difficult time going with it for the sake of doing it ... so I thrive in environments that are consistent with my internal value structure.

.... I think that was the first time when I was able to articulate that I'm separate from society. I mean I'm in society, but also I can stand apart from society, and decide how I'm going to function in society ... I also remember no one, none of my peers or my family doing this, that I was very much alone in doing this and it didn't seem to matter. All my friends, they're the ones, the white wedding dress and the (softly) little house and that kind of thing. Maybe a role model would be a teacher I had, but other than that, I was very, very separate. So sometimes I wonder ... why, why am I so different than my family members, or my friends? ... and I can actually say at sixteen I had the one memory when I can actually see the pattern starting, it probably started years before, but I don't have any solid, something I can hold on to.

This memory was the earliest point Ann could identify where her value system caused to make a choice that ran contrary to society, standard practice or other external norms. She saw this memory as part of an ongoing and consistent pattern in her life where she would evaluate a situation, decide where it fit with respect to her "internal value system" and then make choices based on her values. Even at the age of 16, Ann was far more concerned about making decisions that were meaningful to her, than she was about being like her peers or family.

Ann was strongly driven by intrinsic motivation, and her own value system rather than societal or institutional expectations. This individually did, however, come at a cost. When many of her teenage peers were desperately trying to fit in, and unquestioningly following group norms, Ann was struggling to find personal meaning and relevance in societal expectations. Ann's statement "I was very much alone in doing this and it didn't seem to matter," makes it clear she was not going to be deterred by the loneliness of her struggle. At the same time, however, there was a hint of unresolved pain in her question "why, why am I so different than my family members, or my friends?" Although Ann felt alone in the choices she was making, this sense of separation from others was not enough to undermine her determination to live according to her internal value structure. She had decided that although she was a part of society, she would make her own choices and "stand apart from society" when needed.

Ann's choice of the wedding dress SDM, with its focus on a lifestyle determined by internal values rather than societal or institutional expectations coincided with the end of her pre-practicum. At that point in her studies, Ann was struggling to find the energy to complete the papers required to grade her experiences over the semester, and she resented having to jump through academic hoops to document changes that had already taken place within her. Ann's struggles in the program were very similar to her difficulty jumping "through the hoops for paperwork" at the academic institution where she had worked. She was feeling tired and worn out from the tremendous effort she had invested into her counsellor training throughout the semester, and it was difficult for her to find the energy she needed to complete a task that was so extrinsically motivated, i.e., to document for her professors the changes that had already taken place within her. Although she recognized the need for papers in an academic institution, a part of her probably felt as if she was agreeing to wear a white wedding dress. This was however, a compromise Ann chose to make because she valued the training she was getting from the program. It did not, however, make it any easier for her to find the energy she needed to complete the semester's paperwork.

Ann's other SDM at Time 2, illustrated some of her other needs during that time in her counsellor training. This was a memory Ann had previously mentioned during her first interview. During that first interview it had not, however, been in response to the request for an SDM. Instead, she had mentioned this memory at the start of the first interview (before the concept of SDMs had even been introduced) when describing her experience of coming to train as a counsellor. This SDM happened when Ann was in the process of trying to decide what to do when she went on sabbatical. Originally Ann had planned to train to work with the visually impaired, but she had had some uncertainties about that goal and had been exploring other possibilities. She happened to casually mention her educational leave to a counsellor acquaintance she had spoken with a few times, and to her surprise (he was unaware of her dream to become a counsellor) he remarked that he could see her in the role of a counsellor. This feedback from the counsellor had a tremendous impact on Ann:

he said that *he could see me in the role of a counsellor*, and I was really quite taken aback at that because I had hardly spoken to him, and I certainly didn't tell him anything private, my value structure ... he had quite an impact on me because ... *I was really being myself* ... he didn't see me in the teaching role ... he saw me as a parent, and really in the community, and not ... doing a workshop or something like that in personal growth. So *he was able to connect with a ... part of my personality*.

....K: And what ... [is] important to you now, when you think back on that, in terms of it helping to define who you are as a helper?

I think there is a *dichotomy between academic knowledge and being a good counsellor*, and even though you can have academic knowledge, *some people I believe, just aren't going to cut it as a good counsellor*. You know, there's that something else that, maybe it's the personality. I'm not sure what it is, but *it's something that I think you need to have before training will work*. And he was able to identify that something else, maybe it's a value system.

.... *he was older too (clears throat) which was important to me because he had been around ... he had a similar background to me, but far more advanced ... so he had a great wealth of experience, so he wasn't some 20 year old who hardly had any life background. He had a great deal of rich life background, in fact was retired, and counselling now, so that really helped validate what he had to say for me.*

K: And the impact of what he had to say was what for you?

That he saw that ... *counselling would be an appropriate profession, that he thought that I would do well.*

....back then ... *the academics weren't a concern for me ... I think that if people have average intelligence, they can learn counselling techniques, but there's that bit of personality type of, I don't know what it's called, but I expect he was able to pick up.*

....K: So it was kind of validation that maybe you could do it, or that..?

Uh huh, *that I was cut from the counsellor-in-training cloth (laughs).*

....when I later asked him specifically what it was, he was able to describe, and I really can't remember what ... the particulars are now, but then I wanted specific behavior ... *I needed to know that this wasn't ... [a] general type of airy-fairy statement.*

....so it was *quite encouraging* to me, and I think that *he was instrumental* in myself applying the year I did for school.

....*I had identified an interest in the helping profession when I was around sixteen, in grade 10, but decided that I needed (softly) life experience first, so I thought this was a sign that I might be ready.*

Although Ann had cherished the goal of becoming a counsellor for a long time, two major concerns had held her back from pursuing that goal. One concern had been whether she had sufficient life experience to make a good counsellor. The other concern had been whether she had the special innate characteristics she believed were necessary to become a good counsellor. Ann was not sure exactly what those characteristics were, whether it was some aspect of personality or a person's value structure. She did, however, believe it was something distinct from academic ability and counselling techniques. A chance observation by a senior and respected counsellor provided Ann with the external validation she had been seeking, that she was indeed, "cut from the counsellor-in-training cloth."

Ann had been relatively confident of her academic abilities, but very uncertain about the suitability of her personality, value structure, and life experience. The senior counsellor's endorsement had provided her with the reassurance that she had the essential pre-requisite personality, value structure, and life experience to be a counsellor. Experienced, seasoned, and finally believing in her suitability as a counsellor, Ann had decided she was ready to apply to graduate school. Ann's criteria and her own pre-admission assessment of her suitability for counsellor training had probably been far more rigorous than most graduate programs.

When Ann shared this SDM, it was at the end of her first semester into the program, a time she had described feeling as if she were on a small island, exhausted and collecting her energies for her next swim across the ocean. This SDM was likely very reassuring to her at a time when she was tired and searching for the strength to continue on to the next part of her journey.

Time 3.

At Time 3, the end of Ann's practicum, the SDMs she shared were affirming memories, associated with self-efficacy, identity, and internal strength. The first SDM she mentioned was the experience of birthing her second child, a memory she identified as illustrating her whole philosophy of life:

for three months before she was born, I would visualize what it would be like to give birth and go through the procedure of what it would be like ... *I would visualize* the baby coming out of my body and how I would respond to that ... *a relaxation process*, and I'd play this particular music ... so when I heard the music, *my goal was to connect the music with this place of calmness and control...* and I was *very diligent* in that, and so when the time came, *I was able to do what I had prepared ... in fact during labour, I was surprised how calm I was*, and I was very ... relieved. It was like I had clicked into a different mode, there wasn't that fear like there was with the first child, so *I felt very much in control* ... and I had really worked with my mind, and my anxiety, and I could see, in a very really tangible solid way, how a shift in my mind could affect my body ... and how I could experience labour in a far, far, different way than with my first child ... and *that was a really incredible experience for me, because my body hadn't changed, but my mind had, and I worked with my body, and accepted my body ... and experienced it, as opposed to being fearful and fighting my body* [like] the first time ... and yes, actually when I delivered my child it did hurt, but nothing like the first time. It was quite a shift, *and something that I will remember always*. And that I know that *I can go back and prepare my mind for other things that maybe I would find difficult, and certainly have*, like through this year, and I would say that this is [a] *really profound first time for me*.

The memory of preparing for the birth of her second child was very profound for Ann because of its similarity to her experience of preparing, and then working through the challenges of counsellor training. This SDM had significance for Ann at two different levels. One of the ways this memory was significant was at a global level, as "political-feminist type of statement" of what it meant to be "a fully functioning woman." She equated her birth experience with the "feminist political power" of women. Ann believed women did not have equality, but that they did have a choice in how they respond to this inequity; "women can take their plight, and they can do something about it."

Ann also attached a more personal and microscopic level of significance to this memory. This SDM demonstrated to her the power and control she had over what she experienced:

it's like in narrative therapy ... or the constructivist view ... I changed my language, I wrote my experience differently ... the power of changing perspective, rewriting the script ... I can, and I think anyone can, basically change the reality. Even though, yes, I'm going to birth this child, I can't change that part, but I can certainly change how that child is going to be birthed.

K: So it's kind of you reaching out and taking an active part in how that's going to go, sort of becoming the narrator rather than the recipient of the story (uh huh, yeah) almost?

Uh huh, yeah. Being able to seize, I guess, control in areas that I can, and working within those areas and being comfortable. This child is going to come out of me, no matter what I do, and I can make it good, or I can make it not so good, and I choose to make it good, and quite good.

Through the experience of giving birth to her second child, Ann learned she could change her perceptions and rewrite her script to change her experience. When she seized control of the areas in her life that she had power over, she discovered she could drastically alter the quality of her experience.

Ann perceived this memory to be closely linked to the philosophy of life she had been evolving over the years.

[it] springboards to a very fundamental philosophy in my life, that I can change my response to my environment, and as I look throughout my life, I would say that as a child, as a teenager, as a young woman, as a woman ... where I'm at now, that that's consistent. Even though, for instance, I grew up in poverty, I had a choice. I could stay in poverty, or I could put myself through university and not let poverty define me, "Oh, I can't afford to go to university."

Ann had been battling to make active decisions in her life rather than succumbing to the difficulties of her environment since childhood. She had chosen not only to struggle against the poverty of her childhood, but also the pressures in her northern community to maintain the "status quo." There were strong expectations within her community to conform, to be like the others, to have babies, to listen to the male elders in her church, and to remain in the community rather than pursue post-secondary education. Ann vividly described how difficult it had been in that environment to find the energy to follow her dreams:

it's like there's a bucket of molasses that is poured on people growing up in that environment, upon me, and it just drains you, and pushes you to the floor ... ohhh, there's so much force to stay and keep the status quo.

When Ann looked back at her experiences growing up, she was amazed that she had withstood the pressures upon her to maintain the status quo, and had actually made her own life-affirming decisions. She was able to identify this second experience with childbirth as a concrete example of the power she had to make her own decisions in life.

It was only in retrospect however, that Ann was able to see this memory as an example of a pattern that had been guiding her behavior over the years:

that honouring of myself, and believing in myself, and looking after myself ... that's what I was doing all those years, and not realizing it though, just feeling really out of whack, and realizing something was really, really wrong here.

This memory was important to Ann because it was an example of her lengthy struggle to maintain an independent sense of self despite the pressure in her environment to conform to external standards. At Time 3 when Ann was becoming progressively more comfortable with herself and her environment, this was a validating and empowering memory because it affirmed the importance of owning her choices. It is not known if the recall of this memory (and others like it) helped her to more powerfully believe in

herself, or whether her increasingly strong sense of self meant she chose to remember experiences which validated that sense of self. It is likely that both possibilities are true; she could develop a greater belief in herself and a stronger sense of independence through the recall of similar experiences in her past, and that the more strongly she believed in herself and her independence, the more likely she was to recall those experiences.

Ann's second SDM at Time 3, validated her innate strength as a helper and demonstrated a potential beyond what she had been taught:

when I was 19, or so, my friend was complaining about this young man who was awkward socially, and [she asked] why he was like that. *I remember telling her ... that I thought he was motivated by a need to be accepted, and if we accepted him, probably he would relax, and not be so socially awkward ... then I remember this woman who was listening to us ... and she said to me that she was surprised about how I would say that, and said something to the effect that my mother had taught me well ... I was offended right away, because this didn't come from my mother ... there [had been] no teaching about that, that this came from me, this was my own personal thought process ... but it also felt very good ... I took it as a personal compliment.* That was an indication "yes, I am able to look at social situations and maybe with some degree of richness, indicate something of benefit." Because ... [it helped my friend], instead of responding to his social awkwardness, [it] helped her to see beyond that, and how perhaps she could facilitate his growth. That was ... kind of like a stroke for me, "yes ... this feels good, that was right, and no, it's not my mum, this is me." *I respected this woman, this woman was a lot older than me, and basically she was saying that I was wiser beyond my years ... that was an indication that yeah, I am perceptive ... and I am intuitive, and I am sensitive ... I can analyze and put forth in a valuable way. (quickly, emphatically) "It's not my mother! (laughs) This is me! I'm doing this!" ... A realization that "yeah, these are my skills, these are skills that I have honed in and identified.*

...because it's me, it's not separate from me, and it's like eating and breathing for me ... and even if I was never a professional helper, it's still part of my intrinsic kind of personality ... and how I define myself to some degree, it's like my eyes are blue, so the inmatenes of it, and that's why I was so offended.

....it was the first time, I think, that I really knew I had made an impact on her thinking, she had shifted. I saw her face, and I felt the energy drop because now she was thinking. It was the first time I knew that I could do that.

This was a powerful memory for Ann because an older, respected woman had validated her helping skills. It had also been an external sign she might have the "intrinsic kind of personality" needed to be a professional helper. Ann had been angry when the woman attributed the insight to training by her mother, but Ann had also been flattered and taken the remark as a compliment because it implied she had a wisdom beyond her years.

Ann's experiences in her small community and her family had left her feeling very alone, isolated, different from her peers, and uncertain about her suitability as a professional helper. Many of the SDMs she chose to share validated her skills and perspective, revealed she had the innate characteristics necessary to be a counsellor, or emphasized the importance of honouring her individuality. For example, both the helping SDM at Time 2 (where an older, respected counsellor had volunteered he could see her as a counsellor), and the helping SDM at Time 3^e (where an older, respected woman had

complimented her on the wisdom of her perspective) provided Ann with the validation that she had the personal characteristics needed by a professional helper. In a similar manner, all of Ann's non-helper SDMs emphasized the importance of being able to maintain her own personality and identity (e.g., the Affair, No White Wedding, & Birthing Second Child).

At Time 3, Ann was able to look back at her experiences and realize that "honouring" and "believing" and "looking after" herself had been what she had been "doing all those years and not realizing it." It had been difficult for her to develop a personality that was independent of her friends, family, and community, but she had persisted and was proud of the results. These memories were potent reminders of the value of those strivings, and may have helped encourage her when she was feeling insecure, sad or tired. Alternatively, these memories may have helped generate or reinforce any feelings of strength or hope Ann was experiencing. Just as Ann had been able to rewrite the script for the birth of her child to create a new experience with her second child, she was able to influence her experience as a counsellor-in-training by making active choices about how she was going to perceive and respond to the experience. *"I can make it good, or I can make not so good, and I choose to make it good ... quite good."*

Summary

Ann's journey to become a counsellor began many years before she applied to graduate school. Her early interest in helping was evident in several of the SDMs (see Table 18). Unfortunately, Ann's ambition, career aspirations, and view of people with emotional or social problems had been at odds with her community and family. Ann found their conservative expectations for women, their "superstitious" treatment of people with mental health problems, and the pressure to conform, to be like a "bucket of molasses" poured on her. Looking back, Ann perceived her life to have been a long struggle to honour and believe in herself, and the type of work she wanted to do. Ann was still striving to honour and believe in herself at the end of her practicum, but was excited by her progress and feeling far more connected to her sense of self than she had before.

When Ann was growing up, she felt isolated and different, and kept her views on mental health to herself because they differed from the rest of the community. Ann also lacked a role model until she was taught by a psychologist who shared her mental health experiences with the class. This psychologist had a significant impact on Ann because she was the first professional woman, other than a teacher, that Ann had met. Previously, she had not known it was possible for women to get doctorates. In addition, this was the first time Ann had met someone with similar beliefs about mental illness. Ann was tremendously relieved to discover this woman had a humane and compassionate approach to working with people with mental health problems, rather than the fear-based behavior she had become accustomed to in her community. The psychologist provided Ann with a welcome role model, and was instrumental in her choice of a career.

Ann's unfortunate lack of early role models or people with similar views of mental health made her very uncertain of her ability to be a counsellor. This lack of confidence made Ann eager for external validation; she wanted reassurance from someone she respected that she had the intrinsic personality needed to be a good counsellor (e.g., Counsellor Personality and Intrinsic Helper Personality SDMs). Her lack of confidence also made her very vulnerable to criticism (e.g., the negative comments made by a professor about her tape), and easily question her suitability as a counsellor.

Ann not only sought validation from others however, she also set herself rigorous self-tests to assess her suitability as a counsellor (e.g., Could she handle suicides and separate herself from clients' problems? Could she work with clients who cried or had fundamentalist Christian beliefs? Could she work with suicidal clients?). At the end of her pre-practicum Ann had successfully passed a number of her self tests (e.g., she counselled a fundamentalist Christian, and a client who cried) and had enough confidence in her abilities to believe she had "the stuff it takes to do it." By the end of Ann's practicum, she felt solid enough to state that she felt "seasoned" for the first time. Ann also had started to speak of herself as a counsellor rather than a "people-helper" as she had before. Even though she was somewhat tentative when referring to herself as a counsellor, Ann had started to believe she was "cut from counsellor in training cloth" and she could eventually become a legitimate member of the counselling profession.

Ann's initial goal had been to help people by becoming a psychologist, but she had been too uncertain of her ability to handle suicidal clients to pursue her goal at that point. Instead, she had gone into teaching, and taken her first job at a reserve. Ann had been appalled by the horrible conditions children experienced on the reserve (e.g., suicide attempts, young girls raped), and her initial reaction had fallen somewhere between shock and "extreme distress." She had been upset to discover she was not allowed to directly intervene on the children's behalf, and her only permitted role was teaching the approved curriculum. Gradually, Ann was able to separate herself from the distress, and to feel less overwhelmed by the children's situation. Instead, she began to focus on what she could do within her teaching role to help the children. Ann experimented with alternative teaching methods and eventually began to use experiential and group work to help the children within the teaching framework. Although this was an extremely difficult experience for Ann, it demonstrated to her that she was able to separate herself from the emotional distress of the people she helped. She did however, retain doubts about her ability to work with suicidal people.

Ann's response to the emotionally distressing experience of teaching on the reserve was similar to the way she responded to the experience of coming to train as a counsellor. Ann identified the start of her program as "the most intense time" of her life, a time when she felt in shock and turmoil. She responded to the emotional challenges of counsellor training by going through periods where she would "freak out" for a while, and then would return to what she was working on and "get right back into it." By the end of her first semester, Ann was no longer in distress; she perceived herself to be at the "apex"

of her development, stronger and healthier than she had ever been. Despite her emotional distress, Ann had chosen to persevere, to repeatedly return to the challenge of trying to actively cope with something that was extremely difficult. Ann continued with the challenges of counsellor training despite her emotional distress, just as she had in her struggle to find a way to help her students on the reserve.

Until shortly before Ann's entry into the program, her fear of a client dying had kept her from counselling. Initially, Ann's fears had caused her to choose teaching rather counselling or psychology as a career. Her choice of a teaching career had been based on the mistaken belief that as a teacher she could avoid having to work with people who were at risk of dying. Ann persevered, and gradually became less paralyzed by her fear of suicidal clients.

Ann's experience with a suicidal student, shortly before her application to the counselling program, caused her to reassess her readiness to counsel clients. Although she was critical of her discomfort in the situation, and uneasy about the impact she had on the student's life, this experience gave her tangible evidence of a new readiness for counsellor training. Even with this proof, Ann was uncertain whether she had the intrinsic personality and values necessary to be an effective helper. It took the unsolicited observation of a respected senior counsellor in the community to convince her she was ready to apply for counsellor training.

When Ann entered the counselling program, she underwent a totally unanticipated transition in her response to clients and death. At the start of Ann's program, she had been far less afraid of a client dying than she had been, but it still remained a concern for her. Once in the program however, she began to meet others who had worked with the dying, and her views gradually shifted. Ann became intrigued and even somewhat attracted to the idea of counselling the dying, and to see it as extremely meaningful work. The Ann began thinking about the very thing she had previously feared. She had worked through her fears to the point where she was able to entertain previously inconceivable thoughts, i.e., that work with the dying could be fulfilling. Ann was even looking forward to her next struggle to respond to someone suicidal because she found it such a "pure" measure of her progress. It is not known whether some undisclosed event in Ann's past had sensitized her and made her more fearful of work with people at risk of dying, or whether it was natural cautiousness. The theme of death however, did consistently emerge over time as a significant focus for Ann, albeit one that underwent considerable transformation.

Ann preferred to face her fears head on and to take whatever control might be available to her. When she started the program she had been extremely fearful about whether she would be able to manage graduate school and the whole challenge of living in a new city so far away from her young children. Ann chose to address those fears by arriving before the program began in the fall. Her early arrival allowed her to discover she could handle the academic challenge of graduate courses and gave her the opportunity to begin to adjust to the difficulties of a long distance relationship with her children. Ann's ability to anticipate and plan ahead for many of the challenges she would face meant she was able

to reduce the stress she experienced at the start of her counsellor training. Ann had been able to space her transitions out rather than having to face them all at the same time. This response was very similar to the choice she had made around the birth of her second child. Ann had wanted to take control of the birth of her second child; to ensure it would not be as difficult as the first had been. Ann had seized what control she could by diligently preparing her mind for the birth and rewriting "the script" for her birthing experience. As Ann had observed for women in general, she had been able to take her "plight" and to "do something about it."

Ann did not, however, try to take active control of every situation. Although it came less naturally to her, she was learning to accept rather than actively struggle against some things. For example, by the end of her pre-practicum she had learned to be "far more settled" with her "unsettledness." Ann had also started to recognize the importance of letting things go. Gradually she was discovering how much more effective she could be when she was compassionate towards herself. By the end of practicum Ann realized that when her expectations were too ideal, she persecuted herself, and ended up with results opposite to those she had intended. Ann still had high standards for herself, but she was learning to lighten up, to be more compassionate and less judgmental towards herself.

Ann had known at the start of her training that it was important to honour and trust herself, and to take time for self-care, but she had difficulty putting that into practice. She recognized in her first interview a "conflict" between her workload and personal life. Intellectually Ann knew her relationships and personal life were "essential" to her well-being, but her first priority was to get her work done and to "use every moment" wisely. By the time Ann reached the end of pre-practicum however, she had been able to get her life far more in balance. She had done this by: pacing herself better, taking more time for self reflection, taking better care of herself, and learning not to be everything for everybody. Unfortunately, Ann had difficulty maintaining this balanced approach over the next semester.

At the end of practicum Ann realized she had let her world become "very small." She had become almost totally immersed in her counsellor development. The part of Ann that liked being "driven," loved the intensity and pace of the work she was doing at university. Another part of Ann however, recognized the rest of her life had become progressively more unbalanced over the semester. Ann also was very aware her time in Victoria would soon run out and she was determined to get the most out of the time that remained. The personal sacrifices Ann had made, particularly the time spent apart from her children, strengthened her resolve not waste any of her time in the program. Although Ann did have many external demands that semester, it was her determination to cram in as much counsellor development as she could that made it difficult for her to adopt a more balanced approach.

Ann repeatedly identified her work load, and not taking time for self-care or introspection, as the things she feared would interfere with her development as a counsellor. Ultimately, it did prove to be one of her greatest challenges; one she met with mixed results. Ann was to prepared to sacrifice many

of the things other people considered part of normal life in order to pursue her dream of becoming a counsellor.

Although Ann voiced concerns about the potential consequences of becoming over-committed (e.g., her difficulties would “overflow” into her sessions), she did not believe her lack of balance over the last semester had a serious impact on her counselling. Ann’s stated awareness of the importance of balance and her actual behavior contradicted each other. The consequences of her lack of balance over one semester may have been minimal, but the effects over a more prolonged time period would likely be much more significant. Will Ann continue to struggle to find time for herself and her needs when she returns to her community? Are these lifestyle patterns? Was this lack of balance a unique response due to her time-limited opportunity to step out of her normal life concerns?

Throughout the interviews Ann clearly valued change and development; she spoke animatedly of being “on the cutting edge” and feeling at “the apex” of her development. Her memories also revealed an ongoing and long-term commitment to growth and an investment in the goal of becoming a counsellor. Until the experience of graduate school however, Ann’s goals had been pursued within the context of her role as a wife, mother, and provider. Economic and family needs had been ever-present, in the foreground demanding her attention. Even as an adolescent Ann had recognized the importance of maintaining her own independent sense of identity, but somewhere along the line she had lost sight of her dreams. The dissolution of Ann’s marriage pushed her into the choice of either connecting with her “core” again or letting her dreams die. Ann’s choice to reconnect to her dreams, and to take counsellor training in Victoria had resulted in her living alone for the first time. Ann had not been prepared for how challenging it would be to evolve a “role of self,” and how much she would struggle with loss and loneliness.

Previously, Ann’s needs had been subsumed into the background, behind others’ needs. While Ann was in the program away from her children, job and community, they moved into the background, and her needs moved into the foreground. Ann was still however, focusing on only one set of needs at a time. In Victoria, where she could focus intensely on her own needs, Ann had evolved a role of self separate from her family but had difficulty living a balanced lifestyle. How would she fare when she had to integrate her role of self with her various roles in her family and her community? How would she balance her work load and personal needs within those roles? Would she be able to continue to accept herself without falling into self-persecution again?

Ann believed she had moved from an “intellectual understanding” of who she was to an awareness that integrated both head and heart knowledge. This new awareness gave her a powerful sense of solidity, and greater confidence that she could handle the difficulties ahead. Ann’s ability to step outside her experiences and to find patterns in her behavior gave her the reassurance of having something predictable in the midst of change. Ann noticed, for example, that she tended to have a “spiral pattern”

of slipping back and forth between old and new experiences until she eventually became comfortable in the new circumstances.

Ann had also evolved a metaphor that helped to describe the process she underwent when she was struggling to adapt to a challenging experience. This metaphor also reassured Ann because it enabled her to feel more confident about her ability to handle future difficulties. Ann likened the transition process to the experience of looking into a pool, then exploring the pool, and then eventually being able to go down to the bottom of the pool and to feel safe there. When Ann was at the bottom of the pool, something would happen to give her a glimpse of a deeper ocean below her that she had not been aware existed. Initially the ocean would seem like a vast "bottomless pit," but she saw herself gradually becoming less scared or intimidated by it.

Ann had learned that one way to reduce her fear of the ocean below was to trust she would have the strength she needed when the time came. During her training she had surprised herself with her capabilities. Ann thought it likely that in the future she would also discover unsuspected abilities, just as she had in her past when she counselled her professor in front of the class, and had been able to diplomatically speak up to her practicum supervisor. Ann believed that even though the waters of the ocean would be deeper, it would have some similar aspects to her familiar pool. Ann anticipated that the skills and knowledge she had already acquired would benefit her in the new environment. In particular, she thought it would be important to remember to honour, believe, and trust in herself. Ann had developed such a "solid" image of herself that she doubted the new waters would challenge her sense of self other than at a very subtle level. Ann did not anticipate the new environment would cause her any significant difficulties unless she let herself get too busy, and did not take enough time for herself.

Ann's successful negotiation through the difficult transition to become a counsellor had taught her a new respect for her abilities and helped her to develop a much stronger sense of her identity. It had also reinforced for her the importance of honouring and trusting herself, and taking time to listen within. Her experience within this transition had also given her more confidence in her ability to negotiate through future transitions as long as she was able to remember to take time for herself and attend to her needs.

DiscussionHow did these women manage to transform such an overwhelming experience?

Each of the women in the study found the transitions associated with counsellor training to be extremely challenging, particularly at the beginning of the program. They used very graphic terms to describe the first part of their transition. Clara, for example, described the experience as "night," the "dark ages" and a time of "despair." Bonnie felt as if she were "somebody from another country" and likened her initial experience to "being drowned, under the water and struggling." Similarly, Ann found it to be "the most intense time" of her life, a time when she felt "so much newness inside" that she could barely recognize herself. Although the women found the transitions overwhelming, they continued to function well within the program.

At the end of the program, the women used vastly different terms to describe the transition. Clara likened the experience to "day," a time of excitement and hope, rather than night and despair. Clara no longer felt lost, but rather "on the route to being found." It was a time of "revelation;" she was developing a clearer vision of what she wanted, and feeling more confident about just being herself. In a similar vein, Bonnie felt like she had begun to surface, that she was coming up and looking around, rather than being under the water drowning. Bonnie had also entered into a period of self-discovery, developing greater self-confidence, and taking greater charge of her own growth. Ann, likewise, had experienced a significant period of self-growth, and was believing in herself far more than she had before. For the first time she felt "seasoned," "actualized," and at the peak of her internal development.

Although each of the women found the transition to graduate counsellor training difficult and overwhelming, there were individual differences in their responses. Ann's transition into the program was, perhaps, the most variable, she would be "okay with it" and then "start to freak out," whereas Bonnie and Clara felt more consistently overwhelmed. Ann's responses at the start of the program varied from feeling overwhelmed, in shock and turmoil, to feeling confident, energized and finding the experience fun. Ann was the only woman of the three who came to the university early to enroll in a graduate summer course before the program began. As Ann had intended, this more gradual transition into the program did better prepare her for the transitions ahead. At a minimum, it helped to allay some of her anxiety about her academic performance at the graduate level. In addition, her early arrival helped her to work through some of the difficulties associated with long distance parenting before the program formally began. Ann's decision to approach the transition in stages may have minimized the impact of this transition in a variety of other ways. For example, it enabled her to: gradually familiarize herself with Victoria and the university; begin incorporating the graduate student role into her

identity, and start to build a network of supports and resources. Even with this preparation, however, the changes still happened too quickly for her at the start of the program and she felt overwhelmed.

In contrast, Clara's late acceptance gave her little time to prepare for her entry into the program. Clara may have found the program less of a struggle, and felt less uncertain she belonged with the other students, if she had been accepted earlier and had more time to prepare herself for the transition. Almost saturated with change at the start of the program, Clara was reluctant to take risks in counselling: "The bottom line: I know I need to change, and I want to change, but there is this other part of me that *I don't want any more change in my life.*" Even though Clara recognized she needed to change to grow as a counsellor, her need for relative stability and time to rebuild her self-confidence was a greater priority. Clara made the temporary decision to "get by" with the basic counselling skills she already had, and chose to retreat into her "head" skills rather than risking her "heart." Ultimately, this decision appears to have helped Clara get through that difficult time period without becoming overwhelmed. After some successes, she eventually did begin to take risks and to make changes that helped her to grow as a counsellor. This decision did, however, have the consequence of putting her counsellor development on hold until she recovered her balance.

Bonnie also found the many transitions at the start of the program difficult to handle and observed "it would be easier for me if there was just one aspect of my life changing instead of so many." In many ways Bonnie was the least prepared of the three women for the counsellor training environment. Her lack of experience in group dynamics, or full time university study, combined with her first experience living in a city made the transition a formidable challenge. The considerable planning and preparation Bonnie invested in the transition made it less difficult than it would have been. Nevertheless, the comments she made regarding that time from the perspective of Time 3, i.e., "I never want to go through that again, *it's just too much* ...I have no need to put myself through so much trauma and be so burnt out" make it clear she still found it overwhelming. Bonnie continued to apply her strengths of planning once she was in the program, and tried to get control of the transition by anticipating difficulties she might encounter. For example, she went to learn more about the library and computers before she would be required to use them for course assignments. In a similar manner, Bonnie also initiated the formation of study groups in anticipation of the support they would bring, rather than waiting until she actually did need support. These attempts to anticipate likely problems and to do something about them before they arose, gave her more control over her situation than if she had only responded to difficulties when they became crises.

Despite the challenges that Ann, Bonnie and Clara faced at the start of the program, each demonstrated significant growth and resourcefulness through the transition. Given the number of overwhelming challenges these women faced in the counsellor training program, how did they manage to transform it into such a rewarding experience for themselves? One very important factor was the strength of their dream of becoming a counsellor. For each of these women the goal of becoming a

counsellor had been a long term and deeply cherished dream. They had planned for this transition for years, and made numerous personal, family, employment, and financial sacrifices to pursue this dream. Initially the strength of this dream carried them through many rough patches, but eventually, somewhere near the end of the first term, they felt drained and had difficulty mustering the energy needed to continue. In the second semester during the practicum there was a resurgence of the dream, but a more personally sculpted dream.

These personalized dreams re-vitalized the women and caused them to approach their training with new enthusiasm and vigor. Clara, for example, characterized her new vision of her counselling dream as a "revelation." She described it as the *"lid has just been opened ... wait a minute, this is my life and I have some choices here."* She decided as a result of this revelation to make more active choices about the type of counselling she wanted to do; she no longer wanted to passively adopt the goal that had seemed the most popular i.e., personal counselling. Clara also began to question her basic values and her goals in life. Although she was not exactly certain what her final vision would be, she had "a deep sense" she was going in the right direction and was excited by the process itself. A part of Clara however, felt as if she was "limbo land" and was fed up that she did not yet have a clear vision of her goal.

Bonnie likened her new vision of counselling to a *"light bulb"* going on to illuminate connections she had not seen before. She was able to see that her teaching, counselling, and her lifestyle choices meshed and were somehow connected to a "core belief" she had about people. Bonnie was excited and energized by this insight because it helped her to realize "I don't happen in isolation, that all parts of me are connected, and are making me what I am right now." Like Clara, Bonnie was a little frustrated by her realization because it had just started to "percolate up" and she could only see "glimmerings" of it. Bonnie, however, was also confident that with time she would be able to grasp this insight more completely.

Ann's vision of herself as a counsellor also underwent a substantial qualitative shift which energized her. Her previous "intellectual" knowledge of herself had been accurate, but the awareness had not really permeated to a "heart" level of knowing. Ann's understanding changed to include a knowledge of herself at both an intellectual and a heart level of awareness. She characterized this new feeling of strength, and a greater confidence in herself, as feeling *"right in every cell"* of her body. Ann was astounded by this internal strength, she found it incredibly empowering and energizing. A small part of her however, was a little uneasy with this feeling of power. Ann was unaccustomed to this kind of strength and a part of her felt a little guilty and was afraid that this newfound power would be taken away from her.

Whether this new vision was called a lid opening up, a light bulb going off, or a rightness that could be felt in every cell of the body, the women clearly found this a meaningful and powerfully energizing

experience. These revelations, or shifts in perceptions, did not just happen to the women, they were the result of considerable introspection and continued self-examination. Although none of the women had as much time for introspection as they would have liked, they highly valued self-reflection and self-awareness. The women spent time trying to understand their own reactions, and to find the meaning underlying their behavior. They were clearly very interested in their own process, and were drawn to developing a greater understanding of themselves that went beyond the papers or journals they had been assigned as part of their counsellor training.

The women were each aware that they performed better and could take on more challenges when they took time for themselves. They found this insight difficult to put into practice, however. Ann, for example observed that when she took time to listen to herself, the messages were very accurate, but that she couldn't hear her internal "voice" when she was stressed. Clara lamented that she had spent years discovering the importance of honouring her needs and yet had to suddenly put those needs on hold in the program. For these women, one of their greatest challenges was taking sufficient time for self-care and self-reflection. Even though adequate self-care meant more of an opportunity to recharge and connect to their inner world, they found it difficult to make, or take, the time for themselves. They were easily caught up in the pressure to satisfy the many demands they faced.

With time the women came to recognize that some of the pressure they experienced in the program was self-generated. Bonnie, for example, realized she had set herself high standards and expected herself "to be perfect." Ann recognized that she tended to "over commit and get too involved," and let her life get too busy without realizing it. She also came to see that she was letting the university drive something in her that liked being driven. Clara came to recognize that her fear of not fitting in or being equal to other graduate students had been unfounded, and had caused her to be too anxious about her performance; "so much of this program was trying to fit in, and a lot of self-doubts." Not all pressures, however, were internally generated. There was also considerable external pressure; the women found the course load and academic expectations heavy.

The women faced the dilemma of being unable to get all their work done despite their best efforts. Even though these women had been out in the work force working for several years, the workload still exceeded their expectations. As Clara noted "I didn't think it would be as bad as it is ... it's like eight to midnight, that's Monday to Friday, plus weekend work. I had never worked that hard!" They were also extremely reluctant to lighten their academic course loads or ease up on their expectations regarding performance. Ann very reluctantly dropped one course in the first semester, and at the end of the first semester Bonnie observed "I think I should have taken on less ... work load is my number one barrier to my performance, but I'm in it too far now, so I will continue." Bonnie and Ann also wanted to get as much exposure to new ideas and possibilities while they were in Victoria because they knew there would be few opportunities for professional development in their rural communities. Clara did not believe she

could lighten her academic load because she felt under tremendous financial pressure and perceived no means to extend her studies to complete beyond the one year.

With time, and discussion with their classmates, the women came to realize that they were not the only ones unable to get all the readings done, and that others felt overwhelmed and had difficulty managing their loads. Initially, many of the comparisons the women made to their classmates were unfavourable to themselves. Bonnie, inexperienced in groups, found that she spent a lot of energy trying to understand group dynamics, and where she fit in with her abilities and experience. Clara's comparisons however, were more harsh than Bonnie's. Clara was uncertain *whether* she fit in. Her late admittance and past history made her particularly anxious and uncertain of her worth. These anxieties became focused on one particular student who became the "ultimate graduate student" in Clara's mind. When Clara compared herself to this student, Clara felt lowly and incomplete "I could imagine her being a professor, and I can't imagine myself ... I just see her as the complete person, and I'm not complete." Clara could see she had almost a "neurotic insecurity" about that student, but she lacked the confidence to do anything about it.

Gradually, at their own pace, the women began to risk opening up more and sharing experiences with their classmates. This personal connection to their classmates helped the women realize their classmates had many of the same insecurities and difficulties they did. Shortly into the program Bonnie initiated some informal study groups, which became an excellent place to learn more about each other's experiences. Bonnie found this shared time with her classmates really helped to normalize her experience: "it's a good time to share what's going on inside, I'm always amazed [at] the masks people have in class; they all sit there looking so together." Ann also found it very reassuring to share her experiences with her classmates: "My classmates help me to validate the normality of my experience ... it's so validating to hear them suffer with me, I like to hear it so much." By the second semester Clara felt confident enough to take the huge risk of talking to the ultimate graduate student, and to share some of her feelings with the student. This risk had a significant impact on Clara because, to her amazement, the classmate was very supportive and had extremely positive things to say about Clara, e.g., "I was floored by some of the things you would say in class ... you've never said a whole lot but when you spoke Clara, wow! People really listened." Ironically, Clara learned that while she had been judging herself to be inferior, the ultimate graduate student had been perceiving her as "up there."

The women also received important reassurance about their work from their classmates. For example, when Ann was devastated by what she perceived to be very negative feedback from a professor (i.e., extremely disproportionate ratio of negative to positive comments), she had seriously considered speaking to an advisor about her suitability to be in the program. Instead, Ann had spoken to a number of her classmates and learned that at least "45% of the class also had a similar experience" with the same style of feedback from the professor, and she became far less alarmed about the feedback. At the

end of the first semester Bonnie had been unhappy with the way she let “everything lump up at the end,” but was somewhat reassured (but still determined not to let it happen again the following semester) to discover she was “not unusual in that, that’s how everybody’s done it.” In the second semester Bonnie could begin to let go of her “stuff” about proving she belonged when she could see “I’m not at the top, I’m not at the bottom, but I’m somewhere in the middle, and that’s good enough for me.” Both Clara and Bonnie were also reassured and somewhat surprised when they found their classmates wanted to consult and get help from them. When they were approached for assistance by their peers, it sent them an important message that they were valued and belonged.

The support from classmates was very important to these women, but it was limited. Although the women were reassured when they learned their classmates were also tired, overwhelmed and feeling insecure, it limited the support available to them. Part of this limitation came from the women’s concern about not overburdening their colleagues, and part of it was pragmatic, there was very little time for any of them to attend to their needs. The women were also very aware of the impact their training was having on their other supports, their families and friends. They did not want to burden the people who were already making sacrifices and supporting them through this difficult transition. In addition, it was difficult for people not in the program to understand its intensity and demands. The dilemma for the women was that the people who best understood what they were going through, i.e., their classmates, also had little time. Their other supports who, perhaps, had more time because they were not also caught up in the program, had less understanding of the process. Sometimes, however, they found it a relief and easier to center when they were with family or friends totally away from the academic environment. It could help them to ground and to diffuse a focus that had become too imbalanced or intensely focused on counsellor training. As Clara noted about one of her supports “she reminds me of my true self.”

The women also had to make more conscious decisions about their supports. Their lack of energy and time made it important for them to learn to set more boundaries and limits; it also meant they could not be as supportive and available to others. Ann, for example stated that she had become far more able to look after herself, pace herself, and “not be everything to everyone.” In addition they had to pay more attention to where they were getting their own supports. Both Bonnie and Ann came to the program from rural areas, and had an immediate need for supports in Victoria. Bonnie handled her need for supports by choosing to initiate informal study groups, which gradually developed into a personal source of support as well. Ann, on the other hand, chose to “artificially” get a support system by piggybacking onto another person’s pre-existing supports and resources. Both Bonnie and Ann were aware of the importance of having supports while they were going through the this transition, and they made very active choices to construct social supports for themselves shortly after their arrival in Victoria. For Clara, who was married and already lived in Victoria, it was not as necessary to

immediately set up new supports. In addition, Clara was too afraid she did not really belong in the program to take the risk of reaching out and making closer, more personal connections with her classmates. Clara also had the hurdle of overcoming the fear caused by her recent traumatization in a group. Clara chose to reach out and connect to others more personally after she had built enough confidence to believe in herself enough to take risks again. Thus, although each of the women did make conscious decisions to reach out and establish more social supports, they did it in different ways and at different times.

Although the women did manage to set up some important social supports for themselves, they found it difficult to take the time they needed for themselves. They focused on assignments and papers to such an extent that it eclipsed the other parts of their lives. Their lives became very imbalanced. Clara saw the long hours and hard work she put into her training as “unhealthy” and “unbalanced” and observed “here I am choosing to do something for a year that completely goes against my philosophy of who I am as a person and what I need.” All of the women recognized this imbalance and were uncomfortable with the lack of room for activities outside their academic world.

At the same time, however, there were some positive aspects to this imbalance. Ann, for example, made her life far more “simple” than it had been before. She cut out many of her previous activities: “I don’t watch TV, or read the newspapers, and I’m not connected to the world ... I have my blinders on, and when I need to take breaks, I go to the ocean, or something like that.” As a result Ann felt far more confident and self-aware than she had ever had before. There were also, however, sacrifices associated with this lifestyle. Even though she made the conscious decision not to “sabotage” work with a relationship, she had never lived alone before and she was lonely. She found it difficult to go home to an empty house at the end of the day. Although her solitude was chosen, a part of her felt “withered” and wanted have a more intimate connection with someone.

Bonnie, like Ann, limited her connection to the world outside of academic work: “the other parts of my life have just sort of gone by the wayside.” She was uncomfortable with this imbalance, and wanted to get “back on an even keel,” but found that more of a challenge than she had anticipated. At the start of the program, Bonnie thought that her new environment and the lack of a familiar routine, made it difficult to take enough time for self-care and to live a more balanced lifestyle. Later on in the year, however, she realized “that one can always be really busy,” and what she needed to figure out was how to “set one’s priorities so that one has social relationships, and keep up relationships with children ... and yet still have the time to do all the things you need to be doing.” Bonnie had the insight that the reason she was so busy was not just due to situational demands but also because of choices she made. Like Ann, a part of Bonnie liked the intense focus, and being driven by what the university had to offer.

The women found more opportunity for self-reflection in the second semester. They became more focused on their own perspective and less preoccupied with external evaluation that term. This was a

sharp contrast to their experiences in the first semester. These independent, self-motivated professional women had suddenly found themselves in an environment where they were being watched and evaluated while they struggled to learn new skills. Ann talked about "that whole energy of being watched" in the first semester. Later on in the semester when she no longer felt the same level of anxiety, she attributed to either no longer having time for the anxiety, or being "in a such a constant state of anxiety" she was not aware of it.

Clara was also pre-occupied with evaluation in first semester. She was upset to unexpectedly find her "sense of value" linked again to what others expected of her. Clara believed that "a significant part" of her learning and growing over the last 10 years had been "letting go of the need to please others and living up to other people's expectations." She was surprised and bothered to find the need to please others had resurfaced after so many years. It made her too concerned and too conscious of her performance, and it interfered with her ability to "be present" when she was counselling.

Bonnie, like Clara and Ann, was very aware of external evaluation and expectations. Bonnie was uncomfortable with how much control of her development that others had: "I've never really done well with having other people be in charge, I like being in charge of my own growth." Bonnie had learned to be very independent and self-directed when she did her home schooling, raised her children on her own, and taught in a rural area. She was not accustomed to having the kind of direct input from others she received in the program, and knew she did not respond to it as well as she did to more self-directed learning. She was uncomfortable with the "pressure" of constantly being analyzed or graded.

At the start of the program these women became uncomfortably preoccupied with external expectations and evaluation. They had been used to feeling competent and having a self-directed work style. In the program they were uncertain of their new skills, had far less control than they were used to, and were concerned about external evaluation. Under those circumstances it was difficult for them to be as self-reflective and self-aware as they had been. By the second semester, however, each woman had started to feel more confident about her skills, to turn more inwards, and to be more her own judge rather than to focus as much on the opinions of others.

Ann's external focus had begun to wane by the end of the first semester. She was tired of "having to jump through the hoops" and documenting her growth for someone else "I have learned the lessons and now can it stop here please?" In the second semester she focused more on "appropriate self-care" and began to set limits with others regarding how far she was willing to stretch. Previously, in her uncertainty she had let others have more control over her growth. By the second semester she had decided to stand up for what she believed in, and to set the "parameters" of how far she was willing to stretch. Bonnie's focus also shifted more inwards by the second semester. She was still preoccupied with analyzing herself, but from the perspective of examining what she thought rather than "what other people might think." She had returned to a process of self-discovery and self-examination similar to the one she had evolved for herself when she had been teaching.

By the end of the second semester Clara, too, had begun to develop more of an internal focus. She was relieved to be "looking at inside of myself as the judge ... rather than outside and measuring up." Her "locus of control" had begun to shift inward and she felt less of a need to get approval from others or to prove she belonged. Although she wished it otherwise, a part of Clara still worried about pleasing others and was looking for "strokes" (for example, it had been tremendously important to her to receive the feedback that she shone when she gave verbal presentations). She was pleased however, that she had begun to shift to away from the excessive focus on others that had characterized her first term and could focus more on what she wanted and believed.

In the second semester the women also began to let go of their anxiety about control, and to have greater trust in their ability to handle the future. Clara, for example, was in the midst of questioning her career and life goals that semester, and yet she felt relatively calm in that process. Although she was uncertain of her future, she was more able to live with the unpredictability and say "okay, let's just see what's going to happen from here." By the second semester Ann also found she could let go of some of her need for predictability. She had begun to give herself permission to experiment and grow, rather than needing to know in advance how she would respond. She was learning to accept that at times she would surprise herself, to live with that uncertainty, and to trust she would know how to handle her future.

Even though ultimately the women developed greater trust in their ability to handle the future, they all reported times when they felt extremely discouraged and found it difficult to continue. None of the women however, seriously considered quitting the program. Clara described it in the following way: "I have to just keep going with it and being there and trusting that maybe something will come out of this eventually." The women had an amazingly high capacity to persevere despite the turmoil they experienced. When things became too overwhelming, they did have an emotional reaction, but they tended to contain or limit it, rather than let themselves fully experience their distress. After their reaction, they would to some extent distance themselves from their feelings and return to a more intellectual focus on the task at hand. Ann's process of freaking out for half an hour or so, and then getting right back to whatever she was working on, is a good example of emotional response followed by that kind of containment and a return to task. As time went on, she also talked about coming to feel "far more settled" with her "unsettledness."

Bonnie also talked about being "on the edge of anxiety all the time." Although she did not, perhaps, allow herself go into the same mini panics that Ann did, the feeling of panic was clearly not far away. The way Bonnie attempted to handle her anxiety was to focus on the next step, keep organized and look ahead without panicking. At the same time however, she did not feel completely in control; or "on top of it;" at times she felt as if she was "going along for the ride." One part of Bonnie was busy trying to get control and not panic, while another part of her tried to distance herself from her reactions and to

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stand up to her supervisor. These two behaviors caused her to assess herself in a new, and more favourable light because earlier she had not imagined herself to be capable of that behavior. Clara had a similar experience when she was able to share her feelings with the graduate student she feared. Clara previously had been so intimidated by that student that it would have been inconceivable for her to take the risk of sharing her insecurities. Both Clara and Bonnie were surprised when classmates sought them out for assistance and support. When Clara and Bonnie saw that their peers looked to them as a resource it challenged their earlier more modest assessment of their abilities.

When these women came into the counsellor training program, they had been employed for several years and had developed a sense of professional competence in their area. This previous competence could also be a source of reassurance to them. Clara found her previous experience to be particularly helpful when she became discouraged by the academic hoops ahead of her: "nobody can take away what I already know about myself as a person and as a counsellor. I can ... chisel away at the old self-esteem, but I really think that I have a base." Although the women became discouraged by the amount of transition they were experiencing, they each had a history of independence and competence that was available for them to call upon when needed.

It could also be helpful to put the experience in perspective. The sacrifices the women made, and the time and energy they invested into the goal of becoming a counsellor, made it difficult to keep the importance of the training in perspective. It was easy for the women to become so wrapped up in the training that it became almost their sole focus. Clara, for example, came to realize in the second semester that she had let the program become her "be all and end all." Once she realized that it was "only a year" of her life and that she didn't have to learn everything she needed to know as a counsellor in that year, she found the experience far less stressful.

Throughout the study it became clear that the way the women conceptualized their experience had a significant impact on the way their experience unfolded for them. This was a very interactive relationship. For example, the women's confidence in their abilities played a critical role in determining how threatening they assessed their experience to be. On the other hand, feedback from the external environment (particularly at the start of the program) could strongly affect how confident they were about their abilities.

Both Clara and Bonnie started the program at the same time, but with very different perceptions. Bonnie believed the program to be similar to many other university counsellor training programs; she perceived it as extremely challenging, but not particularly threatening. She had enough confidence in herself to initiate the informal study groups that eventually came to serve a source of validation for her. Clara, however, came into the program feeling fearful and threatened. Her recent traumatic training group experience and her late admittance caused her to be fearful about the safety of training groups and to question her own merit. Clara did not have much confidence in herself, or the program, at the start

of training. It was not until the second semester when she had positive feedback about her academic performance, and she began to feel more confident, that she began to perceive the program as a challenge rather than a threat. Her new confidence gave her the courage to risk speaking to someone she had been afraid of, which in turn, normalized her experience, and helped further increase her confidence.

In a similar manner, the women's confidence levels and perceptions of control interacted with their experiences. Initially, when the women felt the least sure of themselves, they were also the most concerned about what others thought and how they could meet these external expectations. Later on, as they received positive feedback from others and began to develop greater self-confidence, their focus shifted more inwards to their own values and beliefs, and they began to take more direct control of their lives. As the women began to make more active choices about their training, lifestyle, and actions, they became even more confident and assured, ready to take on the risks that would bring them more positive experiences. For example, Ann took the risks of speaking up to her supervisor and counselling her professor in front of the class, and Clara took the risk of speaking to the graduate student who had intimidated her. The experience of taking control and creating more personally sculpted visions of their future helped the women to feel more energized and excited about their training.

Even though at the start of their training most of the women's attention was focused on the many new external demands of the program, they were very active in their attempts to deal with these demands. They expected a lot of themselves and were extremely persistent, even when discouraged. Although there were times when the women felt overwhelmed, they focused on what needed to be done, and continued on with the work. They expected themselves to be resourceful enough to get themselves through, and they did. Bonnie, for example, described her response to the stress level in the following way: "that's something you have to cope with and set priorities to, 'Okay, how can I lower the stress? What do I need to do for myself?'" To a certain extent, these women were pragmatic, yes they had feelings and reactions to their experiences in the transition, but they also needed to get the work done, and they made sure they did. They took responsibility for themselves. Clara probably experienced the greatest dissonance between her imagined training and her actual experiences, and yet she, like Bonnie, and Ann, managed to produce what was needed to meet the demands of the program.

These women are remarkable examples of persistence, ingenuity, and resilience, yet one has to question the long term consequences of their choice to put their needs aside in order to accomplish what needed to be done. To what extent will they continue this practice when they are out in the field? They each recognized the need for more balance in their lives: Bonnie realized that "one can always be really busy," and that she needed to learn how to set her priorities so that she would have time for the things she needed to be doing in her personal life; Ann recognized that part of her tended to over commit, and liked feeling "driven" by what the university had to offer; and Clara felt like she was losing ground after she had struggled to learn how to honour her needs. Although they clearly acknowledged the need for

more balance in their lives, there was a gap between what they intended and what they actually did. It was difficult to find time for themselves amidst the competing demands. They were willing to temporarily put their needs on hold in order to get their counsellor training. When and where would they learn to balance their professional work and personal needs?

One of the perennial challenges for many professional helpers is learning to make self-care a priority. Larson (1993), for example, talked about the “what about me” (p. 114) question, related to “one-way giving” (p. 116) that many helpers struggle with. When helpers have put their personal needs on hold, it becomes easier for them to become overwhelmed and imbalanced, or to burn out. The women in the study recognized the need to pay more attention to their own needs but will they learn to put this into practice when they are working as professional helpers? Will they be able to readjust their priorities to ensure that their needs don’t get lost in amongst their clients’, children’s, family’s and spouse’s needs? How much more difficult will it be for these women to meet their needs once they are back in their families, communities, and jobs? If they haven’t learned to make their needs a priority during their training, a time when they have put many of the demands of the regular life on hold, how will they learn it later? Self-care may be talked about in counsellor training, but is it modeled, and how much priority is it given in comparison to academic course work and deadlines? How many people do we know who have achieved that kind of balance in their lives who could serve as mentors or guides? As a society, how much of a priority do we place on self-care compared to productivity and meeting external demands?

The women clearly learned a lot about counselling skills and personally, during their training. They took an active responsibility for themselves and intently focused on making the most of their counsellor training experience. In the end, the gaps in their development, e.g., being able to balance personal and work demands, may reflect the gaps in the profession as a whole, and the personalities or vulnerabilities of people who choose to become helpers.

How did their past experiences influence their transitions?

It is somewhat surprising, but these women who were embarked upon the difficult path of training to become a counsellor had relatively few positive helper models when they were growing up. The women did recall some instances of positive helping behavior, but tended to remember more negative than positive helping experiences. It is possible that fewer of the positive experiences stood out in their memory, but it is also likely that as future helpers themselves, they would have remembered helpers they wanted to emulate. If these women generally had few good helper role models, even fewer of these models were female. None of the women identified a female mentor who had encouraged them to pursue their goals, and modeled how to balance a counselling career and a personal life.

Two of the women in this study not only lacked mentors, but grew up in environments where an interest in mental health had been discouraged. Clara's family, particularly her mother, had sanctioned teaching, but actively disapproved of counselling as a career. Her mother had been very disapproving of Clara's compassion and her inclination to help others. Clara had been told to be "gruff," to stand up for herself, and not to be so much of a "follower." Ann had received similarly negative messages about working with people with emotional problems. She had kept her interest in mental health work to herself because of the fears and "superstitions" of her family and community. Although Bonnie's childhood environment had not actively discouraged her from pursuing a counselling career, she grew up in extreme geographic isolation. Bonnie's lack of neighbours, playmates, and community members meant little exposure to any sort of influence or modeling; she more or less evolved her interests in a vacuum. These three women had early experiences where they felt somewhat different or isolated from others. For Clara and Ann, this had meant having an interest in counselling that did not fit into their environment's belief structure. For Bonnie, this had meant feeling like a stranger in a strange land when she came to school and was exposed to group dynamics for the first time. These early childhood experiences made it a greater challenge for them to develop confidence in themselves, and to evolve their identities as helpers.

After childhood, however, each of the women did have someone who helped to positively influence their dreams of becoming a counsellor. Ann's female psychologist instructor at her high school revealed a career path she had not previously considered, and made her aware of new professional possibilities. This psychologist had also validated Ann's interest in people with emotional problems. Clara's aunt had, likewise, validated her caring approach to others, and had served as a model of a competent professional woman (although in another area). Bonnie did not mention a significant female role model in her past. One of her male instructors at college had, however, been particularly encouraging and supportive, and had helped her to access needed resources. These people had been important positive influences in the women's lives, but they had not been mentors, per se. The women had felt encouraged or validated by these people, but the contact had not extended to personal ongoing support and guidance through their training.

This lack of female mentors is consistent with Roberts and Newton's (1987) review of four doctoral studies. These studies used biographical interviews to explore how well Levinson's theories applied to women. Although the studies found that role models had helped these women in the attainment of their occupational goals, few of the women had formed "true mentor" relationships. Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1987) described a variety of functions for the mentor including: "*sponsor ... host and guide ... exemplar* that the protégé can admire and seek to emulate ... *counsel* and moral support in time of stress" (p. 98) and, crucially, someone "to support and facilitate the *realization of the Dream*" (p. 98). Clara, Bonnie, and Ann, did not have anyone who had filled the type of mentor role

described by Levinson et al. The women had to create their own balance, find their own supports, and struggle to juggle personal and professional needs without the benefit of having someone with whom they could sort through their issues at a more personal level. The women mentioned their instructors and the counsellors in the practicum setting as professional resources, but the women lacked a place where they could safely explore in depth the personal issues that emerged in their counsellor training. It is easy to understand why these women had so many self-doubts and were so uncertain of their skills.

Each woman had unique experiences in her past which contributed to nature of the struggle she would have in the transition. The distinctive character and richness of the case study format was well-suited to provide details about the history and individual struggle of each woman. For example, Clara's recent harmful peer group training experience, and her late admission made her particularly fearful at the start of the program. Those recent experiences, combined with her earlier experiences with a strong, judgmental mother who disapproved of Clara's "people-pleasing" nature, set the stage for her struggle to believe in herself. As Clara acknowledged, "a significant part of my learning and growing as a person in the past 10 years has been letting go of the need to please others and living up to other people's expectations." In the program she discovered she was still "hooked" into comparing herself to others, and overly concerned about others' opinions. Clara eventually took the challenge of confronting her fears, particularly through her imagined nemesis, the "ultimate graduate student," and started to stretch herself to become more independent and to develop more self-confidence.

Bonnie's past experiences were very different from Clara's and set the stage for a very different set of personal struggles. Bonnie's home schooling in an extremely remote area, and lack of a peer group until her later teen age years, had left her uncertain of group dynamics and how to behave with others. This early experience made her more of a people-watcher than she wanted to be, and her challenge was to develop greater comfort in groups while also learning to live in a city for the first time. In addition, she had to learn to adapt to full time university study. Bonnie was uncertain of how to fit in with a group of students in a university setting, and wanted to develop a place where she could feel warmth and belonging, rather than feeling like a stranger. She took the challenge of trying to meet her goals by studying both the course material and the dynamics of her peer group work, she also initiated her own informal support groups that eventually became the personal supports she sought.

Ann also brought her unique history of experiences to the program that brought with them their own set of struggles. One of these was her fear and doubt about her ability to be a counsellor, particularly her concern that one of her clients might die. Her early experiences in her religious family and a community that was superstitious about mental health problems made her uncertain of her ability to be a counsellor and had kept her from pursuing a counselling career earlier. In addition, Ann had never lived alone before she came to the program. For the first time she faced the task of defining herself, discovering her "role of self," and finding out who she was "without the props." Ann took on the

challenge of becoming “seasoned” for the first time, developing an independent self who was more human and compassionate, and less ideal, judgmental, or self-righteous her old self had been.

The women in the study came into the training program with their own rich history of experiences. These experiences helped shape the women’s choices and made some issues particularly relevant. Unresolved issues and the lack of opportunities for growth in some areas in the past, meant the women each had different personal challenges to deal with as part of their transition to becoming a counsellor. These women were committed to growth and development, and that meant having to confront issues from the past and learning to deal with them in new ways. Unfortunately their lack of available time and supports meant they had far less time for introspection and integration to deal with those issues than they wanted.

What role did the research interview play in the transition?

It was somewhat of a surprise to discover the important and unique role that the research interview came to play in the women’s lives. The women found themselves able to share things in the interview that they had not been able to share elsewhere, and they took time to process and integrate things at a level they did not find, or make, time for on their own (see Appendix D). The women felt supported in the research interview, and they said that it helped them to process their experiences and to develop their own perspective of what was going on. They also felt more personal power in their lives. Clara, for instance, had remarked:

I feel ... *a lot more personal power* about my life it’s like getting support, this is what I wish would always happen ... it’s just a marvelous process and to really help me to look at what’s going on for me, not just in the present but in the future ... looking at how the past feeds into who I am now, it’s really, really wonderful.

Ann had similar things to say about the interview process:

This is far reaching ... a chance for me to validate my perspective I’m creating my future ... and that’s *an incredibly powerful thing for me* this process has forced me to really dig deep within me, and pull things out in a way that hasn’t been threatening, in a way that has been honouring to myself a reality check for me ... this is who I am, without a point of reference, I am the point of reference ... I’m creating my own standards here.

Although Bonnie was less effusive about the power of the experience, she also found it valuable:

an interesting process for looking at where I’m actually at ... I haven’t had a lot of time for introspection helpful ... I don’t really verbalize all this stuff with peers I think that the questioning, the narrowing it down all the time, it’s hard for me, but that’s what I need people to do, I really like that.

In retrospect, however, the powerful effect of the interview on the women who participated in the research is not surprising. The same aspects that can make the narrative interview a powerful research tool can also give it therapeutic value. Polkinghorne (1994), for example, suggested that “therapeutic work is to reconstruct a coherent self story” (p. 16). Singer and Solovey (1993), also emphasized the

importance of the narrative memory in therapy, and suggested that the therapist might “play a vital role for patients as a kind of narrative midwife, allowing the narrative that patients have inside of them to emerge” (p. 118). In the research interview, with the women as co-researchers, I attempted to learn more about their narratives from the past, present, and future and to discover significant patterns and themes in their transitions. The feedback from the women indicated that they, themselves, used the interview to make connections and to find greater coherence in their lives, which suggests that the interview may have overlapped functions, and served both as a research and therapeutic interview.

Although the interview had not been intended to fill a void in the women’s lives, it may have fulfilled a needed function for them. The women came to their graduate training with their own unresolved issues and undeveloped areas, and they knew they needed to attend to those issues and to work them through. These issues fall in an area of their training that the graduate program does not directly address because it falls in the area of personal work. It was up to the students to do that kind of work themselves; they knew they would be better therapists if they worked on these issues, but they did not find the time or resources to follow through with the realization because they felt overwhelmed by academic demands.

Perhaps the opportunity to participate in a series of narrative inquiries similar to the interviews used in this research, with some one who did not have a teaching or evaluative role, might act as a bridge between personal and academic work, and give students the opportunity to work through their issues. As therapists doing their own narrative work, trying to integrate and define themselves in ways that are meaningful, coherent, and satisfying, they would likely find themselves better prepared to also act as narrative midwives for their clients.

What has been learned about the various ‘lenses’ used to learn more about the women’s transitions?

The information gained from self-defining memories and possible selves helped to provide a greater understanding of how these women negotiated through their transitions. This information, combined with the transition trees and interview data, yielded a rich and in-depth understanding of the women’s experience in the transition. The richest and most evocative information came from the narratives.

The part of the research interview with the greatest impact on the women was the task of generating SDMs (see Appendix D). They found it difficult to come up with SDMs and were initially uncomfortable with the task. Ultimately, however, they found it to be a useful way to learn more about themselves. Clara was the most enthusiastic about the SDMs, she indicated they were a tool she had used numerous times, and that SDMs together with narrative therapy had become her “little gospel.” Ann’s initial reaction to the SDMs had been dislike, she didn’t want the challenge of having to dig so deeply within herself. Her dislike shifted to appreciation as she began to realize the SDMs could help her to create her own frame of reference, and to define herself. Bonnie offered few direct comments about the SDMs except to note that they stretched her, and she found them challenging.

The SDMs generated by the women were richly detailed and clearly carried considerable emotional significance for the women. It often took them a while to come up with their SDMs, and they were described with feeling and intensity; these were not stale or tired stories that had lost their potency by repeatedly being retold. The women struggled to find just the right words to describe their memories, and seemed to be trying to sort through the meaning of the SDM as they spoke, gradually going into deeper levels of meaning as they explored its significance. Out of all the parts of the research interview, the SDM tended to elicit the most deeply personal revelations, and most clearly illustrated the women's core issues and values.

The SDMs were not, however, static representations of significant events in the women's lives. The themes of the memories were dynamic and changed over time as the issues the women struggled with changed. For example, in Ann's early SDMs there was the theme of wanting to connect with her needs her dreams and her "very core," whereas later on the theme of being powerful, feeling calm and in control emerged. This change in theme reflected a change within Ann that had developed over the course of her training. At the beginning of the program Ann had just taken the risk to reach out to pursue her dreams, whereas towards the end she had developed a sense of control and greater direction in the transition. There were also, however, themes she mentioned more consistently over time that represented relatively enduring core issues, such as the importance of maintaining her individuality and personality. Ann's SDMs not only reflected changes that had taken place within her, but also revealed some of her more enduring characteristics.

Repeated SDMs can reveal important changes that have taken place over time, as Clara's bunny rabbit SDM demonstrated. Although the facts represented in her bunny SDMs were consistent, the narratives she used to describe them differed significantly. In Clara's first version of the memory, the bunny was an insignificant figure, with little power, who passively hung around waiting to be told what to do by other, more powerful, figures. In her later version of the memory, the bunny had many of the same duties (dressing others, and passing information from one person to another) but the bunny was no longer characterized as passive, instead it had become a communicator and facilitator who helped others to attain their goals. This change in Clara's narrative perspective regarding the bunny rabbit role reflected her later insight into the importance of being resourceful, and the value she placed on helping others. Clara's emerging pride and belief in herself as a resourceful helper, contradicted her earlier acceptance of her mother's judgment that she was weak people-pleaser, just as her later SDM rewrote the bunny's role in the memory.

It is interesting that even the general SDMs the women shared tended to have strong helping components to them. Does this mean that a significant part of their overall identity, and their sense of self, came from their role as helpers? Does this, perhaps, reflect their socialization as women (e.g., Bepko & Krestan, 1990) rather than their identity as helpers? Or, were they responding to some type of

demand characteristic of the interview; knowing that the research was about their transitions as helpers, did they intentionally select helper memories?

The self-defining memories were particularly useful sources of information about how the women defined themselves both in the past and the present. The narratives from these SDMs were rich in detail and spoke eloquently of the women's underlying values and beliefs and how they made meaning of the world. The SDMs also helped to identify issues that continued to be live, unresolved, or were particularly sensitive areas for the women (e.g., Clara's ambivalence about being a "people pleaser," Bonnie's search for warmth and closeness rather than feeling alone and a "stranger," and Ann's struggle for individuality and the "role of self" vs. maintaining the status quo). The SDMs also had the strength of being responsive to changes within the person, for example the reframing of Clara's bunny rabbit story. Although Singer (J. A. Singer, personal communication, July 23, 1996) has not collected SDMs over time in research studies, in his clinical practice he has found significant changes over time in the SDMs of his clients as they worked through issues. Clara's use of SDMs as a therapeutic tool to work through her issues, and the resulting changes in her SDMs, suggest that further systematic study of changes in SDMs over time, and their usefulness as a therapeutic technique, would be a fruitful area for more research.

Possible selves also provided useful information about the women's experiences in the transition. Although less dramatically rich in feeling nuances than the SDMs, possible selves also contributed to an understanding of the women's transitions.

The importance of possible selves was particularly dramatic for Clara, her feared selves played a predominant role in the early part of her training. These feared selves shaped many of Clara's choices in the first semester. Driven by her fear that she was inferior to other students, and her fear that she might be damaged by another harmful training experience, most of her actions were influenced by her determination to prove herself academically and her need to feel safe. Although Clara did have hopes that she would grow and develop as a counsellor, initially her fears were stronger and she was unwilling to take the risks that might associated with learning new skills. Instead, she chose to get by in the program using her pre-existing counselling skills, devoting her energies to the academic learning she found less emotionally risky, and less meaningful than the "heart" learning she valued. Although her hoped-for selves were incentives for her behavior, her feared selves were too strong, and they impeded her from taking the actions to actualize those hopes.

Even though at the start of her training Clara was not ready to risk actualizing her hoped-for selves, the genesis for that change was present in her hope that she would come to feel "solid again and able to make that leap into being less tentative, sure of myself." Later on when Clara did feel more secure about her academic standing, and had allayed her fear that she was inferior to the other students, she began to take the risks, or leaps, that eventually helped her to develop greater confidence in herself. Her

hoped-for selves may have been kept in abeyance until her fears were brought down to a level where she felt safe enough to pursue her hopes.

The discrepancy between Clara's hoped-for and feared selves may be analogous to Oyserman and Markus' (1990a; 1990b) findings with delinquents. They found that in order for a youth not to fall into delinquent behavior, there needed to be a balance between the hoped-for and feared selves. Youths with hoped-for selves, but lacking in corresponding feared selves, were more likely to become involved in delinquent behavior. These youths had incentives but no disincentives to temper, or check, their behavior. Although further research would be needed to investigate the connection between strong feared selves and behavior, it is possible that Clara's situation may have been the opposite to that of the delinquent youths'. Clara had extremely strong feared selves at the start of the program, but lacked the counter-balance of equally strong corresponding hoped-for selves. The imbalance between her hoped-for and feared selves likely made it more difficult for her to initiate behaviors that would have moved her closer to her hoped for selves. Instead, many of her initial actions appear to have been guided by her fears. It is a testament to her courage and perseverance that she managed to stay in the situation long enough for her fears to reduce to a level where she could begin to actualize her hopes.

When Bonnie and Ann started the program their hoped-for and feared selves were more balanced than Clara's. This relative lack of discrepancy between their hoped-for and feared selves may have enabled them to work more quickly towards their hoped-for selves. On the other hand, it would probably not be desirable for counsellors to lack the counterbalance of appropriate feared selves to accompany their hoped-for selves. Counsellors who, like the delinquents, lacked the feared selves to balance their hoped-for selves, might be more at risk to engage in rash, risky, unethical or power-abusive behavior with their clients. There was clearly no such concern regarding the behavior of the women in this study, but it does suggest an intriguing avenue for further study; is there a relationship between hoped-for and feared selves and ethical behavior in counsellors?

In general, the women's possible selves became less task focused, and specific, as they progressed through their training. Over time, their hoped-for and feared selves gradually began to pertain less to particular counselling microskills, and to focus more on personal characteristics or more global descriptions of skills. The focus of women's possible selves tended to shift from *what they were doing* as counsellors, to *who they were* as counsellors. This is consistent with the model of counsellor trainee experience that Marshall and Andersen (1996) developed from their case study. In their model, part of the transition to a new sense of self and counsellor identity entailed the integration of skills into a "way of being" (p. 137).

When the women were directly asked about their hoped-for and feared selves, their responses tended to be more conceptual and removed than they had been for the SDMs. The innovation of asking for a projected future self's SDM proved to be a useful way to learn more about possible selves while still retaining the richness and immediacy of narratives. The projected SDM provided more personally

relevant and detailed information about the experiences the women thought would be the most meaningful to their future selves. Some of these projected SDMs were created from the women's actual experiences, whereas other projected SDMs were created from experiences the women imagined. Without exception, however, all of the projected SDMs the women produced were of hoped-for rather than feared selves. It would be interesting to find out if this would also be true for the general population. These women were particularly motivated and goal oriented, and in the midst of a hoped-for (albeit extremely challenging) transition, might they have been more positively biased towards favourable outcomes than other people would have been? Would depressed people be more likely to create feared projected SDMs? What would the projected SDMs of people facing unplanned or threatening transitions be like?

These women were very persistent and kept themselves functioning despite tremendous difficulties. One way they may have done this was through their strongly developed hoped-for selves, the dreams they hoped to one day attain. A number of the women's projected SDMs accurately foreshadowed their later development. It is likely that these hoped-for selves served as useful incentives and guides for the women to focus on when they were feeling less discouraged or overwhelmed.

Another function of possible selves is that they revealed the women's evaluative context at the time of the interview. The projected SDM, in particular, was a useful way to learn more about the things the women believed were most important in their lives. In the process of creating a SDM from the present, the women were required to step outside their current concerns, and determine what could be important enough that it might come to define them in the future. Possible selves and the projected SDMs also revealed the women's hoped-for resolutions to unresolved issues and conflicts from their past, and provided direction for their current efforts.

What were some of the challenges that I faced as a researcher?

One of the challenges I encountered in conducting this research, came from the incredible depth and richness of the women's responses during the research interview. These women were very bright and introspective and were willing to respond very early with an honesty and forthrightness that caused me to be very conscious of my role in the research process. I found it a challenge to understand the complex thoughts and feelings that they shared with me. Many times the women were actively processing their experiences and coming to new awarenesses during the interview, and I was trying to grasp their meanings-in-motion as they spoke. It was not only a challenge to understand their perspective, but also to find the words to accurately reflect my understanding of their meaning. I was particularly concerned about my ability to hear and accurately reflect their meaning, because I believed that as counsellors-in-training they would be acutely aware of the adequacy of my listening skills. I was relieved to discover how willing they were to work with me to clarify things I had not fully understood. I was also pleased

because their responses suggested my research approach and interviewing skills had been appropriate. It was a relief to discover that they valued my presence and listening skills during the interview. Fortunately, the feedback from the women strongly supported the validity of the research.

Another challenging aspect of this study was maintaining the focus of the interview as an interpretive inquiry. As a practicing counsellor, there were numerous occasions during the interviews when I was tempted to shift to a therapeutic intervention rather than just sticking to the lines of the research inquiry. This challenge was the greatest for me during Clara's first interview, when she was, as she later put it, "neurotically insecure" and uncomfortably focused on the "ultimate graduate student." I made the conscious decision to keep the research focus of the interview, but did suggest to Clara at the end of the interview that she might find it helpful to talk to a counsellor because of the intensity of the feelings she was experiencing. I also suggested a few possible resources, but she rejected the suggestion and chose to deal with it on her own, instead.

One of the largest challenges of the study was trying to integrate the huge amount of information from the interviews into case studies. It was a monumental and daunting task. I attempted to describe as many of the richly textured and interwoven strands that linked the women's narratives as possible. I was frustrated, however, as I constructed the case studies, because I knew that no written description could fully convey the uniquely special and inspiring women who exist beyond the narratives.

What next?

In this research women were studied in depth over time, and their experiences in the transition were examined from a variety of contexts. The study was, however, finite, and many areas were not covered by this investigation. Using the descriptive case study approach, it would be interesting to further explore areas touched upon, but not specifically investigated in the research. It could be intriguing, for example, to conduct some case studies of men counsellor trainees and to explore the impact of gender in the transition process.

An alternative approach would be to go back and analyze the transcripts using another "lens" to examine the data. Some interesting possibilities include a closer examination of their self-confidence, meaning making, coping methods, self-statements, or values during the transition process. Similarly, an analysis of the data using a different conceptual framework, such as Kegan's (1994), or Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule's (1986) developmental models might be fruitful.

It would add another dimension to the research if the women's family, friends, supports, professors, and supervisors were interviewed regarding their view of the women's experience in the transition. It would provide a kind of triangulation of the data, and add a multiplicity of perspectives to add to the women's own observations of their experiences. That kind of study would examine the transition from the context of a variety of perspectives rather than being based solely in the women's personal meanings.

As a researcher, before embarking on any of those intriguing possibilities, I would want to analyze the fourth woman's transcripts, and then continue with follow up interviews for the women who participated in the study. If the women were willing, and available, I believe that extending this current study to include a longer period of their counselling career would provide a wealth of valuable information.

At a more applied level, it might be helpful to present the information from this study to a focus group of counselling graduate students and solicit their reactions: e.g., what fits, and what doesn't fit, does the study have any implications for their transitions? Similarly, it might be useful to present the information to counselling faculty, get their reactions to the information, and find out what implications they think it could have for their training programs. Depending on the reactions of the students and faculty, it might also be possible to start a pilot project, using a modified version of the research interview, to provide students with a place where they felt supported and could focus on themselves and their issues outside of classroom.

With regards to transitions in general, therapists working with people in transition would likely find it helpful to use narrative techniques to help them to develop more coherent, and less fragmented selves as they negotiate through the transition. SDMs also have the potential to be a useful tool for people in transition, either by the person on his or her own, or in conjunction with a therapist. The person might find that the exploration of SDMs can help him or her to identify, and more effectively reframe, issues that had been unresolved in the past, and were getting in the way of his or her current transition.

Therapists may also find it helpful to assess the balance of the person's hoped-for and feared selves. Individuals with imbalanced hoped-for and feared selves may either rush too quickly into the transition without paying attention to potential consequences (i.e., hoped-for selves much more strong than feared selves) or hang back, too afraid to take the risk to moving forward into the transition (i.e., feared selves much more strong than hoped-for selves). Therapists who are aware that a client has of one of those types imbalance can be forewarned of the difficulty that client may encounter in the transition.

It would be interesting to explore whether some of the themes that emerged in this research could have useful implications for transitions in general. For example, a stage model of transition, such as the one suggested by Sawatzky et al. (1994), where the counsellor trainee goes through a cyclic process of experiencing dissonance, and then struggles to feel empowered again, does not adequately describe the complexity of these women's experiences. The counsellor training of the women in this study encompassed a number of interactive transitions rather than a series of discrete stages or steps. Various individual issues and themes wove in and out of the women's training experience and it became difficult to find discrete resolution to their challenges. Instead, development in one area was often the precursor for yet further development in other areas, or a theme was revisited in a somewhat different form at a later date. As Schlossberg (1981) suggested, it may "not [be] the transition itself that is of primary importance, but rather how that transition fits with an individual's stage, situation, and style at the time

of the transition” (p. 5). The challenge will be to develop an understanding of transitions that includes a more comprehensive understanding of the many intra-personal and situational factors which interact to create the person’s experience in the transition.

Conclusion

The women’s SDMs, narratives, and possible selves proved to be useful lenses to understand the women’s experiences in the transition. These experiences were dynamic and interacted with the women’s perspectives. The women’s SDMs revealed how the women had come to define themselves in the present and the unresolved issues from the past would likely reemerge in the future. The women’s narratives were linked to issues from the past that they were attempting to resolve, and the hoped-for future they were trying to actualize. The women’s anticipated future helped place their current experiences in context, and gave them a framework they could use to re-evaluate their past experiences. The women’s narratives, SDMs, and possible selves provided considerable insight into their transitions to become counsellors, and illustrated the complexity of their experiences and perspectives.

One of the difficulties inherent in this research is that case studies are finite and static once committed to paper. At best they are only a two-dimensional approximation of the dynamic, multi-layered, textured, and interwoven tapestries that make up the woman’s experience. Goldberg’s (1986) advice to writers about their writing could also be applied to case studies and narratives:

we don’t exist in any solid form. There is no permanent truth you can corner in a poem that will satisfy you forever. Don’t identify too strongly with your work. Stay fluid behind those black-and-white words. They are not you. They were a great moment going through you. A moment you were awake enough to write down and capture. (p. 33)

Just as the case studies based on the women’s narratives are not complete or permanent representations of the women, neither are their narratives. Although we can observe and learn something from narratives and the case studies, experience is fluid, an ongoing collection of great moments that pass through us. This research has attempted to be awake enough to observe, write down, and capture some of those moments for the women in the study.

This research had the advantage of a longitudinal approach, it was better able to capture and convey some of the dynamic complexity of the women’s experiences than studies based on cross-sectional or retrospective data. These detailed descriptions provide a rich and evocative depiction of the women’s experiences, perceptions and responses as they negotiated through their transitions.

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Appendix A: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION:

Title: The Experience of Women in Transition as Counsellors-in-Training: Self-Defining Memories, Narratives, and Possible Selves

Researcher: Kathryn Jardine, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Psychological Foundations in Education (472-1229), Supervisor, Don Knowles, Ph.D. (721-7792)

I understand that this research project will be studying the experience of women students in the Masters program in Counselling, The Department of Psychological Foundations in Education, at the University of Victoria, as they go through the transition of training to become a counsellor. I understand that I will be asked questions about my experience in this transition, my self-image and identity, my models and goals, and how other influences impact on this transition. I understand that I will also be asked to complete a brief demographics questionnaire which asks for personal information and will identify me. This research is being carried out by Kathryn Jardine, a doctoral student in the Department of Psychological Foundations in Education of the University of Victoria, for her doctoral dissertation.

- I understand that my participation is completely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without explanation.
- I understand that any data collected in the study will remain confidential; interview results and questionnaires will be kept in a locked filing cabinet, and that the demographic information will be kept in a locked area separate from the other data. Furthermore, I understand that my name will not be attached to any published results, and that my anonymity will be protected by using code numbers/names to identify the results obtained from individual subjects. I also understand that some of the information from my interviews may be omitted or changed in the final report in order to conceal details that could otherwise reveal my identity.
- I understand that it is important to protect the identities of third parties, and that I will do my best to protect their identities from being revealed during the interview. I also understand that any information I reveal about third parties will be subject to the same provisions for anonymity as the information I reveal about myself (i.e., their names will not be revealed, their identities protected by code names/numbers, results will be locked in file cabinet, and details may be omitted/changed to conceal identities).
- I understand that my interview will be audiotaped and that the tape will be erased within three months after the dissertation has been accepted. I also understand that if I do not wish to have my interview taped, I can refuse to do so at any time.
- I understand that whether I participate or choose not to participate will have no bearing on my grades or academic standing.

Date:

Signature:

Researcher:

Transition Interview Guide: Masters Students in Counselling, PFED, University of Victoria

[Note: general format of questions, to serve as a guideline, exact format will vary]

Introduction Section

-Discussion of the confidentiality of the study (and its limits), and that she is free at any time to not answer a question or discontinue the interview.

-Brief overview of the purpose of the interview: to learn more about their experience of the transition of training to become a counsellor.

-Signing of consent forms (see separate forms).

-Brief overview of the types of questions that will be asked in the interview: e.g., transitions, identity & self as a helper over time.

Narrative Re: Experience as a Counsellor-in-Training

-Tell me about your experience of training to be a counsellor (or, for the first interview: Tell me about your experience of coming to train as a counsellor)

Self-Defining Memories

-Have you ever heard of a self-defining memory? (1st interview only)

-I'd like to ask you to share a few self-defining memories with me. I'll explain what they are. A self-defining memory is a memory that is:

- at least a year old
- one you can remember clearly
- it feels (very) important as you think about it
- it helps in some way for you (or someone else) to understand more deeply who you are as a person/individual
- can be positive or negative, or some of both, the important thing is that it feels like it is associated with strong feelings for you
- it is something you have remembered/thought of many times, it feels familiar to you, something you carry with you.

It is the type of memory you might share with someone you've come to know and trust; a memory you might share when you want to give someone a deeper sense of who you are; and how you've come to be who you are right now.

...Can you think of a self-defining memory you are willing to share with me?

-Is there another self-defining memory you can share with me? (optional, to be used if first memory is not well developed or one that does not appear to be particularly "live" for the woman)

-Do you have any self-defining memories in the area of becoming a helper?

Models of Goals/Helping

-Do you have any memories of people as helpers (in your past) who have helped you to shape your idea of what a helper should, or perhaps, shouldn't be?

-What about now? Are there any people in your life right now who influence your image of what a professional helper should or shouldn't be?

-How would you characterize your goals right now in terms of being a helper/counsellor?

e.g., For instance, I hope people will describe me as...?

and your fears? I hope I'll never be described as...?

-How likely do you think you will be to achieve these goals?

-Do you perceive your goals as changing since you began the program? (for 2nd and 3rd interviews)

-Is there a metaphor or analogy you could use to describe the helping/counselling role as you see it?

Transitions

-I'd like to switch tracks now, and ask you a few questions about some of the transitions you may be going through right now.

-How much in transition do you feel right now?

...in your role as a counsellor?

...in general?

...from 1-10 (where 0 is no changes, and 10 is almost everything is changing)?

-Could you look at this transition tree (give diagram) and circle the areas where you feel like you are in transition at the moment?

-Can you now use lines to connect the areas (on the tree) you think are linked together?

-How do you think these transitions influence (or, for the first interview, are likely to influence) your experience of training to be a counsellor?

[At the last interview bring out transition trees she completed previously, and ask her if she can describe any patterns/changes/consistencies over the time of the transition.]

-What, if anything, do you see facilitating/helping you with the transition (of training as a counsellor) right now?

...within yourself?

...the people you know?

...the university?

...hinder/get in the way of this transition?

-What, if anything, do you see as likely to help or hinder you with this transition in the future?

Self-Defining Memory in the Future

-I'd like to go back to the beginning again, where I asked you to think about a self-defining memory, and ask you to do something that might be a little difficult, take a bit of thought to do.

-I want you to take a few minutes to imagine yourself in the future, after you've gone through this current transition. Now, I'd like to ask that future self to create a self-defining memory from this time you're in right now. What would that self-defining memory be...why would it be significant to your future self? what is it that you would want to remember?

Final Stages

-Thank you for your participation, and the time you have taken to answer all these questions. I would be interested in any feedback you'd care to share with me about how this process was for you.

For the first interview:

-Could you please take a few moments to now fill out these brief questions (give demographic questionnaire).

Legend: A=Ann 1=Time 1
 B=Bonnie 2=Time 2
 C=Clara 3=Time 3, e.g., C1=Clara at Time 1

Feedback area	Quotes
<p>Process of going through the interview</p>	<p>C1: <i>Very, very good for me</i></p> <p>C1: <i>Wonder how much time I have to answer the questions ... so I wouldn't have to kind of worry about "oh, god, I wonder how much detail I should go into."</i></p> <p>C2: <i>Great!</i></p> <p>C2: <i>[Other than the question about what was helping her with the transition; because she didn't feel like she was being helped] really easy to go through, very aware it's exactly the same process we did last time ... I felt amazed at how much I had more to say, how the questions just spurred on.</i></p> <p>C3: <i>Tremendous ... I wish this could happen more often.</i></p> <p>C3: <i>Really liked all of the questions ... second time ... I was a little disappointed it was the same thing ... today now, is really huge because there's so many things happening ... that I was more than thrilled to share.</i></p> <p>C3: <i>I've just enjoyed it thoroughly! but ... I'm never quite sure of how long it's going to take.</i></p> <p>B1: <i>It makes you really go inside, draining ... not always having the words ... quite challenging.</i></p> <p>B1: <i>It's a new format ... a little uncomfortable in that sense only.</i></p> <p>B1: <i>An interesting process for looking at where I'm actually at ... I haven't had a lot of time for introspection.</i></p> <p>B2: <i>Better this time, easier. I think I'm more centered ... that was really hard in September, it was like too many new things.</i></p> <p>B3: <i>Got a little anxious about, "oh, I wonder what I said last time," but then I've been able to let that go.</i></p> <p>B3: <i>Helped having the same questions, somewhat the same</i></p> <p>A1: <i>Made me think. It's given me time to stop and reflect.</i></p> <p>A1: <i>I'm tired. It was demanding for me! ... challenged me in a way I hadn't ever been challenged before ... I like it because, I can't do this with anyone else.</i></p> <p>A1: <i>I find openness threatening ... I have so many memories, which?" So it takes me a while to sort them all through.</i></p> <p>A1: <i>While I'm giving my answers, I'm analyzing them, too ... I'm out there processing while I'm responding, so it's like this dual thing always happening, ... I'll go home and I'll think about this.</i></p> <p>A1: <i>Might have been easier for me, if there was a little more structure in the questions ... [but] you asked me to select. The very question can dictate a response, and that didn't happen ... [with a check list] I could think of what a nice successful counsellor might respond like, but in this case I didn't have any of that, so that's good.</i></p> <p>A2: <i>It flowed much easier for me.</i></p> <p>A2: <i>Time for me to kind of step aside for a moment ... and do a little self-assessment ... say why am I here? ... and how much have I really changed?</i></p>
<p>Benefit</p>	<p>C1: <i>I feel ... a lot more personal power about my life.</i></p> <p>C1: <i>Helpful to have a chance to lay my life out like that ... more holistically ... everything is all linked ... a whole picture of my life as where I came from, where I'm at, and where I'm going.</i></p> <p>C2: <i>It's like getting support, this is what I wish would always happen ... it's</i></p>

Feedback area	Quotes
	<p>just a marvelous process and to really help me to look at what's going on for me, not just in the present but in the future and even with the self-defining memories looking at how the past feeds into who I am now, it's really, really wonderful.</p> <p>C3: An opportunity to look into my process ... this process, in terms of my own growth, is just tremendous.</p> <p>B1: Making the connections ... looking at wider angles ... that helped.</p> <p>B1: Really helpful because now ... I know what I can do today ... problem solving a bit.</p> <p>B3: Helpful ... I don't really verbalize all this stuff with peers.</p> <p>B3: I think that the questioning, the narrowing it down all the time, it's hard for me, but that's what I need people to do, I really like that.</p> <p>A1: [A chance to] just separate myself and take a breather, and look at what has been happening, as opposed to experiencing it so intensely.</p> <p>A1: I think "Oh, I don't know if I can ever get it done!" But ... I hear myself saying that I'm going to do it anyways ... So it's a time for me to take stock, and to do some goal setting, and a confidence-building time for me.</p> <p>A1: This is far reaching ... a chance for me to validate my perspective</p> <p>A2: Validating ... a little ritual at the end ... this is what happened this semester, this is how I've grown ... like a celebration, I have made it this far!</p> <p>A3: In my discovery and growth, it's like report card time ... to step out of the process ... I've learned about myself ... [I've] become clearer.</p> <p>A3: A chance for me to get out of my experiential mode ... affirming for me.</p> <p>A3: I'm creating my future ... and that's an incredibly powerful thing for me.</p> <p>A3: This process has forced me to really dig deep within me, and pull things out in a way that hasn't been threatening, in a way that has been honouring to myself.</p> <p>A3: A celebration for me ... "gee, this is really who I am! this is amazing!" "Gosh, look how much I have to offer!"</p> <p>A3: I lose perspective of where I have come, and this tells me to put in perspective.</p> <p>A3: A reality check for me ... this is who I am, without a point of reference, I am the point of reference ... I'm creating my own standards here.</p> <p>A3: I wasn't expecting this to be growth enhancing. It has been.</p>
Interviewer	<p>C1: I just feel so happy to have been able to talk about all of this ... I wouldn't say this to anybody else. I wouldn't even say it to my husband.</p> <p>C1: I feel really accepted</p> <p>C1: The questions really stimulated a lot for me and on every level. Past, present, and future.</p> <p>C1: [Like] free therapy. Just let me talk about and vent a lot of stuff that I keep down there, and it was really really useful. I'd recommend it to all my friends!</p> <p>C2: Your incredible paraphrasing. I grope for words ... when you would say something back to me ... you just have this one sentence, or metaphor, or something that would just fit so well.</p> <p>C3: Grateful for your facilitation, and being able to help me through ... your patience, just staying with me those times when I would go off and your paraphrasing was just so helpful.</p> <p>C3: I would think that the issue's finished ... but you kept on with it, which helped me just deepen that awareness ... the depth that I went into was often surprising, and that I always felt so supported there.</p>

Feedback area	Quotes
	<p>B1: I can't think of anything that really got in the way.</p> <p>B3: <i>Excellent at reflecting it exactly and often gave me images that really helped me to focus more on what I was saying, or help me to express more what I was saying.</i></p> <p>A1: <i>Very effective, your pacing was good. The open questions were extremely well done.</i></p> <p>A2: <i>Questions were very relevant ... right on ... I could identify so well with the questions, it's very relevant and current.</i></p> <p>A3: <i>Your questions are wonderful! They don't pry ... I got to choose and that was incredibly empowering.</i></p> <p>A3: <i>It wasn't too challenging too pushy, it was stretching me to look inside myself, in a different way than I have before, and that's work for me.</i></p> <p>A3: <i>No pressure at all, I felt the freedom to say "no I don't have a self-defining memory, or nothing comes to me." You gave me the space and time ... I felt safe and secure ... there wasn't a time ever, in all these hours that I felt uncomfortable, or intuitively off.</i></p> <p>A3: <i>In the first session, or the second session, you would paraphrase, and maybe once or twice I would restate it differently ... [it helped] me to kind of find my own thought ... I was in really gray area, wasn't quite sure what was happening, was trying to articulate it.</i></p> <p>A3: <i>I never thought that you weren't with me ... I was really impressed with how much you were with me, because I was going to places that are very new for me ... your paraphrasing was very good, summaries were excellent.</i></p>
Interview setting	<p>A1: <i>So quiet and mellow.</i></p> <p>A2: <i>Appreciated the breaks and the candies ... the environment is great, it's very accommodating and safe ... no one knocks on the door, the phone doesn't ring ... the environment is conducive.</i></p>
SDM	<p>C3: <i>I don't think I would have gotten to the place that I am now without having this neat little tool about self-defining memories ... goes very much along with narrative therapy ... it's like my little gospel right now.</i></p> <p>B3: <i>Hard coming up with the self-defining memory, stretches one ... quite challenging.</i></p> <p>A1: <i>Highly effective method of finding out, I think, where the other person's at, because I'm doing the selection, that's what I don't like about it very much.</i></p> <p>A3: <i>Really what I'm saying is "these are my values, this is me, this is what motivates me" and it's good to hear me say that. I really like what I'm saying.</i></p> <p>A3: <i>Took me a while to get into ... it was a challenge for me, and I really had to dig, and I didn't like that, you kept on going back to it. I realized then that's the very place I need to be ... because I'm defining who I am, I am creating my own point of reference.</i></p> <p>A3: <i>I didn't like self-defining memories, and then I realized they're not going away, that is the focal point of your research! ... but now I can see, yeah, it's really great to define myself.</i></p>
Projected SDM	<p>C1: <i>I really liked that process.</i></p>
Transition tree	<p>B1: <i>I liked the whole visual, I found the tree more helpful. I think it might have helped me to draw out images that would take longer.</i></p>
Did the interviews influence the process of the transition?	<p>C3: <i>Between September and December, not a whole lot, just too busy ... but between December and March ... I would start thinking about the questions and I've used the term self-defining memory about 40 times since ... and I've thought about it, so yes it has ... and that's kind of helped me ... that whole thing about memories and looking back at who I am ... I've reflected on this</i></p>

Feedback area	Quotes
	<p><i>significantly between January and now, a lot.</i></p> <p>C3: Like a validation. For example, I'd say, "this coordination thing, me being resourceful, am I resourceful?" So I'd start going searching my memories, how have I been resourceful? ...the bunny rabbit ... So yes, I've used by memories as a way to validate the process that I'm going through right now, <i>to push aside those myths that I have of who I should be and searching through my memory banks of different ways of being, and using that to validate where I am now!</i> So, oh, <i>it's been significant!</i></p> <p>B3: <i>No, I think in September I was so busy ... and then, by December, it was kind of the end of term, so I went off for two or three weeks, and [I] really didn't think that much about [it].</i></p> <p>B3: <i>In counselling we're always talking about process, so it's like being one of a million, everybody wants to know about your process.</i></p> <p>A3: <i>I don't think it has. I think this is a time to step out, and say what I'm already experiencing, and to be kind to myself, and to celebrate what I've experienced. Maybe it has encouraged me ... I feel I've been kind to myself here and I like it, and I will continue to be kind. So it's reinforcing, to be kind to myself, but I had already decided that before I came in, I was already there ... So, it hasn't altered it, it's just a continuation of what's already happening.</i></p> <p>A3: <i>I am only ready to see where I'm at anyways. If there was some sort of influence, if I wasn't there already, I wouldn't be able to perceive it.</i></p> <p>A3: <i>So I don't think you've altered the course at all, certainly I thought about what I said afterwards but only as in reliving those memories, thinking about those memories that I've thought about so many times before.</i></p>
<p>Post-interview feedback about transcripts, tables and process</p>	<p>C: I found it to be an especially slow slogging-like process getting through the transcripts because a lot of <i>the script seemed to be incoherent—it's scary to think I actually talk that way.</i></p> <p>C: <i>Just reading through a few phrases I found it quite easy to launch myself back into my thoughts and feelings of the time.</i></p> <p>C: <i>You did an exceptional job of pulling together main themes/quotes. I don't know how you did it!! I found it too easy to get lost in the rambling nature of my statements to pick out at any given time what my point/theme was! But you did it--marvelously I might add.</i></p> <p>C: <i>The only other thing I might change ... [would be] to add on to the summary table of the "shouldn't theme": "abuse of power"</i></p> <p>B: <i>I was amazed at the number of unfinished thoughts and ums, the transcripts accurately reflect my thoughts for each of the interviews.</i></p> <p>B: <i>I kept rough notes on key phrases and words from each session that would fit under your summary headings (For example, What helpers should/shouldn't be). There was excellent correspondence between the two.</i></p> <p>B: <i>Thank you for giving me the opportunity to revisit this rather confusing year.</i></p> <p>A: <i>[she wanted to take her time reading through the transcripts] to savour it like a cup of good coffee.</i></p> <p>A: <i>Reading the transcript was quite engaging ... I found myself needing to take my time while reviewing the information because I was reliving it.</i></p> <p>A: <i>The content was accurate</i></p> <p>A: <i>I learned that my speaking can sometimes be indirect. At times some of my phrases were difficult to understand.</i></p> <p>A: <i>You did an excellent job in representing the accuracy of my message. Your attention to detail is appreciated.</i></p>

Appendix E. Clara: Transitions Summary at Time 3

Time 1: “dark ages”

-dark ages
 -panicking
 -overwhelmed by changes
 -is there any stability in my life?

Time 2:

-dark ages
 -being lost
 -really, really, really stressed
 -where the hell am I?
 -going through the motions
 -very negative
 -really lost
 -stressed beyond capacity
 -in search for some type of
 control and balance in my life
 -concerns regarding others’
 expectations
 -questions regarding identity

-night-----VS. -----day

-despair-----VS. -----excitement/
 happiness

-being lost-----VS. -----on the route to
 being found

Time 3:

-on the route to being found
 -suddenly, there’s space for me
 -excitement
 -happiness
 -oh wow! (in awe)

Appendix E. Clara: Feared Counsellor Selves Over Time

Time 1 (smotherer mother vs. manipulator)	Time 2 (harming others vs. being tentative)	Time 3
-a mother smotherer ... taking care of the person so much that they become dependent, counselling never ends	-controlling	-bossy
-being arrogant, thinking I know what your issues are, and having always an agenda	-overbearing	-pushy
-not being open enough to the person who is in front of me and being arrogant and knowing, I know what your issues are and this is what we're going to work on	-treats a person like and experiment, like a guinea pig (e.g., "oh, I'm going to try this type of counselling on you today") rather than going with what's happening for that person	-overly directive
-really manipulative	-advice giving	-arrogant
-really sneaky about it	-harming others	-confrontative
-having the client be dependent on me	-puts my agenda ahead of what they need	-insensitive
-telling them who they are, what they need to work on	-giving my own spin on what I think they need to do	
-dependent on me giving them lots of acceptance and not nurturing enough in their own minds	-putting my interpretations ahead of theirs	
-smotherer mother or manipulator ... I don't want to be like that ... but I guess I got to be aware of it. I know both exist in me	-I know it does affect my counselling right now ... I'm very tentative. I used to be able to challenge people in a way that respected them. But right now, I'm just so afraid being overbearing and over-riding their process that I lock on to the extreme of being tentative ... I'm struggling right now to get that balance back.	

Appendix G. Models of What Helpers Should Not Be

Time 1 Shouldn't Abuse Power: the danger of playing God, something really awful can happen and a lot of damage can be done.

(2 Trainer/counsellors in community program)

- very confrontative approach... without that baseline of trust
- I always got this message ...you're only as good as how much you are willing to risk. If your are willing to risk it all, then that as good as counsellor you will be.
- If you can't deal with that issue, how are you going to deal with a client who has that issue? Come on, spill your beans!
- He hammered her and said listen, you know, you signed up for this program to take risks.
- I can't tell you, Kathryn, how this impacted me (upset, appalled) as people out there do damage. I could't sleep at nights.
- it would be a barrage of stuff come on.
- What about building trust? Their response was "Clara, trust isn't, trust has to do when you're ready to take that leap... They'd just say well you re resistant, to the confrontation approach. You've got to learn how to be more assertive.
- No one can make you feel like your safe and trusted. It's up to you to take that leap and risk and then you'll feel trust. **THAT** was the **RESPONSE!** (yelling)
- so oppressive ... so abusive
- I haven't even integrated as to what this means about me being a helper and a counsellor, but that *something really awful can happen and a lot of damage can be done* and it shook me up **A LOT**. Really a lot.
- And again, it is **I know** what your issues are
- Whenever a person would dare confront this cofacilitator or the facilitator, uhm, it was back, it was put back at them
- I can't imagine a counsellor not operating from that basic foundational square one of accepting a person and where they're at and even if you have a hunch about what their issues are, it's not helpful to say "confront or you re not good enough"
- I m so lucky that I didn't get totally brainwashed into like as I saw others accept this. The battering as, "aah, I guess I do have problems". You know, I didn't, I didn't hook into it, but I came out pretty beaten up about it and really off center.
- something about foregoing, foregoing trust and acceptance of that person because you think you know what their issues are. Um, in other words, *playing God*
- eliminating that baseline trust and acceptance, in no circumstances can be justified. Wrong.

Appendix H. Clara: Hoped-for Counsellor Selves Over Time

Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
-really trusts and accepts them for who they are	-a person who has clarity, inner clarity	-resourceful
-insightful and intuitive in helping them to put the patters together	-able to support them [clients] in getting what they need	-intuitive
-can make space for their feelings and support them in it	-compassion and cared	-perceptive
-able to help them to change, support whatever changes they need to make	-senses what other people need	-enthusiastic
-support them to change in a way that ... they still have control, but I give them perhaps suggestions, feedback, things like that	-helping a person to ... be clear about who they are and what they need	-energetic
-helping, supporting people	-wisdom	-wise
-giving them their space for their thoughts and their feelings	-help them to find healthy ways to get there and to express themselves	-a real person
-felt confident and okay		-passionate for what she does
-solid again and able to make that leap into being less tentative, [to become] sure of myself		

Time 1	Time 2 (start)	Time 2 (end)	Time 3
<p><i>-hard</i> <i>-stress</i> <i>-unpredictable</i> <i>-the unknown</i> <i>-impact of losses...</i> I hadn't realized how big exactly that would be <i>-number is overwhelming, just too many changes</i> <i>-feel like somebody from another country might feel</i> <i>-academic expectations seem so nebulous</i> <i>-all this new information coming at you and trying to integrate it into your style</i> <i>-feeling less competent</i> because I see not being competent in other areas <i>-the feeling of am I competent... everything seem to be shifting</i> in that area <i>-don't have the same foundation underneath</i></p>	<p><i>-too many "news"</i> <i>-so overwhelmed</i> <i>-on overload</i> <i>-trauma</i> <i>-insecure</i> <i>-not very confident</i> <i>-on the edge of anxiety all the time</i> <i>-too cluttered</i> <i>-stressful</i> <i>-buzzed out</i> <i>-pressure to constantly be working ... a heavy term</i> <i>-lonely</i> <i>-wondered if they made a mistake that I'm here... if I really wanted to be a counsellor?</i> <i>-difficult to keep up with the speed [verbal interactions]</i> <i>-people watching</i> <i>-observing, just listening very carefully</i> and watching body language</p> <p>first clients: <i>-self-conscious</i> <i>-extremely nerve wracking</i> <i>-got to get it right the first time</i> <i>-too uptight</i> <i>-awkward feeling</i> <i>-always that pressure that somebody's going to be looking at this</i></p>	<p><i>-beginning to grasp what it's about</i> <i>-consolidation</i> <i>-settled</i> <i>-kind of know the system</i> <i>-know contacts</i> <i>-networked enough</i> to know who I can talk to if I have difficulty <i>-possible for me to be a counsellor and that I will get there</i> <i>-I'm sure that I will find my way</i> <i>-still a long ways to go</i> <i>-[need for] balance, self-care... really get caught up in academics</i></p> <p>last client (of term) <i>-a little easier</i> <i>-could see that there was progress</i> <i>-a little more risk taking</i> <i>-some flexibility</i></p>	<p><i>-more comfortable</i> <i>-making more sense</i> <i>-more flexibility</i> <i>-some awareness</i> <i>-pretty confident</i> <i>-secure feeling</i> <i>-[anxiety] easing off</i> <i>-a lot of progress</i> <i>-beginning to mesh more</i> <i>-worked really hard</i> <i>-pretty successful</i> <i>-chances to reflect</i> <i>-[more] in charge of my own growth</i> <i>-more combining and figuring out what fits for me</i> <i>-discovering myself again</i> <i>-seeing connections</i> <i>-[starting to] solidify my belief system</i> <i>-I don't have doubts anymore</i> <i>-it's starting to become clearer</i> to me <i>-I've come to find my space</i></p> <p>re: clients <i>-I can do this, I don't have to be petrified</i> <i>-it's a process of learning like anything else</i> <i>-I'm where I should be [with kids]</i></p>
Being Drowned			Surfacing

Appendix J. Hoped-for Counsellor Selves Over Time

Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -warm -supportive, as well as resourceful, a combination of the two -caring -competent -would want them to have trust that I know what I'm doing -I [myself] know what I am doing -I have a personal construct -I have the knowledge -I have standards... like ethical standards -I am capable of dealing with them -aware of what my limits are -boundary issues are clear -confident verbally -how systems work -having a bigger picture -[knowing] what are the structures, what are the organizations that deal with certain problems... [and] how do I connect with that? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -caring -warm -someone... who's able to set boundaries, but does so in a fashion... [that still] makes me approachable but also makes other people aware, too... that I need some time for myself -skilled -able to achieve whatever goals are set -my style would be flexible enough to mesh with a wide variety of people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -someone who's really people-oriented -empathic -caring -interested in them as a whole person -someone who wants to be an explorer with the client... and discovering hidden aspects -a good listener

Time 1**Shoulds: Past**

[her instructors at college]
 -*gentle support*
 -*encouraged me*
 -they really worked on *stretching*
 -constantly were *telling me how intelligent I was, how they enjoyed working with me*
 -it was *up to me to choose a path*
 -*helped me find ways, given my situation*
 -they could *understand*
 -he got me materials
 -*really reaching out and going beyond what they had to do*
 -"we're here don't forget us"
 -a really *good model* for me
 -*resourcefulness*
 -*opening of doors*
 -*neither one pushed their branch*

Shoulds: Now

[her graduate instructors]
 -each have slightly *different* approaches
 -it really has been quite isolated, I haven't been working with anybody .. either positively or negatively

Time 2**Shouldn'ts: Past**

[classmates who later became social workers]
 -*lost... the nurturing part*
 -it became more like a skill, like being a *mechanic...* found it even when I was talking to them, it rather interfered sometimes
 -in a conversation, which was not a counselling situation, the counsellor would appear
 -even caring people who really want to work with other people and have some skills, have to *watch out those skills don't become automatic* and lose any power they have
 -maybe it's a *barrier*, a way of protecting
 [should] be *aware of...* what kind of situations I'm in...what is going to be demanded of me and *what are my limits*]

Shoulds & Nots: Now

[her graduate instructors]
 -variety of styles
 -one extreme... "these are my office hours, and that's it!"... to the other extreme of... "if you need to talk to me, here's my phone number"...use the skills, but keep it kind of distant, [vs.] to use the skills and keep it kind of warm
 -how much can they put out before they get burnt out?

Time 3**Shouldn'ts: Past**

[helpers, e.g., teachers]
 -*rigid* thinking
 -*advice* giving
 -*not having faith that I will get it*, that I will figure my way
 -[not] giving, allowing *space*
 -there hasn't been the *understanding that I could also have the ability to get unstuck*
 -the authoritarian kind of... more the expert model
 -"*maybe you're not meant to do that or maybe it's too difficult so you should stop*"
 -"*you can't do it, you're unable*"

Shoulds: Now

[peers, some instructors, practicum supervisor]
 -helping me to *focus*
 -they have that *confidence that I can do something*
 -they give me *space*
 -[practicum] allowed to do whatever I need to do
 -*whatever works for you... try it, I'm here for feedback*
 -having people think that I know what I can handle and what I can't
 -*questions* are really put in a very *positive* way
 -it's also in a pretty *democratic* way

Time 1

-uncaring
-unconcerned
-surface involved
-stuck in one mode of thinking
-inflexible
-incompetent
-I don't have a clue what I'm doing
-unethical, e.g., not disclosing... inadvertently to someone outside
-a client who perhaps takes me for a ride and that I'm totally unaware of... [e.g., borderline personality disorder]
-goofing up
-just... not being there
-not recognizing the symptoms... and picking up on it [e.g., suicides, depression or abuse]

Time 2

-someone who's cold
-someone who pushes people away without maybe even being aware of it [vs. appropriate boundary setting]
-being unaware of myself
-not ethical
-someone who has stagnated

Time 3

-domineering
-judgmental
-limiting in some way
-unbelieving
-someone who doesn't trust the client
-doesn't listen
-closed down

-nurturing	-distant
-warm	-cold
-supportive	-closed down
-caring	-uncaring
-understanding	-unbelieving
-encouraging	-unconcerned
-available	-barriers
-opening doors	-pushing people away
-resourceful	-limiting
-an explorer	
-reaching out	
-appropriate boundaries	
-skilled	-goofing up
-competent	-incompetent
-knowledgeable	-totally unaware
	-not being there
-personal construct	
-having faith in client	-judgmental
-democratic	-authoritarian/expert
-giving client space	-not allowing client space
-good listener	-domineering
	-not picking up on things
-ethical	-unethical
-flexible style	-inflexible
	-stuck
	-stagnated
-bigger picture	

Appendix N. Bonnie: Common Themes Across Self-Defining Memories

Theme	Stage Managing	Special Student	Starting High School	Creative Connections Trip
<p>warmth & closeness</p> <p>vs. alone & judged</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -warmth that everybody exudes -explosion of personal warmth -lots of hugging & sharing -a lot of positive feeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -moved near to tears -almost on the edge of tears, it was a very moving moment -realized I'd been a real focal point -we shared the first dance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -a lot of people phone me -it's a neat way to get to know people -I know that person a little better -like getting a little present ... also a chance where the other person opens up too -feeling like a stranger in a strange land -not knowing anybody -cliquey -teenage girls at that age are snotty & catty about the stupidest things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the closeness that we all felt -real closeness -almost like a giant pajama party for seven days
nurturing & support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -providing the support [physical & little words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -supportive -nurturing & resourceful -an extension of the mothering role -concerned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -nurture -really liked helping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -helping
<p>growth & fulfillment</p> <p>realizing potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -self-actualization of individuals -self-fulfillment -stretching -watching others grow -they go out & do something that they never thought they could do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -she was just all there -helping her discover who she was -watching people go through the process of discovering who they are -she had some sort of vision beyond just staying at home -like she had an identity for the first time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -strength -wanting people ... to even recognize that they have potential -wanting to work with people to fulfill their potential -they do know a lot more than they think 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -confidence -resources that we have within ourselves that we aren't always aware of -having a unique way of looking at the world that can help you to see things clearly

Theme	Stage Managing	Special Student	Starting High School	Creative Connections Trip
independence & self-set goals	-on a continuum, depending on where the person is at & how big a step they can take that's comfortable to them, but still kind of stretching them	-goals they set themselves	-I had to be independent from very young	
leading/ guiding behind the scenes	-back stage -not important for me to be the one on stage, to be recognized	-back seat -not all that comfortable being the one on stage	-leading form behind -pretty shy in class -an observer	-a guide, not someone who necessarily knows the answer
orchestrating/ teaching	-orchestrating the production	-orchestrating ... setting things in motion -keeps in contact -follows through	-forming things like study groups -really liked ... teaching	-facilitate their working together -I want to share some of the learning I've made -I have some things to pass on
supporting the underdog/ everybody has worth		-like she had an identity [vs.] being looked on as someone who wasn't very intelligent, who couldn't get it together, who had to be taken care of	-top bunch [vs.] ... second class citizens -supported the underdog -everybody feels like that sometime or another they don't belong	-everybody has a right to strut their stuff -we all have something worth showing
collaboration/ cooperation in groups	-we're helping each other			-collaborative -how one works together -cooperative activities
perspective on self &/or group			-in some ways it would be nice to ... be up there looking down ... to get outside and look	-part of my fascination for ...creativity & working together... is that I'm also trying to figure it out for myself -also learn by watching their process

Theme	Stage Managing	Special Student	Starting High School	Creative Connections Trip
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -trying to find ways that I would feel confident & ... being able to pass that on to students
<p>creative connections & application/integration</p>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -making connections & applying them -creative problem solving -a chance for people to tap into their creative abilities that they may be unaware of -integrate so much of their learning -to see that transfer [to the real world]

Time 1

-in the beginning I felt really *insecure and inadequate* ... really *frightened*
 -it's *fun* because there's *so much energy there*, it's like I'm on the cutting edge of myself
 -I *don't have time for my anxiety*, or maybe I'm just in a *constant state of anxiety* and don't know it
 -I'm being *challenged* ... at all fronts
 -it seems like *I've lost that old familiar self*
 -my *old little securities were taken away* from me
 -sometimes I find myself saying it's happening *too quick, too fast, I'm overwhelmed*
 -like I'm *on the table*
 -I'm *always making connections, and moving*... I'm not still...*I don't have time to be still*
 -I'm *okay with it*, and then I *start to freak out*, but not really, but in my mind I do: ..."*it's too much, it's too quick, it's too fast*" ...half an hour or something like that, and then I get right back into it.
 -other times I feel *really confident*
 -life is turned *upside down*
 -*in shock*
 -change is happening *so fast and you can't control it*
 -*what can you grab on to, and hold on to and be stable?*
 -*lonely... in isolation*
 -*the most intense time of my life*
 -*turmoil and change*
 -*grief, loss, loneliness*

So much newness inside yourself, it seems you can barely recognize yourself.....

Time 2

-very *engaging*
 -*challenging, like my heart and soul was in it*
 -other than [one very bad experience]...it has been a *very positive* experience, *growth enhancing*
 -*gratifying*
 -like I just ended the first part of a lot of transition and it's kind of *a little break*...I swam to the first island...and I see the next part of the ocean
 -I *made my life so simple*, so I don't really see myself in transition because I'm so *focused and I've chucked everything else out* [right now when writing papers]
 -*more settled... more comfortable with myself*
 -really *tired* of evaluating myself...*it's like a vessel has been emptied*
 -jump through the *hoops*, it's *not for my growth anymore*...I've learned the lessons and now *can it stop here please?*
 -the program, or the transitions...*had a profound effect*
 -I *feel stronger now than I ever have in my life before*
 -*the apex of my development*, that I *know myself the most that I ever have known myself that I'm the most connected*
 -I'm *the healthiest now that I have ever been*, in my *emotional health*, my *mental health...a powerful sense of self*
 -I'm feeling *really tired*

Time 3

-in the thick of things still
 -*established and comfortable*, I feel *settled*
 -into a *comfortable routine both externally and internally*
 -inside myself I feel *far more at ease* with the different roles I have since I've become a student
 -being able to *stretch* those boundaries or comfort zones
 -*able to do things that I thought that maybe I wouldn't be able to do*
 -quite *comfortable*, the classroom situations that *used to threaten me* first semester...*are now my comfort zone*
 -I'm *becoming used to places that were previously anxiety provoking*
 -I realize my life isn't balanced, and as this semester goes on, there's part of me that feels even more *unbalanced*
 -I'm really *pulled back*...to get my courses done, *my world is very small*
 -I'm realizing that , yes, *this is going to end* and that process is starting for me
 -University *drives something in me that's there wanting to be driven, and I really like it*
 -part of me *will miss that excitement*
 -*confidence* in myself, I'm really *believing in myself* in a way that I've *never ever* been able to
 -*challenged*
 -*my peak at internal development*
 -a little bit *guilty* that I have this *new self-confidence*
 -quite *actualized*
 -I haven't had time yet to assimilate it, and I'm *watching myself react to that new found power*
 -*disengaging* myself, coming to the end...the transition of closure
 -*little peaks of kind of fear*
 -still in some *grief*
 Seasoned

Time 1

- wisdom*
- being *quiet*
- having a person take as much time and being okay with that...*following their pacing*
- being *able to see the line between letting people be* and explore themselves, *but also knowing it's okay to push people* in a way that is appropriate
- knowing that...*intuitive line of when the person can be*, maybe *challenged* a little bit?
- being *able to facilitate growth*
- [clients] not only getting something out of the issue at hand, but...*maybe a foundation for ... resolving other issues*
- [clients] could take that connection with feelings and...*apply it to other areas of their life*
- vision...that there is hope ...to identify what they can control*
- I would *invite them in*
- accurately refer out*
- set my own parameters and stick to it...*that I would have the reputation of setting the boundaries and sticking to them*
- my *values* would also...*be congruent with my lifestyle...that I'm congruent with myself*
- when people have a *different perspective* [coming out with things very strongly] that if it bothered me...I would be *able to handle that*
- learning and always growing myself*
- to be *integral*
- to be *able to say I don't know*

Time 2

- support* them [clients] and help them arise to the occasion
- internal *integrity*
- know my own *boundaries* and be able to *communicate* that with the person
- solid* enough *boundaries* that if I couldn't work with this person or my own stuff was getting in the way...I would have the *wherewithal...to terminate*
- if I was having some sort of a concern, after *talking to...a professional...I could come up with the client...and that could be worked out*
- very important that I would have *solid boundaries...act immediately* and well, *be aware*
- self-awareness*
- the person *that looks after herself and paces herself*
- immediacy* in sessions, and in my personal life
- continuing to grow and be open*
- a risk taker*, but not too risky that it would violate people
- always professionally *keeping up with new ideas* [and in personal life as well]
- consistency*
- congruency*
- learning new things and trying those out*
- when I make *mistakes I would recognize them, and take appropriate action* and then be able to *let it go*, and not persecute myself
- always *taking care of myself*
- consulting* with colleagues or supervisors
- giving them* [clients] the *space to explore* what their values are

Time 3

- [at a minimum] I would act in a way that the *average counsellor* with my experience would act
- competent in...those really gray areas*
- choices that I would make would be *consistent with my peers*
- ethically* I would be able to function in a *professional way*
- I *could hold on to some sort of principles and structure*, and have a decision making process and be extremely firm, so that if I was taken to task, I would be able to *defend myself* and my *peers would say "yes, this is acceptable"*
- stay *current*
- knows my limitations*
- if the person I'm working with is *going beyond my limitations* that I would be *sensitive* to that, and do something about that
- act *ethically responsible* and within the appropriate bounds
- high *self-awareness*
- healthy risk taking*
- an *initiator*
- sensitivity*
- appropriate techniques*
- make a positive difference*
- if I reach out and it didn't work, then be *able to reshift and learn* from that, and *then try again*
- allowing myself to be *moldable, bendable, pliable*
- accepting when I am wrong*, that I am *kind to myself*
- immediate...if I...make an error* that I would *come forth...like to say "I made a mistake, that wasn't appropriate, I really goofed up here"*
- appropriately transparent*
- [if ran into disciplinary problems] that I could *shift it to using that as an impetus to grow and learn*
- make a life-long *connection with myself...constantly check in*

Time 1

- I would *slip in my own agenda*
 -challenge too much
 -miss some cues [small concern, believes likely clients will bring it up again if important enough]
 -my mind would go blank, and their mind would be blank
 -the largest fear would be that *I damaged someone*
 -we do some problem solving...and they come to some sort of decision, and somehow *I take personal responsibility for it, and the family falls apart...or they actually kill themselves...or they damaged someone else*
 -I wasn't able to piece it together quick enough
 -I really *misjudged in a big way*
 -they'd *con me*
 -vain
 -narrow-minded...not tolerant

Time 2

-[pushing something] under the carpet because...I got *caught up in my life*
 -[being] seduced by some sort of wonderful system *conning people, get seduced into things that are weird*
 -imposing my belief structure and values
 -telling people what to do
 -I would become too *spread out too thinly* and wouldn't have the energy
 -my life would be *too busy*, and I *wouldn't be centered*
 -my life would be stressful... *I would be parachuting to some stressful event in my head*
 -not looking after myself *basically*, in my lifestyle
 -if I'm kind of off, that would impact my *professional performance*
 -being *stagnant...not keeping up* with current information in the field
 -being afraid of change, saying we've always done it this way

Time 3

-arrogant
 -inappropriate...somehow I'm *way out in my thinking process...[but] in my thinking process it would be logical, reasonable*
 -[worst possible scenario] feeling, thinking, believing that this is the appropriate technique...and in fact...*I was way out of line...that would really shake me up*
 -some sort of *gross negligence*...I don't think that will ever happen, but this is...unrealistic fear that I have...and *I have to get supervision* or something like that
 -a *part of me that's quite self-destructive* sometimes...sometimes when the client is being really vulnerable with me, I sense the power that I have...and this *thought goes through my mind that I could say something absolutely ridiculous*...but I don't say it...it's me, they've said *something that comes up from my past*...and I realize, wow, if I ever said that, that would be terrible...I have the impulse I don't act on it, and I won't act on it, and I guess *what scares me is that it's there*
 -if I'm not looking after myself well enough...and I don't check in with myself regularly enough, *that will overflow in how well I do in the session*

Appendix R. Ann: Hoped-for Selves by Theme

Theme	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
boundaries & referring out, awareness of own limits & taking appropriate action	-set my own parameters and stick to it... that I would have the reputation of setting the boundaries and sticking to them	-know my own boundaries and be able to communicate that with the person -solid enough boundaries that if I couldn't work with this person or my own stuff was getting in the way ... I would have the wherewithal...to terminate -very important that I would have solid boundaries...act immediately and, well, be aware	-knows my limitations -if the person I'm working with is going beyond my limitations that I would be sensitive to that and do something about that
learning, growing, adapting, changing	-learning and always growing myself	-always professionally keeping up with new ideas [and personally as well] -learning new things and trying those out -consulting with colleagues or supervisors	-stay current -if I reach out and it didn't work, then be able to reshift and learn from that, and then try again -allowing myself to be moldable, bendable, pliable -[if I ran into disciplinary problems] that I could shift it to using that as an impetus to grow and learn
recognizing & acting on mistakes, immediacy	-to be able to say I don't know	-if I was having some sort of a concern, after talking to...a professional...I could come up with the client...and that could be worked out -immediacy in sessions, and in my personal life -when I make mistakes I would recognize them, and take appropriate action and then be able to let it go, and not persecute myself	-immediate...if I...make an error that I would come forth...like to say "I made a mistake, that wasn't appropriate, I really goofed up here"

Appendix R. Hoped-for Selves by Theme

Theme	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
making a positive difference with client extending beyond the moment/session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -[clients] not only getting something out of the issue at hand but... maybe a foundation for ...resolving other issues -[clients] could take that connection with feelings and...apply it to other areas of their life -vision...that there is hope...to identify what they [clients] can control 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -make a positive difference
ethics			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -ethically I would be able to function in a professional way -act ethically responsible and within the appropriate bounds
integrity, self-awareness, congruence, self-care (& other good personal characteristics)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -my values would also ...be congruent with my lifestyle...that I'm congruent with myself -when people have a different perspective [e.g., very strong opinions] that if it bothered me...I would be able to handle that -to be integral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -internal integrity -self-awareness -the person that looks after herself and paces herself -continuing to grow and be open -congruency -consistency -always taking care of myself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I could hold on to some sort of principles and structure, and have a decision making process and be extremely firm, so that if I was taken to task, I would be able to defend myself and my peers would say "yes, this is acceptable." -high self-awareness -sensitivity -accepting when I am wrong, that I am kind to myself -appropriately transparent -make a life-long connection with myself ...constantly check in
professional skills, competent, supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -having the person take as much time and being okay with that...following their pacing -being able to see the line between 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -support them [the clients] and help them arise to the occasion -giving them [clients] the space to explore what their values are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -an initiator -appropriate techniques -(at a minimum) I would act in a way that the average counsellor with my

Appendix R. Hoped-for Selves by Theme

Theme	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
professional skills, competent, supportive (cont.)	letting people be and explore themselves, but also knowing it's okay to push people in a way that is appropriate -knowing that...intuitive line of when the person can be, maybe challenged a little bit? -being able to facilitate growth -I would invite them in -being quiet		experience would act -competent in those really gray areas -choices that I would make be consistent with my peers
healthy risk taking		-a risk taker, but not too risky that it would violate people	-healthy risk taking

Appendix S. Ann Feared Counsellor Selves by Theme

Theme	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
own vs. client's agenda or values	-I would slip in my own agenda -narrow-minded...not tolerant -challenge too much	-imposing my belief structure and values -telling people what to do	-arrogant
can't rely on, or trust own judgment	-I really misjudged in a big way -they'd con me	-if I'm kinda off, that would impact my professional judgment -[being] seduced by some sort of wonderful system of conning people, get seduced into things that are weird	-inappropriate... somehow I'm way out in my thinking process...[but] in my thinking process it would be logical, reasonable -[worst case scenario] feeling, thinking, believing that this is the appropriate technique... and in fact ... I was way out of line ... that would really shake me up
damage through bad decisions or negligence	-the largest fear would be that I damaged someone -we do some problem solving... and they come to some sort of decision, and somehow I take personal responsibility for it, and the family falls apart ... or they actually kill themselves ... or they damaged someone else		-some sort of gross negligence ... I don't think that will ever happen, but this is ... unrealistic fear that I have ... and I have to get supervision or something like that
poor counselling due to lack of self-care and preoccupation with own needs		-[pushing something] under the carpet because ... I got caught up in my life -I would become too spread out too thinly and wouldn't have the energy -my life would be too busy, and I wouldn't be centered -my life would be stressful ... I would be parachuting to some stressful event in my head -not looking after myself basically, in my lifestyle	-if I'm not looking after myself well enough ... and I don't check in with myself regularly enough, that will overflow in how well I do in the session

Appendix S. Ann Feared Counsellor Selves by Theme

Theme	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
not being alert, astute or quick enough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -miss some cues [small concern, believes it likely clients will repeat important information] -my mind would go blank, and their mind would be blank -I wasn't able to piece it together quick enough 		
professionally stagnant		-being stagnant ... not keeping up with current information in the field	
personal inadequacies	-vain	-being afraid of change, saying we've always done it this way	-a part of me that's quite self-destructive ... sometimes when the client is being really vulnerable with me, I sense the power that I have ... and this thought goes through my mind that I could say something absolutely ridiculous ... but I don't say it ... it's me, they've said something that comes up from my past ... and I realize, wow, if I ever said that, that would be terrible ... I have the impulse but don't act on it, and I won't act on it ... what scares me is that it's there

Time 1**Shoulds: Past**

[Female psychologist/teacher at high school]
 -first *professional woman*
 -*role model*, hero, idolized her
 -*calm* when working with mentally ill people...as opposed to afraid of them
 -*incredibly calm*
 -entirely *different perspective* [vs. superstitions and witchcraft stories in her back ground]
 -*intelligent*, therefore she had validity
 -she *respected these people* [the mentally ill] and they weren't animals to be chained
 -I was *able to shift* from all my role models, and stories
 -I didn't know PhD women existed...it just *never occurred to me that women could do these things*

Shoulds: Now

[Various peers and instructors]
 -it *never occurred to me that people would actually specialize in working with the terminally ill*
 -a *whole avenue of counselling that I was close to*, and intellectually I understand there is a need for
 -now...I'm thinking that it would be very *gratifying for me to actually work with people who are terminally ill...like if I wanted to contribute to humanity and people, there's nothing more primal that I can contribute than to people who are dying*
 -I would *never, ever, ever, thought I'd be interested in this* [working with the terminally ill]
 -all of a sudden I seem to know these people who are in this area, and I'm *seeking it out*.

Time 2**Shouldn'ts: Past**

[Church minister]
 -[advice] pretty *one-sided*
 -*didn't fit my philosophy*
 -I was told "*this is what you do*"
 -I was *only allowed to explore in a very confined area*
 -I was *only allowed to ask certain questions*
 -he *specifically told me what my values should be and are!*
 -he *didn't ask where I was*
 -he *cut me off*
 -a *pseudo authoritarian parent*
 -I was *subordinate* and he was the *authority*, the boundaries were very clear
 [Counsellor]
 -she *warned me of the actions of another client* who happened to be my friend
 -I thought, wait a minute, why are you telling me this?...I'm not even a child...even if I were a child this *would be out of line...we were both clients*
 -I was in no immediate danger...so *ethically it was very inappropriate*

Shoulds: Now

[One particular, unspecified counsellor, and some peers]
 -*nonjudgmental listening*
 -*accepting*
 -*open type of space*
 -use *appropriate self-disclosure* to help *connect with me*
 -*knowledgeable* in the field
 -*able to back up his philosophy with research*
 -he *helped me get inside my dreams* [vs. the others who said that dream's wrong, go for this dream]
 -helped to *validate who I already was*
 -*helped me push from inside out*
 ...help me *rise to the occasion*
 -*could get inside me*
 -helping me follow [my agenda]

Time 3**Should/Shouldn't**

[Various counsellors]
 -*admire* someone who has *counselling skills*, but also *see that there are reasons where I think that...they're just wrong!*
 -you are a *good counsellor*, and now I can see areas where, gee *I think there needs to be some work...and that's okay that you disagree with me*
 -I didn't know that if I had a really positive session, what I was doing was *making all these assumptions, and placing...what I thought was valuable, and ethical and good [on them]*
 -*counsellors are people like I am*
 ...and even though I can respect their skills, there are *areas that everyone is lacking in*
 -*before I would just see their skill level and nothing else*
 -I *admired the skills* in session, but the counsellor did *touch me in a way that I felt was not appropriate*

Should: Now

[Counsellor as a speaker]
 -it's okay to *lighten up* here a bit

Should/Shouldn't: Now

-some of the *ways things are done*, that maybe the *client doesn't know the full picture*
 -big *difference between academic and real world...things aren't so clean cut and easy...as is in the textbook...coming to terms with where my boundaries are* in that area
 -at first when I hear it, I think, oh, wow, that's *stretching things, and then to think, well it's not as clear cut*, and as easy as in the book
 -*what really is in the...best view of the client?...one value is...being forthright...and another value is serving the minor*

Appendix U, Ann: Self-Defining Memories with Repeated Themes Across Time

	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3	
Theme	The Affair	The Suicide Attempt	No White Wedding	Counsellor Personality	Birthing Second Child	Intrinsic Helper Personality
Individuality & personality vs. conforming to status quo	-I'm not going to sell myself up -I guess I needed to start to live my own life -to choose to be true to myself -I hadn't lost my identity before		-explaining about my non-traditional ways of viewing myself -I was not going to follow society's rules just because that's the way it's always been done -I evaluate the system and weigh the pros and cons -I'm in society, but also I can stand apart from society, and decide how I'm going to function in society	-he had quite an impact on me because ... I was really being myself -he was able to connect with a ... part of my personality	-that honouring of myself, and believing in myself, and looking after myself ... that's what I was doing all those years and not realizing it -it's like there's a bucket of molasses that is poured on people growing up in that environment -there's so much force to stay and keep the status quo	
isolation, alienation, & feeling different	-I was very lonely -really, really isolated -alienated		-I was very much alone in doing this -I was very, very separate -sometimes I wonder...why am I so different than my family members, or my friends? -I remember no one, none of my peers or my family doing this			

Appendix U, Ann: Self-Defining Memories with Repeated Themes Across Time

	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3	
Theme	The Affair	The Suicide Attempt	No White Wedding	Counsellor Personality	Birth of Second Child	Intrinsic Helper Personality
values	-going through the whole dilemma of not being congruent with my values -I learned that sometimes my values are idealistic		-being intrinsically motivated, my own value system -if it doesn't fit with my values ... I have a difficult time going with it	-he was able to identify that something else, maybe it's a value system		
helping, making an impact		-I had made a very real impact, but I was overwhelmed that I had made that impact -disappointed that I never had the opportunity to connect with him on a one-to-one level -through my actions he had come back -very tangible the impact that had made -overwhelming ... humble and amazed [about making such an impact]				-[it] helped her to see beyond that, and how, perhaps she could facilitate his growth -I really knew I had made an impact on her thinking, she had shifted ... it was the first time I knew that I could do that
external validation				-he said he could see me in the role of a counsellor -he saw that ... counselling would be an appropriate		-I took it as a personal compliment -an indication that "yes, I am able to look at social situations and maybe

Appendix U. Ann: Self-Defining Memories with Repeated Themes Across Time

	Time 1		Time 2		Time 3	
Theme	The Affair	The Suicide Attempt	No White Wedding	Counsellor Personality	Birth of Second Child	Intrinsic Helper Personality
external validation (cont).				profession, that he thought I would do well -he was able to identify that "something else" -I was cut from the counsellor-in-training cloth -I thought this was a sign that I might be ready		with some degree of richness, indicate something of benefit -kind of like a stroke for me -she was saying that I was wiser beyond my years -that was an indication that ... I am perceptive ... and I am intuitive ... and I am sensitive .. I can analyze and put forth in a valuable way
age, experience & wisdom				-he was older, too, which was important to me because he had been around -he had a great deal of rich life background		-I respected this woman, this woman was a lot older than me

Appendix V. Ann: Self-Defining Memories. Themes Not Repeated Over Time

Theme	Time 1: The Affair
living vs. dying within	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -a crisis in my ... soul -I started to die within -making the choice to reconnect with who I am -I was still there with my dreams -able to connect with the very core of me -I realized I have the same dreams, I was the same person, and it hadn't died
needs & dreams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -my needs weren't being met -I was still there with my dreams -I realized I have the same dreams
	Time 1: The Suicide Attempt
suicide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I had a connection with my own fear of this ... out of all the things I'm afraid of, it was that! -I was concerned about that [i.e. visiting the hospital] because this man was very suicidal -immediate life and death is ... still threatening to me, but I'm more comfortable with it than I was before -it was really scary for me [going to visit]
being caught off guard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -I needed 90 seconds, just to get my head together -I just was caught off guard and didn't have time -I wish I would have been more ready, but I wasn't, I couldn't make myself ready
making progress, growing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -the first time it happened ... I didn't cope as well as the second time -I would have liked ... to cope with it better. I can't make myself grow faster! -3 years prior to that ... it wasn't even a possibility -I knew that I have made some improvement in this area -utterly pleased about that, because that means it was genuine growth

Appendix V. Ann: Self-Defining Memories. Themes Not Repeated Over Time

	Time 2: No White Wedding
meaning	-I wouldn't get married wearing white ... because for me it didn't have any meaning -I needed to know why, where they fit in this system, that was really important ... why things had been done the way they've been done.
	Time 3: Birthing Second Child
calm and in control [vs. anxious]	-my goal was to connect the music with this place of calmness and control -I worked with my body and accepted my body ... and experienced it, as opposed to being fearful and fighting -being able to seize ... control in areas that I can and working in those areas and being comfortable -I can make it good, or I can make it not so good, and I choose to make it good
diligence and preparation	-I was very diligent -I had really worked -I know that I can go back and prepare my mind for other things that maybe I would find difficult
power as a woman	-a fully functioning woman -feminist political power -women can take their plight, and they can do something about it
rewriting experience	-like in narrative therapy ... I changed my language, I wrote my experience differently -the power of changing perspective, rewriting the script -I can, and I think anyone can basically change the reality -I can change my response to my environment ... I had a choice

Ann: Dominant Themes Repeated Across Transitions, Possible Selves & Self-Defining Memories

Theme	Transitions	Possible Selves	Self-Defining Memories
suicide/death or damage	-pre ^{T1} fear a client would commit suicide prevented an early pursuit of helper goal -T ¹ intrigued & drawn to the idea of working with the dying	-T ¹ feared she might damage someone, family might "fall apart," or client kills self or others -T ³ feared being grossly negligent [but thought unlikely]	-T ¹ scared & uncertain how to handle suicidal student but more comfortable than with previous student & was able to visit him in hospital
wanting to make a difference	-T ¹ wanted to make an impact in others' lives & those who were dying	-T ¹ hoped her clients would connect to their feelings, & get something out of the session that would give them hope & provide them with the foundation to take control & resolve issues in their lives -T ³ hoped to "make a positive difference" in people's lives	-T ¹ overwhelmed, humbled, & amazed by her impact on suicidal student -T ³ pleased she had facilitated growth of one acquaintance, & had impact of shifting the thinking of a friend [first time she knew she could do that]
trying to plan ahead, be active, & take responsibility or control of situation	-T ¹ arrived early in Victoria for a "test run" and to show herself she could "do it" (i.e., academics & children were looked after), approached the transitions in stages -handled fear by focusing on what she could control	-T ² hoped to recognize mistakes, consult, & take appropriate action -T ² hoped to be immediate in sessions & personal life -T ³ hoped that if erred would admit it	-T ³ decided to work with & accept her body [in childbirth], rewrite "the script," change her response -T ³ wanted to seize control where she could -T ³ was diligent, worked hard & prepared her mind for something difficult -T ³ "women can take their plight & they can do something about it"
acceptance	-T ¹ accepted there were going to be changes rather than fighting change -T ² felt "far more settled" with her "unsettledness" -T ³ came to terms with who she is "completely & fully" -T ³ "it's okay not to know"	-T ² hoped to act on any mistakes she made, then "let it go," & not "persecute" herself -T ³ hoped to be able to accept it when she was wrong & to be kind to herself	-T ³ worked with her body & accepted it "as opposed to being fearful & fighting" -T ³ decided she could "make it good" or "make it not so good" & she was going to choose to make it good
sense of self, identity, congruence [vs. conforming]	-T ¹ felt like she had "lost that old familiar self" -T ¹ identified core	-T ¹ hoped her values would be congruent with her lifestyle -T ² hoped to be self-	-T ¹ decided she had to chose to connect with her "core" & her dreams or continue to

Ann: Dominant Themes Repeated Across Transitions, Possible Selves & Self-Defining Memories

Theme	Transitions	Possible Selves	Self-Defining Memories
	<p>values she believed would remain constant</p> <p>-T¹ felt like her life had been "turned upside down"</p> <p>-T³ belief she knew her self better than before</p>	<p>aware, to have internal integrity, to be congruent & consistent</p> <p>-T³ hoped to be self-aware, & able to make a "life-long connection" with herself</p>	<p>"die within"</p> <p>-T¹ resolved not to sell herself short, to live own life, to be true to self & realized had not lost her identity</p> <p>-T² decided that although is part of society, can "stand apart" & make own decisions</p> <p>-T³ "there's so much force to stay and keep the status quo" [in home town]</p>
value of change & development	<p>-T¹ liked the feeling of being "on the cutting edge"[but was uncomfortable with the pace of change]</p> <p>-T² believed herself to be at "the apex" of her development, the most connected</p>	<p>-T¹ hoped to always be leaning & growing</p> <p>-T² hoped to be learning, keeping up professionally & consulting</p> <p>-T² feared becoming professionally stagnant or afraid of change</p> <p>-T³ hoped to stay current & to grown and learn from difficulties</p>	<p>-T¹ frustrated could not make herself grow faster but knew she had improved & was "utterly pleased" about the "genuine growth"</p>
self-esteem & confidence	<p>-T¹ connection between self-esteem & performance, uncertain how to gauge competence in student rather than teaching role</p> <p>-T² belief she has "the stuff it takes to do it"</p> <p>-T³ believed in herself in a way she had "never ever been able to before"</p> <p>-T³ felt "seasoned" for the first time"</p>	<p>-T¹ feared becoming vain</p> <p>-T¹ feared she might miss clients' cues, her mind might go blank, she wouldn't be "quick enough" to grasp the client's issues, or she might misjudge or be conned</p> <p>-T² feared might be conned or "kinda off" in her judgment</p> <p>-T³ feared being "inappropriate" in her thinking process, & unaware she was "way out of line"</p>	
isolation, being alone/single	<p>-T¹ single (separated from husband) & without her children for the first time</p> <p>-T¹ started to learn to be "at peace" with the</p>		<p>-T¹ felt very isolated, alienated & lonely</p> <p>-T² felt very alone, "very, very separate," & wondered why she was so different from</p>

Ann: Dominant Themes Repeated Across Transitions, Possible Selves & Self-Defining Memories

Theme	Transitions	Possible Selves	Self-Defining Memories
	<p>discomfort of being alone (& lonely)</p> <p>-T² difficult living alone for first time but learned to "quite like aspects of it," whereas before she hadn't liked any of it, it had been "too new" & "too much"</p> <p>-T³ came to terms with a "role of self," that was independent of others for the first time</p>		her family members & friends
<p>boundaries & standing up for herself</p>	<p>-preT¹ needed to know where her responsibility ends</p> <p>-T¹ ability to set "really strong boundaries" re: how much to give to others</p> <p>-T³ resolved that, if needed, she would stand up to supervisor for what she believed in</p> <p>-T³ found the balance of "where it's too much" and what she's willing to do</p> <p>-T³ had begun to feel more comfortable with her roles & her boundaries"</p>	<p>-T¹ hoped to be able to set own boundaries & to stick to them</p> <p>-T² hoped to know own boundaries and stick up for them. to terminate if wasn't able to work with client & act immediately on awareness</p> <p>-T³ hoped to know own limitations, to recognize when work with client exceeded her limitations & to act on that recognition</p>	
<p>balancing work & relationships, time for self-care</p>	<p>-T¹ identified a "conflict" between workload & personal life & recognized the very thing she thought "supplemental," was really "essential"</p> <p>-T² felt far more able to: look after herself & pace herself, not be everything to everyone</p> <p>-T² emphasized importance of time for self-reflection</p> <p>-T² realized she should have taken on less, work load was her "number one barrier" to</p>	<p>-T² hoped to look after herself & pace herself</p> <p>-T² feared not taking care of herself in the lifestyle she chose to lead</p> <p>-T² feared letting her life become so busy, stressful, or over committed, that she wouldn't be centered, attentive or have the she energy needed for clients</p> <p>-T³ feared if she didn't look after herself well, & check in with herself regularly, it would</p>	

Ann: Dominant Themes Repeated Across Transitions, Possible Selves & Self-Defining Memories

Theme	Transitions	Possible Selves	Self-Defining Memories
	<p>performance”</p> <p>-T³ recognition that self-care, honouring, & trusting herself were most important in her transition to becoming a counsellor</p> <p>-T³ knowledge that university was “driving” something in her “that was there, wanting to be driven,” & even though she wanted a break, part of her that was going to miss the intensity</p> <p>-T³ recognized her world was “very small,” her life was not balanced & was becoming further unbalanced as the semester went on</p>	<p>“overflow” into her sessions</p>	
<p>high expectations for self</p>	<p>-T¹ expected herself to be “using every moment” she had wisely</p> <p>-T² set up own self-tests of performance, e.g., crying client & fundamentalist Christian</p> <p>-T² felt “guilty” for thought about possibility of saying something that might “crush” the client [vs. “when you become a counsellor, it’s all of a sudden you can’t be human, & of course that’s not true”]</p> <p>-T³ recognized her tendency to be “ideal” & valued falling off her horse a few times & having “mucked around in the dirt,” & felt more mature & human” as a result</p> <p>T³ began to “lighten up” to be less judgmental & more</p>	<p>-T³ feared the part of herself that sometimes had negative or irreverent thoughts about the client or thought of “ridiculous” things she might say [yet at same time recognized it was okay to be “human”]</p>	

Ann: Dominant Themes Repeated Across Transitions, Possible Selves & Self-Defining Memories

Theme	Transitions	Possible Selves	Self-Defining Memories
	<p>compassionate towards herself</p> <p>-T³ realized her motivation & drive so strong that at times loses perspective and gets "down" on herself</p>		
needing reassurance/validation	<p>-preT¹ strongly influenced by comment from counsellor who saw her as a potential counsellor</p> <p>-T² classmates helped her "validate the normality" of her experience"</p>		<p>-T² importance of the validation from a senior counsellor she was "cut from counsellor-in-training cloth" & might be ready to be a counsellor</p> <p>-T³ complimented by an older woman for her perspective, sensitivity & a wisdom beyond her years</p>
meaning making & trying to make sense of experiences	<p>-T³ perceived "spiral" pattern of getting used to experiences, need to slip "back and forth" before comfortable with experience</p> <p>-T³ moved from an "intellectual understanding" of herself to an integration of head and heart knowledge</p> <p>-T³ realized there was another "vast area" of development ahead, & felt "so solid" in herself that she was not intimidated by it as she would have previously</p>		<p>-T² needed to know why things were done & where they fit in the system</p> <p>-T² wouldn't do something just because it had been done that way before, it needed to be meaningful to her</p>
ethics, values		<p>-T¹ hoped her values would be congruent with her lifestyle</p> <p>-T³ hoped to act ethically responsible & to hold on to principles and structure</p>	<p>-T¹ learned her values are sometimes idealistic & dilemma of not being congruent with her values</p> <p>-T² importance of being intrinsically motivated & difficulty of going along with anything inconsistent with her values</p>

Ann: Dominant Themes Repeated Across Transitions, Possible Selves & Self-Defining Memories

unease with new found strength	<p>-T³ found her new internal strength "kind of scary," & felt that she was "too cocky ...brash or bold" & needed time to adjust</p> <p>-T³ concerned that too much confidence would mean a lack of "check and balance" & she wouldn't be careful of others' feelings</p>		
anxiety & fear or threat	<p>-T¹ challenged on all fronts, uncertain whether she was in a "constant state of anxiety" and "didn't know it," or just "didn't have time for" her anxiety</p> <p>-T¹ felt "so anxious, so worked up," that she didn't "have the energy for it anymore"</p> <p>-T³ more calm & peace than before, her energy level had "come down," but she still had "little peaks of fear"</p> <p>-T³ her "comfort zone" became the place she was threatened by a few months ago"</p>		
social supports	<p>-T¹ made the "calculated" decision to have "positive, growth-enhancing people" in her life</p> <p>-T² took the risk of admitting vulnerability to classmate & received validation & support</p> <p>-T² relieved when discovered others received similarly negative feed-back on tapes</p> <p>-T² children helped "ground" her & keep things in perspective"</p>		
simplifying life	<p>-T² made her life "so simple ... chucked</p>		

Ann: Dominant Themes Repeated Across Transitions, Possible Selves & Self-Defining Memories

	<p>everything else out” -T³ amazed her life had become so “incredibly simple” -T³ was not doing “a lot of things that mainstream society might do,” had really pulled back to focus on courses</p>		
dissatisfaction with jumping through hoops	<p>-T² felt “emptied” & tired of evaluating herself; “I have already learned the lessons & now can it stop here please?”</p>		
vulnerability to criticism	<p>-T² negative feedback re: tape caused her to feel “insecure” & “overwhelmed” & she began to question the “appropriateness of this program” and herself in it”</p>		
professionally skilled, competent		<p>-T¹ hoped to be able to: follow the pacing of the client, know when to challenge, facilitate growth & be quiet -T² hoped to be supportive & to give clients the space they need to explore their values -T³ hoped to be an initiator, to use appropriate techniques, be competent & make choices consistent with her peers</p>	

VITA

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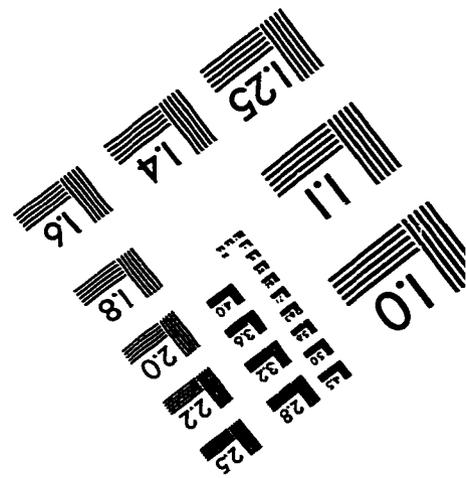
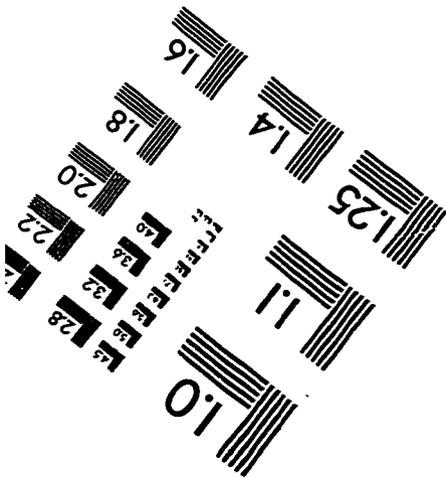
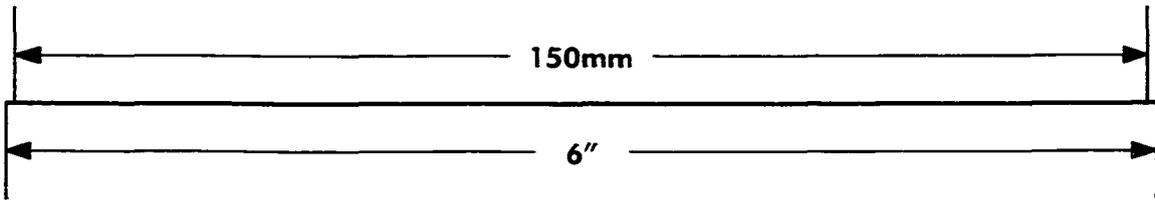
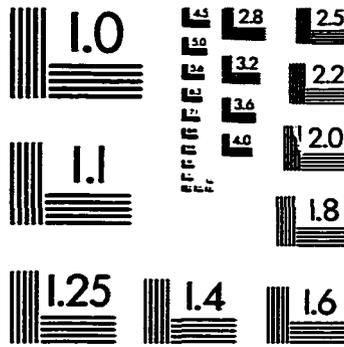
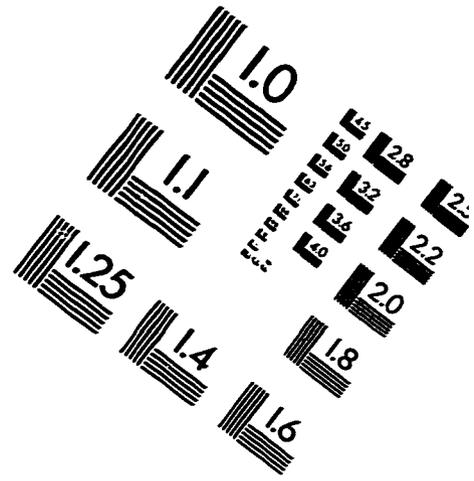
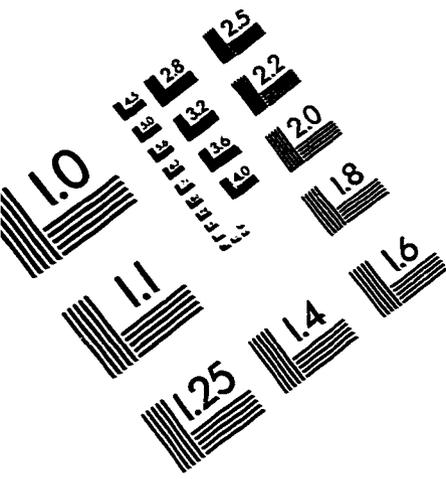
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Unpublished master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada.

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