

**YOUTH EXPERIENCES OF A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO PERSONAL
TRANSFORMATION: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY**

by

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DECLARATION

I, Lucille Yvonne Meyer, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Signed

Date

ABSTRACT

Many youth experience some form of identity crisis as they transition into adulthood. This crisis is amplified in the lives of many working-class youth who have to contend with heading households owing to the absence or death of parents and a socioeconomic context of poverty, lack of access to quality learning opportunities, unemployment and deepening inequality. A recent analysis of youth unemployment statistics in South Africa shows that at the end of 2016, at least 7.5 million youth were not in employment, education or training (NEET), with a large percentage residing in the Western Cape. The growing NEET numbers present a huge problem to youth, communities and the state, as youth who are not in employment, education or training have a greater propensity to become disengaged and disconnected from self, family and social, economic, political and cultural activities, further minimising their opportunities for growth and development. Despite the growing NEET numbers, there remains a paucity of research on credible and sustainable solutions to the NEET crises, including research that gives credence to youth voice and experience.

The key purpose of the study was to explore youth experiences of a holistic approach to personal transformation as one particular programmatic approach or developmental pathway for vulnerable youth. The imperative is to explore ways of addressing the current NEET crisis and simultaneously deepen the theory and practice of youth development.

The study used an ecological perspective as its theoretical framework that illuminated the influence of relationships and contexts on the development of children and youth. A phenomenological approach was chosen as it was deemed best suited to exploring and understanding people's perceptions and experiences of a particular phenomenon. Narrative inquiry was employed as the methodological framework to explore the views of five youth respondents and their parents or guardians. Techniques to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the data included triangulation, which was effected through the collection of two sets of data, an extensive literature review and use of a reflective journal.

The findings illustrate that a holistic perspective, as one particular philosophical and programmatic approach to personal transformation, has the potential to foster connection with self and family, enhance the psychological capital of young people and provide the impetus for them to remain on a positive developmental trajectory. The significance of a holistic approach lies in its ability to recognise and integrate all dimensions of their being into the learning process and meet a variety of needs as a result of their particular socioeconomic and psychosocial realities.

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DEDICATION

For the vast majority of young people in South Africa who are still treated as second- class citizens in their country of birth: May the injustices and indignity end soon!

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GLOSSARY

Terms/Acronyms/Abbreviations	Definition/Explanation
Anamaya kosha	Physical body
Anandamaya kosha	Bliss body
Asanas	Postures
Atman	Soul
Brahman	Higher Self, God
Budhhi	Mind
CA	Chrysalis Academy
CDE	Centre for Development and Enterprise
Chrysalis	Cocoon
DBE	Department of Basic Education
Dharana	First stage of concentration
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
Dhyana	Meditation
DCS	Department of Community Safety
DSD	Department of Social Development
FET	Further Education and Training
Habitus	Set of norms, values and practices
Indriyas	Physical senses
Manas	Mind
Manomaya kosha	Mental body
MBA	Master of Business Administration
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
Niyamas	Daily observances or practices
NYCa	National Youth Commission
NYCb	National Youth Council
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
NYDAA	National Youth Development Agency Act

Pranayama	Breath control
Pranamaya kosha	Energetic body
Pratyahara	Withdrawal of the senses
PYD	Positive youth development
ROH	Reorganisational healing
SA	South Africa
Samadhi	Dissolution
Samskaras	Imprints or conditioning
SAYC	South African Youth Council
Shakti	Energy
Shiva	Auspicious; Pure
Stats SA	Statistics South Africa
Tapas	Walking through the fires
Tat-Twam-Asi	One universal energy
TRE	Trauma Release Exercise
TVET	Technical, Vocational, Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Vijnanamaya kosha	Intellect or Wisdom body
VPUU	Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading
WC	Western Cape
Yamas	Restraints or ethical practices
Yoga	Union

CHAPTER 1: SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 Introduction

This thesis sought to explore youth experiences of a holistic approach to personal transformation as a particular philosophical and programmatic approach to youth development. A holistic approach, with its roots dating back to the year 600 BC, is one that recognises and deliberately engages all dimensions of a human being: the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. The study is embedded in an ecological perspective that illuminates how young people grow up in an ‘ecology’ of contexts such as the family, schools, peers, religious institutions, and the broader community, all of which are impacted by the larger macro socioeconomic and political system (Bronfenbrenner, 1986:723). An ecological perspective provides a useful lens through which to view how the lives of young people are impacted by multiple contexts, and simultaneously, how they influence these contexts. This research study was prompted by my intention to contribute meaningfully to the personal transformation of youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). The accessible language within which the thesis has been written, which is often not associated with academic discourse, does not detract from its academic rigour and scholarship as the intention is for the perspectives and findings to be understood, interrogated and implemented.

Many youth experience some form of identity crisis as they transition into adulthood (Erikson, 1968:128; Pinnock, 2016:143). This crisis is amplified in the lives of many working-class youth who have to contend with heading households owing to the absence or death of parents and a socioeconomic context of poverty, lack of access to quality learning opportunities, unemployment and deepening inequality (Soudien, 2007:xi). It is evident that the context within which many young people in South Africa are growing up is fraught with complexity, challenges and despair as well as hope. Despite the increased investment in education following the ushering in of a new dispensation in 1994, the conditions under which learning is taking place in many schools within the public education system have not improved significantly and inequalities continue to persist. Within the public education system, many schools still do not have basic amenities like toilets, and suffer from poor-quality teaching and overcrowding, and extremely “low levels of teacher morale and dedication” (Chetty, 2014:96). In Cape Town, some learners may even need to join a local gang in order to pass safely through the school gates (Pinnock, 2016:209). The experiences of learners in the classroom greatly influence their attitudes to schooling and there is extensive research that illustrates how young people turn away from the “academic and relational” aspects of schooling, where there are no qualified educators and an environment that is not conducive to learning (Fine, 2002:24).

It is evident that educational achievement is greatly influenced by family socioeconomic conditions (Crouch, 2005:6). The high school dropout, largely as a consequence of underlying structural policies and practices within the education system, is a huge concern for youth, their parents and the state. Of every cohort of learners that enters the schooling system, only 60% complete Grade 12 (Crouch, 2005:8). Many black¹ working-class youth who do complete their school education may not meet the entry requirements for higher education institutions owing to the provision of poor-quality education. In 2014, out of 532 860 learners who wrote the National Senior Certificate, only 28.3% qualified for entry into a bachelor's degree (DBE, 2016:22). The key reason for this is low-quality primary and secondary schooling. Many black learners have never seen a microscope, but when they go to university, they are expected to compete with their peers as if their experiences in the classrooms were all the same (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014:39). Hence, despite the vision of the educational reform process post 1994, there is evidence of the growth of social bifurcation through education (Motala & Vally, 2010:88).

The majority of young people are left with little options after high school, since the low number of seats are filled by middle-class and urban-based students. Even for those who are successful at finding a place at university and complete a university degree programme, the chances of securing employment are limited, given the high rate of unemployment among graduates (Chetty, 2014:89). The small number of black students who are able to obtain scholarships are the privileged ones with good matriculation results from advantaged schools where parents are able to afford high fees. The opportunities for poor and working-class students from dysfunctional schools, who are in far greater financial need, are limited when the key factor for funding is merit, as opposed to poverty, class and need. Despite there being constitutional and legislative imperatives to achieve a "just, fair, equitable and humane social order with the *mélange* of official policy that only looks impressive at face value", the interests of the poor and marginalised are unfortunately not the premise on which the educational system post 1994 is built (Chetty, 2014:89).

This complex environment within which youth are growing up has contributed to increased numbers of youth who are not in employment, education or training. Early school exits are leading not only to underemployment or unemployment but criminal behaviour (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008:2). A consequence of youth not being productively engaged in either employment, education or training, is that they may have a greater propensity to become disengaged and disconnected from self, family and social, economic, political and cultural activities, which can further minimise their opportunities for growth and development (Norton et al., 2014:479). In fact, they lose connection to social institutions (Vigil, 1993:95). Panday et

¹ Black is the generic term, encompassing Africans, coloureds and Indians (Employment Equity Act, No. 55 of 1998:7).

al. (2012:101) maintain that when young people's participation in socialising institutions such as families, schools and the labour market is limited, they do steer towards alternative structures to develop their sense of identity. The disconnection can become so deep, that young people are 'at risk' of separating themselves completely from the broader society. They then carve out their own identities based on risk factors such as substance abuse, peer pressure and gangs (Norton et al., 2014:479). The disconnection and disengagement also tend to impact negatively on the psychological capital of youth, which includes their "hope, self-esteem, positivity and resilience" (Korthagen, 2013a:14). Kessler (2000:xii) associates "emptiness, meaningless and disconnection" with a 'spiritual void' felt by young people. In her view, although the socioeconomic issues which are the source of much violence must be addressed, there is a need to meet the spiritual needs of young people (Kessler, 2000:xii).

Chetty (2015:55) notes that the high non-completion rate of formal schooling is a concern as a combination of poverty and educational attainment could potentially play an important role with regard to issues around economic inequality. It is precisely these dire socioeconomic conditions that foster crime and gang-related activities that led Pinnock (2016:4) to predict that for many youth, particularly in the Western Cape², the prospect of death before they reach the age of 30 is a strong possibility.

These socioeconomic challenges and rising numbers of NEET youth have contributed to a mushrooming of youth development initiatives in South Africa seeking to achieve a range of outcomes such as improved skills development, prevention of risky behaviour and work readiness among youth. Unfortunately, the long-term impact of these programmes is not always measured and known (Van der Merwe et al., 2012b:401-402). Consequently, there is an urgent need to examine development pathways for youth, and their philosophical foundations, with a view to understanding which approaches are best able to 'disrupt' (Weiss & Fine, 2001:520) these states of disconnection and disengagement and simultaneously facilitate the personal transformation of youth towards active engagement with self, family and other socialising institutions within society. Despite the extensive array of scholarship on the 'social crises' and 'youth problem' in the country, there is a paucity of research on credible and sustainable solutions to the NEET crisis, including research that gives credence to youth voice and experience.

In an endeavour to contribute towards finding solutions to the growing NEET crisis, this study sought to explore youth experiences of the Chrysalis Academy's three-month residential programme aimed at facilitating personal transformation. The programme has been implemented for the past 17 years for about 8000 youth that have participated, many of

² One of the nine provinces in the Republic of South Africa.

whom are characterised by society and in the literature as 'at-risk', 'vulnerable' or 'delinquent youth'.

1.2 Problem statement, purpose and research questions

1.2.1 Problem statement

The concept NEET refers to young people who are not in employment, education or training (DHET, 2013:2). Despite recognising that the concept NEET may be 'problematic' as it describes youth in a negative manner by that which they are not, and groups everyone under one label which does not adequately describe their individual circumstances (Yates & Payne, 2006:329), it is critical to acknowledge that the number of youth who are NEET are rising in South Africa, despite many initiatives employed by all spheres of government. Currently, statistics show that about 7.5 million youth are not in employment, education or training (CDE, 2017:1). Young black African people are said to be three times more likely to be NEET, than young people in the white, coloured³ and Indian communities (Van Aardt, 2012:61). In addition, young people from rural areas, early school leavers and those from poorer communities are at greater risk of being unemployed (Van Aardt, 2012:61).

The national government has embarked on a number of initiatives to reduce NEET numbers such as improving access to higher education and providing increased opportunities for vocational education and training through the Further Education and Training (FET) sector; greater emphasis on channelling youth into learnerships and internships, and the introduction of a number of programmes to support youth enterprise development (DHET, 2013:7). The growing number of NEET youth has resulted in an abundance of youth development initiatives in response to the 'problem' and extensive scholarship on the 'youth' problem. However, there remains a paucity of research on what approaches and developmental pathways are most effective when working with youth who are not in employment, education or training.

1.2.1.1 An abundance of youth development initiatives

Youth development programmes have mushroomed over the past two decades seeking to achieve, among others: improved skills development, prevention of risky behaviour and work readiness amongst youth (Barton et al., 1997:483). Charles (2006:48-49), in reviewing global challenges in Commonwealth countries, points out some of the following problems pertaining to youth: an increase in hopelessness, an increase in the number of youth who become involved in risky behaviour, a move away from involvement in community-based activities, a

³ Coloured is a racial classification used in SA before the new democratic dispensation in 1994 to describe people of mixed race. These racial classifications of African, coloured, Indian and white are now used in a new context to monitor affirmative action, inclusion and equity. However, there are many South Africans who object to any form of racial classification.

movement towards an increase in disrespect and disregard for authority figures, and an increase in the number of young people displaying socially deviant behaviour. Unfortunately, the responses of many Commonwealth governments have been reactive, not systemic and seeking quick fixes, aimed at curing youth as opposed to a “long term, developmental, collaborative and preventative approach” (Charles, 2006:49). According to the National Youth Policy (2015–2020), there is a general perception that youth development institutions such as the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) and the South African Youth Council (SAYC) have failed young people largely due to capacity challenges and clarity on mandate (The Presidency, 2015:9).

A number of scholars over the last few decades have however emphasised the importance of sustainability and envisioning a continuum of development, particularly for youth who have become disengaged and disconnected from social institutions (Garbarino, 1999; Fletcher, 2014; Pinnock, 2016). Garbarino (1999:180) promotes the idea that programmes that exist for young people that do not require people or institutions to change in any fundamental way are ineffectual. In the same spirit, Pinnock (2016:296) argues that programmes that are not integrated as part of a longer-term journey for young people are not effective.

1.2.1.2 Extensive scholarship

In addition to the vast array of youth development initiatives, the literature is replete with information on how social and economic factors such as sexual violence, parental neglect, lack of attachment to a parent figure and poverty impact on how youth develop and engage with the world (Garbarino, 2001:362; Ireland et al., 2002:359; Pinnock, 2016:166). Various studies reveal how particular environmental factors may cause some young people to commit violent crime (Edwards et al., 2007:32). In addition, there is substantial scholarship on how schools “reproduce social inequalities”, despite affording individuals “skills for upward mobility” (Weis & Fine, 2001:497).

However, despite a change in the way youth are viewed, much of what is still written about youth is from a ‘deficit’ perspective, rather than an angle that focuses on youth as ‘assets’ (Delgado, 2002:5). Much of what is written is what adults, including policy makers, think is best – the majority of which denigrates young people’s potential (Delgado, 2002:6). Many institutions, including organs of state, often view youth development narrowly as projects to assist young people to avoid or limit anti-social behaviour, without fully exploring its potential as a transformative process to provide youth with knowledge, skills and tools to assist them to contribute to society and ensure their participation as active citizens in their countries (Barton et al., 1997:484; Charles, 2006:45).

1.2.1.3 Gap in the research

Despite the extensive scholarship, the field of research on youth development has not attended adequately to approaches and developmental pathways capable of facilitating personal transformation in youth who have become disconnected and disengaged. Garbarino (1999, 2015) and Pinnock (2016) have contributed much towards our understanding of how to work with ‘high-risk youth’, but there still remains an urgent need to examine some of the approaches to youth development and their value, particularly those developed for NEET youth. More importantly, research needs to be foregrounded by youth voices on their perceptions of what they need to enhance their growth and development. Abrahams, in an interview with Pinnock (2016:265), maintains that what we do not yet have in South Africa is a “secular theory of personal transformation: a template for youth programme development”.

Research on youth development initiatives in the Western Cape is particularly important, as the risk profile of youth in the province is higher than that in other provinces (Western Cape Government, 2014:4). The province has an estimated 6.2 million people (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2017:16). The youth population (15–34) is approximately 2.1 million (Stats SA, 2016:8). The number of youth classified as NEETs in the Western Cape province is similar to the national figure (32%), while almost 15% of school learners live in homes where someone is a member of a gang (Western Cape Government, 2014:4). In the 2014/15 financial year, the province maintained its number one position, recording 33.2% (88 731) of the national drug-related crime (DCS, 2015:28). The highest level of violence in schools nationally occurs in the Western Cape (Pinnock, 2016:212).

1.2.2 Purpose of the study

The key purpose of this study was to explore youth experiences of a holistic approach to personal transformation as one particular approach or developmental pathway for youth who are not in employment, education or training, so that we become more adept at addressing the current NEET crisis and simultaneously deepen the theory and practice of youth development. We are compelled to ensure that our interventions are rooted in sound conceptual models and rigorous research that can assist youth to reach their full potential (Schonert-Reichl, 2000:11).

The latest South African National Youth Policy (2015–2020) recognises that young people are not a homogeneous grouping and that differentiated strategies are required that are needs based (The Presidency, 2015:10). This means that youth who are NEETs may require specific interventions as a result of their psychosocial and economic realities. Not all programmes may be appropriate for all youth, hence the need for research on educational

programmes that address the needs of youth who are unemployed (Van Aardt, 2012:65). The need to research strategies that place young people on a positive developmental trajectory is not only necessary, but also imperative; otherwise the youth bulge is likely to become a demographic time bomb (Stats SA, 2016:viii).

1.2.3 Research questions

The study sets out to explore the following questions to derive an understanding of youth experiences of a holistic approach:

1.2.3.1 What is a holistic approach to personal transformation?

1.2.3.2 How do NEET youth experience a holistic approach to personal transformation?

1.2.3.3 Why do NEET youth experience the holistic approach in the way they do?

1.3 Contributions of the study

I envisaged that this study would have the following benefits:

- Deepen our experience and knowledge of a holistic approach as one developmental approach and pathway for youth who are not in employment, education or training.
- Provide insights into the processes of personal transformation.
- Provide insights into the lived experiences of youth through a methodological approach that uses narratives to collect data as youth voices are generally on the periphery.
- Provide information on likely strategies to employ when working with youth who are not in employment, education or training.
- Deepen the theory and practice of youth development.
- Provide information that may improve curriculum development and training methodology at the Chrysalis Academy.

1.4 Research design and methodology

The study adopted a phenomenological approach as this is deemed most suited to exploring and understanding people's perceptions and experiences of a particular phenomenon (Delpont et al., 2011:305). The methodological framework employed was a narrative inquiry to enable young people to voice their stories. A narrative approach was particularly applicable in understanding the stories of respondents and the emotional impact on them of a range of phenomena such as poverty, crime and unemployment (Bleakley, 2005:534). It provided a useful medium through which the voices of those who are marginalised could be heard, and by so doing possibly influence policy, strategy, programmes, future research and

resource allocations (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2010:274). The views of parents or guardians of the youth respondents were also solicited to explore how they experienced the influence or impact of the holistic experience on the youth in their care.

The instrument for data collection was a semi-structured interview with each respondent to allow for the exploration of each one's experiences. Through a process of nonprobability purposive sampling, five youth respondents were selected for in-depth interviews (Bailey, 1987:94). Choosing the parent or guardian was done through a form of snowball sampling, in that each of the five youth respondents was asked to suggest one parent or guardian who could be interviewed to speak about how he/she perceived the influence or impact of a holistic approach on the youth respondent. Ten respondents were interviewed over a five-month period.

Mindfulness techniques were employed as an integral feature of the research methodology to ensure that I was grounded, fully present and detached during the interviews. Techniques to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the data included triangulation, which was effected through the collection of two sets of data, an extensive literature review and use of a reflective journal (Shenton, 2004:73). The data was analysed using thematic content analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:493).

1.5 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised into seven chapters followed by an epilogue written at the conclusion of the study.

Chapter 2

The literature review describes the landscape and architecture of youth development, both globally and in South Africa. I then engage with the theories and approaches to youth development. The study is embedded in an ecological perspective originally developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979) that illuminates how children and youth develop in a context of a "system of relationships". Concepts of social and cultural capital and *habitus* are also explored to deepen our understanding of the influence of the socioeconomic context and family ecology on the development of youth. The chapter outlines various approaches to personal transformation and a holistic approach is disaggregated as an approach that recognises that a human being consists of different dimensions and that the process of personal transformation of necessity must engage all these dimensions as one whole. There is often a tendency in the scholarly literature to view a holistic approach as having originated in the last few decades, and hence the holistic approach, and its ancient roots, are explored through the lens of among others, the *Upanishads* (possibly 600 BC); *Bhagavad Gita* (3rd–4th century); Schumacher (1978); Bohm (1980); Cope (1999); Kessler (2000), Nirmalananda

(2009); Sivananda (2012); as well as Strozzi-Heckler (2014) and Fletcher (2014) in more recent times.

Chapter 3

This chapter discusses the Chrysalis Academy (CA). It outlines the history, philosophical stance and outcomes of the youth development programme that it offers. The entry requirements, phases of the programme and the content of the curriculum are explored. The chapter illustrates the various anchors on which the programme rests. I then discuss the evolution of the programme over the past 17 years and engage with some of the challenges faced by the CA in implementing a residential programme.

Chapter 4

This chapter provides an overview of the dominant meta-theories in social science research. It then discusses phenomenology as the meta-theory able to explore people's lived experiences and how they make meaning of their worlds. The chapter describes why narrative inquiry was selected as the methodological framework to enable youth and parent voices to be heard in respect of their experiences of a holistic approach. The interview as the method for data collection is discussed, including my role as the instrument of data collection. Issues around sampling and ethical considerations are discussed and how mindfulness, particularly during the interviews, was considered. I engaged with issues around credibility and trustworthiness including a checklist that I used to measure to what extent the study complied with best practice. As I engage in my full-time work with the holistic approach, I discussed the sensitivities and pitfalls with respect to insider research.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 presents the findings that emanated from the ten face-to-face interviews that were conducted over a period of five months. The narratives are written in the first person to amplify the 'youth voice'. Their stories detail a broad range of socioeconomic and psychosocial challenges that the youth encountered in their homes and broader community. The chapter outlines the changes that they experienced by participating in the CA programme, many of which were confirmed by their parents or guardians. It also describes what youth felt were the critical contributors to their personal transformation process.

Chapter 6

This chapter presents my interpretation of the findings. The categories and subsequent themes extrapolated from the findings are presented in tabular format and discussed within the context of the three research questions. The key findings were:

- The lives of the five youth respondents conveyed a 'political story' of challenging socioeconomic conditions and deepening inequality, domestic violence and a desire for connection and attachment, particularly to adult males who have been absent from their lives.
- The way in which the youth experienced a holistic approach converged with the scholarship, which defined it as an approach focusing on and engaging with all dimensions of a human being.
- Significant changes were experienced by the youth in the realm of the mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions which helped them to transform their mind set and perspectives, assisted them to manage their emotions, and to confront the psychosocial issues that they had suppressed for a long time.
- The changes they experienced also deepened their faith and spirituality and improved their relationships with adult figures in their lives.
- Although they acknowledged that the holistic approach as a 'whole' was responsible for their transformation, they felt that the biggest contributor to their change was their time spent in nature and in particular their experience in solitude, which assisted them to "break their silence" on a number of psychosocial issues that they had suppressed over the years.
- The holistic approach seemingly has no 'gender bias', in that its impact was felt by all participants, regardless of gender.
- The holistic approach satisfied a multitude of needs that young people have: the need for connection with self and others; safety; nutrition; peer support; recognition and acknowledgement; as well as psychosocial support.
- A holistic programme is able to integrate all dimensions of a young person's being in the learning experience, thereby deepening the learning experience.
- Youth have a deep desire to be 'seen' and for their stories to be 'heard'.

Chapter 7

This chapter summarises the findings, and provides an overview of all the chapters. I outline the recommendations made by the respondents on how the CA programme could be improved. I then reflect on the research process and discuss my observations and recommendations for future research options and for the theory and practice of youth development in general.

1.6 Why I chose to engage with a holistic approach

Over the last six years, I have been part of the team involved with implementing a holistic approach at the CA. Since 2011, I have been engaged in 18 courses for approximately 3500 youth. In working directly with such a large number of students, I have been drawn to exploring, more systematically, a range of questions. First, what is the nature of the personal transformation process in an individual? Second, what enables the majority of students who complete the CA youth development programme to remain on a positive developmental trajectory and why does a minority recede into drug use? Third, what factors contribute towards personal transformation in youth?

Underpinning these questions however, was my own longing to contribute meaningfully to lives of young people, many of whom are not yet experiencing the benefits of a new democratic dispensation. This longing and the curiosity for insights into the questions in my professional practice with youth was the 'fire' and impetus that motivated me to embark on this research study.

1.7 Insider research

As I am part of the team that engages with the holistic approach to personal transformation at the Chrysalis Academy, the study took cognisance of the principles guiding insider research (Costley et al., 2010:25-43). Insider research is a form of research where one studies an organisation or area of work where one is actively involved. Insider research is 'complex', but it has many benefits and opportunities (Greene, 2014:11). I explore these aspects more fully in Chapter 7.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided an introduction to the study. I outlined the problem statement and purpose of the study, as well as the research questions. I discussed the methodological framework and research design and provided an outline of the focus of each of the chapters. I also discussed what motivated me to embark on this study. As I am part of the team that engages with a holistic approach, I introduce the notion of insider research, discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review that describes the current landscape and architecture of youth development, as well as theories on personal transformation, and disaggregates a holistic approach as one such theory of personal transformation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

When we finally commit to the quest for the true self, we will discover that we are not alone on our journey. One day to our astonishment, we will find that the true self for which we are searching is also searching for us (Cope, 1999:xxii).

2.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework that I employ in my analysis of a holistic approach to the personal transformation of youth. The current landscape and architecture of youth development globally and in South Africa (SA) is described, covering the definition of youth and youth development as well as the legislative framework for youth development in the country. In exploring what factors impact on youth development, I examine issues around identity and the socioeconomic and psychosocial realities of youth in SA, including the impact of trauma. As the field of youth development is fairly broad, global approaches to youth development are discussed to enhance the discourse. The relationship between neurobiological factors and youth development is examined, owing to the interconnectedness between the development of the brain and the maturation of a young person. As the purpose of the thesis is to explore the personal transformation of youth, I describe some of the approaches to personal transformation, including a deeper examination of a holistic approach as one such approach slowly gaining currency in SA. A discussion on a holistic approach would be incomplete without exploring some of its practical implications for youth development. Lastly, the notions of social and cultural capital and *habitus* are explored as additional lenses through which to view the contexts within which young people grow, develop and engage with the world.

2.2 Theoretical framework: An ecological perspective

In everyday life, many people mention that events do not happen in a vacuum; that everything happens in a particular context. This means that when something happens, it is often preceded or influenced by certain factors. This study recognises the importance of 'context' within which young people grow up and engage with the world and is therefore embedded in an ecological perspective, originally developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner. He was keenly interested in human development in the context of a "system of relationships" wherein people found themselves (Johnson, 2008:2). The ecological perspective recognises that children possess individual characteristics that they bring to the contexts in which they develop (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:22). Children, and by implication youth, grow up in an 'ecology' of contexts such as the family and engage with schools, peers, religious formations and other institutions within the broader community, all of which are impacted by the larger macro socioeconomic and political system (Bronfenbrenner, 1986:723). These multiple

contexts influence one another. The smaller contexts are 'nested' within the broader context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:3). An ecological perspective or orientation conceptualises the environment within which the child develops as consisting of different levels. The **microsystem**, which includes the home and childcare, is the most influential as it is closest to the child. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979:22-26), the other levels are: **mesosystem** (this is about interrelations between two or more settings such as parents engaging with teachers); **exosystem** (this involves a setting which influences an individual although he/she is not an active participant, such as a parent's work); **macrosystem** (socioeconomic aspects, ideologies, belief systems); and a **chronosystem** (recognising that the systems of relationships are influenced by time and therefore do change). The activities that are the most catalytic in influencing human development are the interactions of other people with the individual (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:6). Environments that are different result in differences, not only within society, but also in "talent, temperament, and human relations" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:xiii). What is therefore critical is the relationship between the individual and his/her environment and how this interaction is shaped by other broader contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:13). As will be discussed later in the chapter, the individual brain itself develops in response to one's lived experiences. A basic adapted illustration of a nested approach is illustrated below as Figure 2.1.

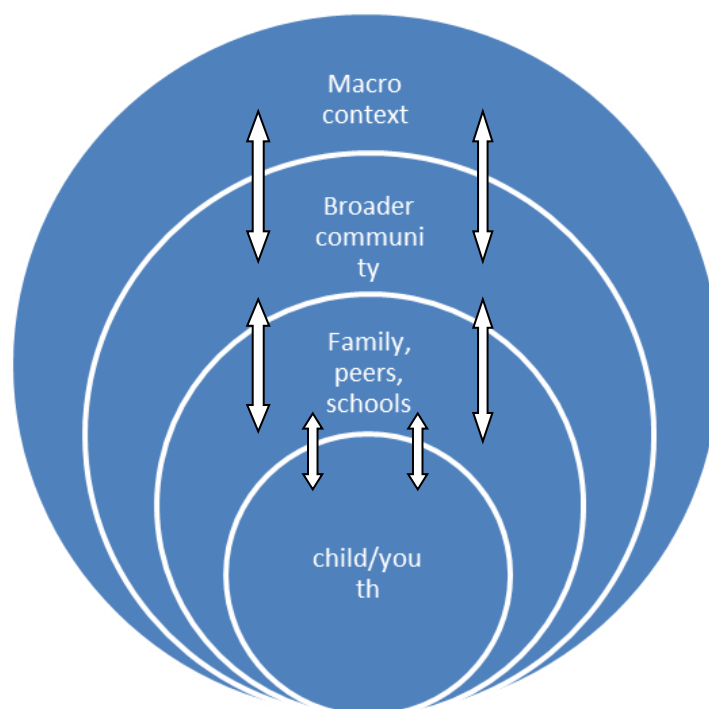


Figure 2.1: An adaptation of an ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979:3; Ward et al., 2012:2)

In accordance with an ecological approach, all the levels of influence have to be considered when designing interventions for children and youth to ensure their sustainability and impact (Van der Merwe & Dawes, 2012:351). This is a view supported by Fletcher (2014:4-5) who argues that child and youth development does not happen in a linear way, but is influenced by the 'ecology' that children and youth find themselves in. This 'ecology' includes, among others, their relationships with other young persons and adults, the socioeconomic context, the environment and culture. Rios (2011:xiv) illustrates this aspect of 'ecology' very clearly when he indicates how the experiences of black and Latino young people in Oakland, California, comprise "ubiquitous criminalization" encountered in schools, through the media, and even in families and other social institutions. This widespread criminalisation influences how they begin to see themselves, their views of other people, and ultimately their life outcomes. Fortunately this 'ubiquitous criminalisation' also has the potential to be the mechanism by which youth develop a 'social consciousness' and identity not concomitant with that of the "youth control complex" through which society seeks to criminalise their activities (Rios, 2011:xv).

2.3 Defining the youth landscape and architecture

This section outlines the definition, nature and form of youth development globally and in SA, broadly defined in this chapter as the youth landscape and architecture. The landscape and architecture of youth development are varied, particularly in relation to who is defined as youth as well as the nature and form of youth development.

2.3.1 Definition of youth

In reviewing many of the definitions of youth, the subjectivity of the term 'youth' is apparent. The United Nation's (UN) definition of youth includes people between the ages of 15 and 24 (United Nations, 2000:1). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), youth is a "period of transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood" (UNESCO, 2016). It regards youth as a concept that is 'fluid' as opposed to a fixed age category, and uses different definitions based on context.

In South Africa youth are defined as those between the ages of 14 and 35 (The Presidency, 2015:10). Often, a further distinction is made between younger (14–24) and older (25–35) youth (Stats SA, 2016:5). This wide age differential from 14–35 recognises that the education and development of young people have been negatively impacted by conflict experienced particularly during the last years of the apartheid government (Ward et al., 2012:2). However, this wide differential is not without controversy in that Panday et al. (2012:100) argue that the wide age differential has been problematic in enabling government departments to meet the broad needs of youth and has resulted in "overlaps and gaps" in service delivery.

In South Africa, youth currently constitute around 36% of a total population of about 53 million people (Stats SA, 2016:viii). Of this 36%, Africans are the dominant group of approximately 83,3% (Stats SA, 2016:10). Approximately 7.5 million young people are not in employment, education or training (CDE, 2017:1). The concept NEET is, however, not without controversy. Yates and Payne (2006:329) postulate that the concept of NEET is 'problematic' as it describes youth in a negative manner by that which they are not and groups everyone together under one label which does not adequately describe their individual circumstances. Grouping youth under one label assumes that they are homogeneous and does not consider the reasons for a NEET status or the level of support that may be required. Focusing on their NEET status has the potential to divert attention from a range of other difficulties that youth may face. They point out that research suggests that strategies that use "NEET-reduction targets" promote a "fire-fighting" approach as opposed to an approach that focuses on specific areas where support may be required. NEET status may not always have negative connotations for youth and could signify a choice to stay at home and take care of their own children resulting from teenage pregnancy. There is a need to understand youth and target support that recognises all their challenges and difficulties, as opposed to an over-reliance on their NEET status (Yates & Payne, 2006:343). Regardless of the concerns expressed by Yates and Payne (2006), there does seem to be a legitimate societal concern that youth who are not in employment, education or training may be more prone to succumb to peer pressure, illegal substances and crime (Edwards et al., 2007:32; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008:2).

Wyn and White (1997:1) argue that the concept of youth is relevant only in its widest sense. They point out that the age category of 13–25 is generally what is regarded as youth for "institutional and policy" purposes, but that the experiences and meaning of the concept of youth are changing as youth participate actively in constructing their own group identity. There is therefore a tension between the notion of youth as a specific age category and the divisions emanating from race, class and gender (Wyn & White, 1997:3). The commonality of age is one that is largely influenced by "cultural, economic and social processes" (Wyn & White, 1997:150). They argue that despite the fact that each person's life can be measured in an objective way as the years pass, the notions of youth and childhood have different meanings depending on social, cultural and political circumstances (Wyn & White, 1997:10). Any research on youth and youth policy therefore has to take cognisance of this inherent tension between the universal processes such as age and particular contextual circumstances (Wyn & White, 1997:150).

2.3.2 Definition of youth development

Although a single definition of youth development does not exist in the scholarly literature, certain key elements have come to characterise youth development globally. These are: safety and structure; belonging and membership; self-worth and control over one's life; closeness and several good relationships; and competency and mastery (Barton et al., 1997:487). Roth et al. (1999:272) define youth development programmes as:

age-appropriate programs designed to prepare adolescents for productive adulthood by providing opportunities and support to help them gain the competencies and knowledge needed to meet the challenges they will face as they mature.

Delgado (2002:8) maintains that only a broad definition of youth development is possible, as a number of barriers, including political expediency, limit consensus. However, this broad definition makes youth development fairly popular as many people and organisations can lay claim to their practising youth development (Delgado, 2002:9). Youth development includes a “philosophical stance, goals, processes and outcomes” and is a “process not an event”, which can take place in any setting (Delgado, 2002:32). Despite youth development being for all youth no matter what their particular circumstances, much of the literature tends to focus on youth regarded as ‘at risk’ (Delgado, 2002; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003; Garbarino, 2015; Pinnock, 2016).

Drawing on the work of many other authors, Delgado (2002:47) outlines a number of themes that describe youth development. These are as follows:

- A belief in the self-worth of youth, irrespective of their cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual and physical competencies.
- The importance of cultural heritage.
- The importance of youth exercising control over their lives.
- A holistic view of cognitive, emotional, physical, moral, social and spiritual needs and strengths.
- A belief that youth possess innate abilities.
- An entire community is required to execute youth development and it cannot be the domain of one organisation.
- Youth development requires long-term commitment.

Youth development in middle-class or upper middle-class families may share many similarities with youth development in poorer and working-class areas, but youth development in working-class areas must endeavour to “empower youth, their families and communities and address social and economic justice issues” (Delgado, 2002:49).

Wegner and Caldwell (2012:224), in reviewing research completed by the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP), which is a database detailing best practices from out-of-school contexts (OSC), list some of the critical factors for successful outcomes of youth development programmes:

- Youth need access to programmes in a sustained way.
- Programmes need to offer appropriate supervision and structure.
- Programmes require well-prepared staff.
- There should be intentional programmes and strong partnerships with families, schools and communities.

In reviewing many of the themes and definitions of youth development, an issue of youth developing ‘agency’ or personal mastery seems to be a growing theme globally (Barton et al., 1997; Delgado, 2002; Van der Kolk, 2014).

2.3.3 The legislative framework for youth development in South Africa

Although youth have played an important role in the country’s recent history as evidenced by the 1976 uprisings and community struggles of the 1980s and 1990s, youth development has not featured prominently in policy development frameworks post-1994 (Panday et al., 2012:99). In 1996, a National Youth Commission (NYCa) and National Youth Council (NYCb) were set up to mainstream youth development across government departments. The Umsobomvu Youth Fund was created in 2001 to promote skills development and entrepreneurship. In addition, a National Youth Policy was developed in 1997 advocating a “positive youth development approach” which focuses on the strengths of young people (Panday et al., 2012:99-100). Subsequently, the National Youth Policy was replaced by a National Youth Development Policy Framework. Through the promulgation of the National Youth Development Agency Act, No. 54 of 2008 (NYDAA), the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) was set up in 2009 through a merger of the NYC and the Umsobomvu Youth Fund to address youth development issues at a national, provincial and local level. The NYDA was set up to ensure that youth development issues are mainstreamed, to “facilitate economic participation and empowerment and the achievement of excellence in education and training” (The Presidency, 2015:9). The latest youth policy for 2015–2020 recognises that young people are resources for human development and are important “agents for social change, expansion and innovation” (The Presidency, 2015:2). The policy outlines the following as priorities: economic participation and transformation; skills development; improving health and reducing risky behaviour; nation building; and social cohesion (The Presidency, 2015:16). The policy refers to holistic youth development but does not spell out what is meant by this. However, despite the introduction of the National Youth Policy and

institutional mechanisms for its implementation, the achievements of the youth sector have been “modest” up till now (Panday et al., 2012:100).

2.3.4 Identity and youth development

In reviewing some of the writings on youth, it is evident that the issue of youth identity is central to the development of young people (Erikson, 1968; Garbarino, 1999; Delgado, 2002; Soudien, 2007; Rios, 2011; Pinnock, 2016). A worldview propounded by Erikson (1968:17) in his seminal work, *Identity, Youth and Crisis*, still exists among many today that a large number of young people experience some form of identity crisis as they transition from adolescence into young adulthood (Pinnock, 2016:143). This is a view shared by Barton et al., (1997:491) who aver that adolescence is indeed a very difficult period for both youth and those whom they affect. Identity however is not something fixed and unchangeable; it is always evolving (Erikson, 1968:24). Youth are not fixed ‘entities’ but are always navigating their way within families and communities (Pinnock, 2016:151). The development of personality can be viewed as a series of eight phases characterised by specific conflicts which give rise to subsequent phases, with each conflict unfolding into an “increased sense of unity” (Erikson, 1968:92). The transition from adolescence to youth is predominantly characterised by a focus on identity and identity confusion. As youth transition from adolescence into young adulthood, they are compelled to deal with “genital maturation” and the uncertainty of their roles (Erikson, 1968:128). Youth are very concerned at this stage with how others view them, as opposed to how they feel, and they need a moratorium to navigate the transition (Erikson, 1968:128). A moratorium is defined as a “period of delay granted to somebody who is not yet ready to meet an obligation or forced on somebody who should give himself more time” (Erikson, 1968:157). Society generally allows a certain moratorium for many of its youth. These include apprenticeships or adventures, colloquially called ‘gap years’. However for many poor and working-class youth, the luxury of a moratorium does not exist. Soudien (2007:xi) argues that many youth are often pushed into adulthood too early as a result of all the complexities they encounter and it is critical to understand youth identity at the social and psychological levels.

Soudien’s (2007:xi) views correlate with those of Sealey-Ruiz and Greene (2011:344) who maintain that many black youth globally find adolescence to be a period when their voices are often silenced by educational institutions and society in general, despite the fact that it is during this period that they are striving to achieve a sense of self. Sealey-Ruiz and Greene (2011:344) maintain that instead of schools seeking to silence youth voices, they ought to celebrate their “cultural lives and personal identities”. They support Erikson’s notion of identity developing in phases. Although their research involves largely African American youth, their notion of the ‘encounter stage’ in identity formation has relevance for youth in

South Africa, which is a stage when youth start to confront who they are in the context of the broader society. In fact, they maintain that how the media depict youth is simply not how they view themselves (Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2011:345).

McLaughlin (1993:36) also argues that youth construct their identities “within embedded, diverse and complex environments” which include families, peer groups, schools, churches and youth organisations. Youth gain support and develop hope from institutions that are familiar with their lived realities. Organisations that enable youth to develop a “positive sense of self” and hope in the future are embedded in local realities and have adults capable of providing “positive bridges to mainstream society” (McLaughlin, 1993:36). Young people’s “sense of self” arises from the various identities that they take on depending on the context, such as schools, families and peer groups. Often when young people live in very violent communities, they learn not to trust anyone and to have very low expectations of the future (McLaughlin, 1993:37), which are very similar views to those espoused by Rios (2011:xiv) earlier in this chapter, when he refers to the notion of “ubiquitous criminalization”.

McLaughlin’s views are shared by Panday et al. (2012:101) who argue that the identity of youth is shaped by their participation in socialising institutions such as families, schools and the labour market, and when their participation in these institutions is limited, young people do steer towards alternative structures to develop their sense of identity. Vigil (1993:95) refers to this situation as young people’s loss of connection with social institutions. Panday et al. (2012:101) aver that four of the key building blocks for successful transition to adulthood are education, employment, health, and active engagement in civic life. Delgado (2002:59) points out that youth have critical needs that need to be addressed, and if these needs are addressed, their transition to adulthood “will take care of itself”. He argues:

The transition to adulthood can either be facilitated or thwarted ... An unsuccessful transition will create a group of marginalized citizens unable and unwilling to be productive. It will no doubt cause a great deal of anxiety in society and increase the costs associated with failure such as incarceration, substance abuse and so on (Delgado, 2002:271).

The view that becoming an adult is somewhat problematic is a view contested by Wyn and White (1997:8) who argue that much of the literature on youth has unfortunately drawn particular assumptions from the field of developmental psychology with regard to universal stages of development such as identity formation and the relationship between social and physical growth, without fully clarifying the theoretical basis of this ‘categorisation’ premised on age.

2.3.5 The socioeconomic and psychosocial realities of youth in South Africa

In South Africa, despite the democratic renaissance of 1994, many youth find themselves in challenging circumstances as their lives are still shaped by race, class and gender. Although

apartheid has been abolished, its impact is still felt in society; and many communities remain divided along race and class lines with the 'socioeconomic drivers' of youth crime and gang participation having not changed much (Ward et al., 2012:4). Soudien (2007:4) argues that the 'individual psyche' of youth continues to be influenced by social structures like the family, education, race and class and Foster (2012:46) maintains that "the experiences of marginalisation, impoverishment and relative deprivation" are still many young people's day-to-day reality. Similarly, Chetty (2014:93) voices a stark reminder that South Africa is still in the throes of a "racialised social system". Many young people are "living their parents' and grandparents' lives in repetition", with some of their lives being much worse (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014:128).

Despite young people having greater access to basic education than before, many have not acquired the skills and competencies to engage meaningfully and productively in society (Panday et al., 2012:129). The quality and nature of the education they receive influence whether they are successful in finding employment, the nature of their employment, and whether they possess the necessary social and cultural capital to extricate themselves from poverty and despair. Many black youth from working-class families remain 'direct victims' of a poor-quality public education system that has not prepared them well for higher education, while many township schools still do not have basic amenities like toilets, and suffer from poor-quality teaching and overcrowding and extremely "low levels of teacher motivation and dedication" (Chetty, 2014:96). Youth in South African townships experience

horror, violence, crime and substance abuse, but they also have a remarkable moral capital which has been ignored. They are mostly good kids, living in a bad world, knowing right, but going wrong; neglected and living non-reflective lives (Swartz, 2009:166).

In many poor and working class homes, youth are heading households as a result of parents having succumbed to diseases like HIV/AIDS or fathers working away from home on the mines for extended periods of time. One also finds that many fathers live in other provinces, either for work opportunities or they have separated from the mothers (Soudien, 2007:21).

The high school dropout and escalating unemployment rates present huge problems to parents, communities and the state, as youth who are not productively engaged in either employment, education or training may have a greater propensity to become disengaged and disconnected from social, economic, political and cultural activities. In any event, many young people globally and in South Africa already have distanced themselves from formal political entities such as electoral processes, which often seem not to be relevant to their lives (Wyn & White, 1997:150). Smyth and Hattam (2001:401) point out that there is a hegemonic discourse that young people are to blame for 'dropping out' of school, making it important to hear the voices of young people to understand how educational institutions contribute to their dropping out.

Although there are similarities between South African youth and their global counterparts, what makes South African youth different is that “the psychosocial extremes of South African life have intensified their aloneness”, in that many youth find themselves without positive role models with whom they can engage (Soudien, 2007:31). Bernard and Este (2005:449) hold similar views in that they argue that black young people have limited access to “positive Black images and role models, whether in the education system, in society or through the media and mass culture”. However they insist that black men do desire role models whom they are able to emulate (Bernard & Este, 2005:449). The disconnection and disengagement that young people experience then tend to impact negatively on their psychological capital, which includes their “hope, self-esteem, positivity and resilience” (Korthagen, 2013a:14). McLaughlin (1993:53) maintains that when there is little parental involvement in the lives of young people, it deepens the feelings of ‘invisibility’ they feel. Consequently, it becomes very difficult to “fill the holes” of not being wanted, or not being heard or seen (Van der Kolk, 2014:296).

A discussion on the socioeconomic and psychosocial realities that youth face is incomplete without a closer examination of the impact of trauma on their lives.

2.3.6 Youth and trauma

There are many definitions of trauma, but it is generally defined as:

An emotional wound or shock resulting from exposure to an event or situation that causes substantial, lasting damage to the psychological development of a person (Boyden & Mann, 2005:13).

Stolorow (2007:10) describes what he refers to as developmental trauma, which occurs “when emotional pain cannot find a relational home in which it can be held”. Developmental trauma often results in people trying to escape from their emotional pain (Epstein, 2013:4). Scaer (2005:2) however maintains that trauma is not only one traumatic event, but can be defined as:

A continuum of variably negative life events occurring over the lifespan, including events that may be accepted as normal in the context of our daily experience because they are endorsed and perpetuated by our own cultural institutions.

The notion of a continuum of negative life events is similar to what is referred to in the literature as an “accumulation of risks” (Garbarino, 2001:362), which is the situation faced by many youth from working-class communities. This means that in the course of their childhood and adolescence, they may face a continuum of risks such as the death of a parent, violence in the home and neglect.

Youth in South Africa have a higher exposure to trauma than in many other countries (Botha, 2014:140). The trauma and violence that youth are often exposed to range from physical abuse, neglect, sexual assault and emotional violence. Children account for 40% of sexual assault victims (Botha, 2014:140). In a research study consisting of 60 youth respondents in one township, all the respondents had personal experience of exposure to violence, while 56% had been victims and 45% had witnessed at least one murder (Ward et al., 2012:5). In view of the high exposure to trauma that South African youth face, it is critical to take cognisance of recent research that illustrates that the “body keeps the score” of all traumatic events (Scaer, 2005; Levine, 2010; Van der Kolk, 2014). Levine (2010:355) contends strongly that people who have experienced trauma are ‘fragmented’ and ‘disembodied’.

Stressful experiences affecting mothers can even affect gene expression in babies (Van der Kolk, 2014:152). Scaer (2005:77) avers that although genetic heritage does determine the colour of eyes and hair, our different body systems, including our brain, “form a template on which layers of life experience, especially in early childhood, may mould us”. He implores everyone to be mindful that abandonment, neglect and the ‘emotional absence’ of an alcoholic mother can all be regarded as sources of trauma, even where there is no physical abuse (Scaer, 2005:130). Many people do not even recognise that the way in which many institutions function, also leads to trauma. Although a large number of young people in disadvantaged contexts grow up in dysfunctional families, they may not have an appreciation that their experiences are traumatic and that these experiences are changing their brain and behaviour (Scaer, 2005:132).

In order to understand how trauma impacts on the entire living organism, it is useful to examine the work of Gilbert (2010), widely regarded as one of the leading experts on depression and the development of compassion. Gilbert (2010:23) identifies three systems involved in the management of emotions:

- Threat and self-protection.
- Incentive and resource seeking.
- Soothing and contentment.

Each of the systems plays a different role, but they also act in balance as one system. A representation of these three systems is presented overleaf.

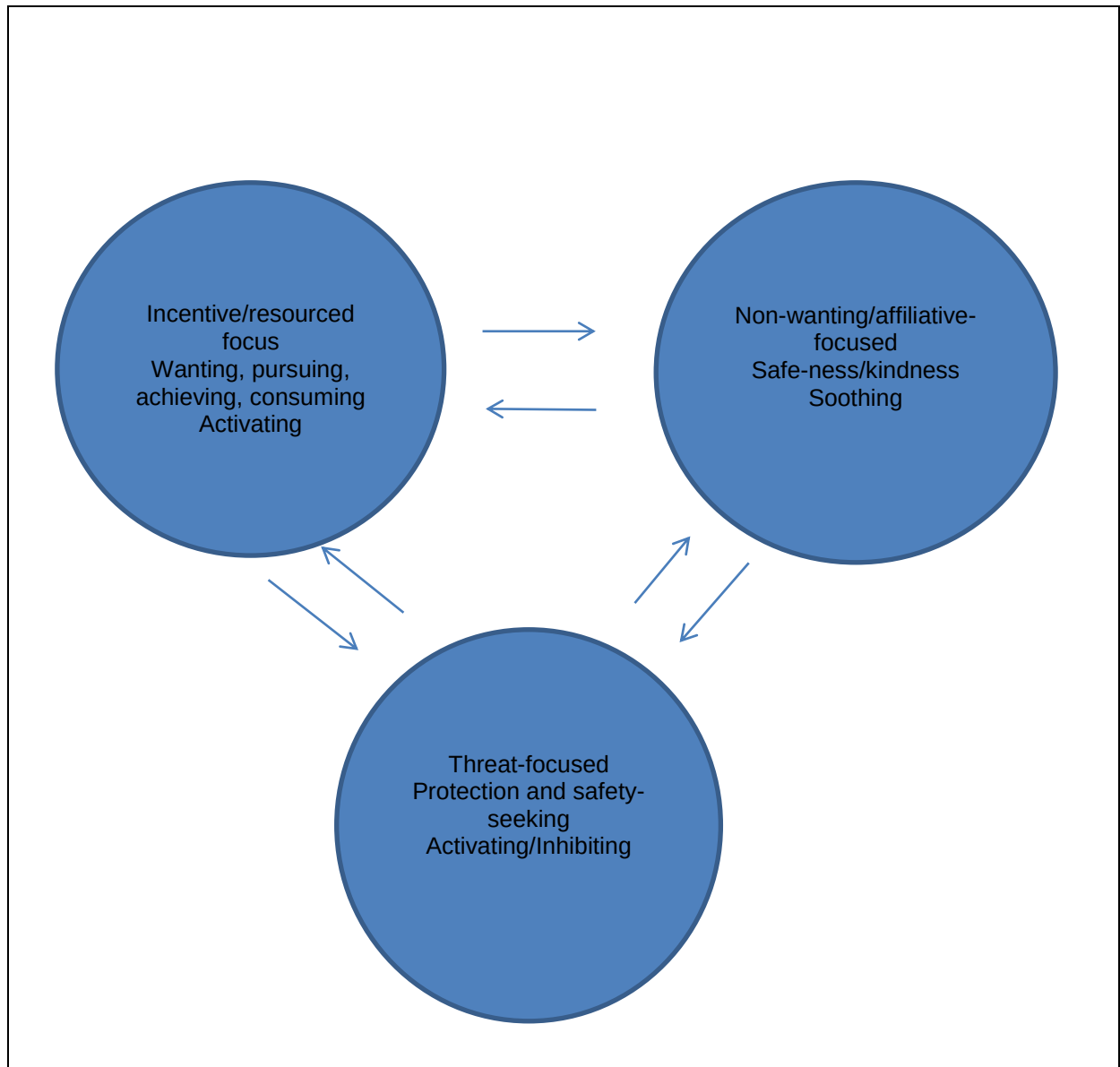


Figure 2.2: Three types of affect regulation systems (Gilbert, 2010:24).

The functions of the three systems are as follows:

- Threat and self-protection system

The role of this system is to be alert to any threat in the environment and send the necessary signals throughout the body so that a person can self-protect. Its role is therefore to ensure that action is taken, whether to run or fight. The body can also 'freeze' or be immobilised in response to the danger.

- Incentive and resource seeking-system

The role of this system is to give “positive feelings that guide, motivate and encourage” human beings to find resources that the body requires. Among others, this could be sex, food and relationships. An over-stimulation of the system can lead to someone desiring to want more (Gilbert, 2010:26).

- Soothing and incentive system

The role of this system is to bring ‘peacefulness’ over the system, which assists in facilitating balance. Gilbert (2010:26-27) maintains that this is an ‘inner peacefulness’ that is different from the ‘hyped up’ feeling that comes from the incentive- and resource-seeking system.

Gilbert (2010:139) asserts that it is the threat and self-protection system that becomes the most activated in modern society. In societies that are characterised by domestic, community or state violence, as in SA, many people will have an overactive threat and self-protection system. This system can also become over-activated if one has a fear of losing one’s employment or because of rejection by others. The threat and self-protection system is however very helpful in keeping people safe, but too much activation can lead to many health complications (Gilbert, 2010:140).

People who are subjected to trauma often become stuck in the fight/flight/freeze mode (Van der Kolk, 2014:85). This is the mode that Gilbert refers to as the threat or self-protection system. Even when the danger has passed, the body is still stuck in this mode. The use of drugs and medication can dull the senses, but the body still “keeps the score” in that the sensations generated by the danger are still present in the body (Van der Kolk, 2014:46). When the body is in the threat mode, the brain releases chemicals like cortisol in the body (Van der Kolk, 2014:57). If a person is not able to ‘discharge’ the ‘freeze’, the physiological processes that take place in the brain and the endocrine system will reoccur (Scaer, 2005:213). Trauma ‘freezes’ people into a past event that changes their perception of reality. Scaer (2005:252) agrees that “the past event is ever present, awaiting its chance to intrude on our daily life based on the subtlest of cues”. Similarly, Gobodo-Madikizela (2003:57), in her work with apartheid-era atrocities among both victims and perpetrators, contends that:

Violent abuse damages – and, yes, even corrupts the individual psyche. It intrudes upon and invades the victim’s unconsciousness so that, in an environment that rewards evil, there are few resources on which the person can draw to resist it.

Although cognitive processes have a role in the healing process, they are not able to eliminate the ‘tyranny’ that the messages of the body exert over the mind until the body is brought out of “dissociation and into consciousness” (Scaer, 2005:255). Trauma interferes with the body’s proper function, particularly the brain that is responsible for interpreting experiences (Van der Kolk, 2014:247). It is evident from brain imaging that trauma causes

“abnormal activation of the insula”, that part of the brain that “integrates and interprets” all inputs from different parts of the body. The insula then transfers a signal to the amygdala that triggers the fight/flight responses. In order to overcome trauma, one needs help to get in touch with the body – with oneself (Van der Kolk, 2014:247). He maintains that people can only tell their stories after they have reconnected with the body, “after **no body** becomes **some body**”. When children experience helplessness, as in the case of sexual assault, this “memory of the helplessness” is stored in the body: “in the head, back, limbs, in the case of accident victims, and in the vagina and rectum of victims of sexual abuse” (Van der Kolk, 2014:265). Many people who experience these sensations try to numb the feelings through drugs, alcohol or medication, or by harming themselves or by participating in high-risk activities (Scaer, 2005:264; Van der Kolk, 2014:266).

Van der Kolk (2014:86) maintains that educational systems and other techniques dealing with trauma unfortunately tend to overlook the emotional systems, and rely on working with the cognitive ability of the mind only:

If the memory of trauma is encoded in the viscera, in heart-breaking and gut-wrenching emotions, in autoimmune disorders and skeletal/muscular problems, and if mind/brain/visceral communication is the royal road to emotional regulation, this demands a radical shift in our therapeutic assumptions.

He urges that what should remain in school curricula are physical education activities as these assist in moving people out of a “fight/flight mode” (Van der Kolk, 2014:86). The best treatment that young people can receive is an education in schools where they are “seen and known”, where they learn to ‘self-regulate’ and develop a “sense of agency” (Van der Kolk, 2014:351).

Levine (2010:5) refers to the “power of kindness” when dealing with trauma, and how the ‘compassionate presence’ of another can be hugely powerful. He maintains that over centuries people have used various modalities to ‘contradict’ their perceptions of fear and helplessness through “religious rituals, theatre, music, meditation, dance, yoga, tai chi, drumming and various shamanic practices” (Levine, 2010:10). Trauma can be “transformed and healed” (Levine, 2010:12). In his own personal life, the way he dealt with trauma was through trembling, which brought his body back to equilibrium. He outlines a number of processes to support someone from what he calls “paralysis to transformation”, involving among others creating an environment of relative safety, space to explore bodily sensations and support to ‘re-orientate’ to the environment in the present moment (Levine, 2010:73).

Gobodo-Madikizela (2003:85) argues that one is not able to truly understand what victims of trauma go through, as language is inadequate to describe the real impact of the trauma. Although not every victim of violence becomes a perpetrator, one of the consequences of trauma involving violence is that it has the potential to generate a cycle of violence that can

be passed on inter-generationally (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2014:30). In boys who commit violent crimes, “the soul is buried under layers of violence and distorted thoughts and emotions” (Garbarino, 1999:35).

The notion of inherited family trauma and how this can shape the lives of young people is an important one to examine (Wolynn, 2016:1) Youth do experience intergenerational trauma, which their parents and grandparents inherited under apartheid: policies of dislocation, racism and relocation from established communities into ghettos. In an effort to enable youth to transform, the effects of intergenerational trauma need to be recognised. Despite the person who experienced the original trauma having died, memories and emotions continue to live on in the expression of genes (Wolynn, 2016:1-2). The “family story is *our* story. Like it or not, it resides with us” (Wolynn, 2016:6). When this connection to one’s past legacy remains hidden, an individual remains trapped. When this past is confronted or brought into awareness, the individual can be set free (Wolynn, 2016:143). Awareness of this oppressive past and its consequences can trigger reactions in the body and bring about release.

The particularly harsh realities that many black youth face daily point to the need for developmental pathways that can support them during the transition and help them become established in adulthood, so that they can effectively deal with trauma and avoid becoming crime statistics or victims of early death (Pinnock, 2016:4). Weis and Fine (2001) who conducted research in many public schools in New York to examine how social inequalities are maintained through the schooling system, argue that schools “sustain social inequalities” that they profess to eradicate. Extrapolating from their research, they argue that there is a need for interventions for youth that can be regarded as ‘interrupters’ of inequality, poverty and despair. They argue passionately for the power of ‘disruption’. They maintain that while many educational institutions do not succeed in educating poor and working-class youth, and while many schools still reproduce inequalities, youth are definitely impacted by social spaces created to “interrupt such dynamics” (Weis & Fine, 2001:521). Panday et al. (2012:128) argue that the level of marginalisation has deepened and is reproducing itself in the current generation of young people. Youth need more than information; they need resources to gain an “educational and economic footing” and a range of other skills to make informed choices. However, strategies and programmes for youth should stem from a correct diagnosis of the reality of youth and from a questioning of the assumptions made about youth upon which development strategies are often based (Wyn & White, 1997:8). The view that development is something that adults do to youth is a 1960s perspective as youth are capable of taking responsibility for their development (Larson, 2006:677). In support of these views, Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2003:170) maintain that there has been a shift in youth development programmes from “deterrence to development”. They point out that adults’

belief in young people as 'resources' rather than as 'problems', "one-to-one attention", 'cultural appropriateness' and an "atmosphere of hope" are some of the factors that facilitate positive youth development (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003:172).

Seekings' (1996:103) caveat is still relevant today that despite the huge socioeconomic challenges faced by young people, there is no 'youth problem' and no 'lost generation'. The youth problem was born in the minds of political leaders, particularly in the 1980s and given legitimacy by the "policy studies industry". Youth are not homogeneous and should not be stereotyped. Youth, and in particular black youth, have shown immense resilience in the face of their challenging circumstances (Seekings, 1996:121).

The transition into adulthood, however, is complex and it raises doubts whether the 'traditional' definition of youth is an appropriate term (Panday et al., 2012:96). Shouldering the responsibilities of an adult requires maturity at economic, social and emotional levels, which are attributes that take time to develop. They argue that the "socio-cultural and economic context in which young people grow up determines both the timing and ability of youth to achieve the markers of adulthood" (Panday et al., 2012:96). This means that if young people leave school early and are unable to find meaningful work, their transition into adulthood is impeded. The notion of youth is therefore 'culturally constructed' and unfortunately largely informed by a 'deficit approach' (Panday et al., 2012:97). This begs the question, what are some of the dominant approaches to youth development?

2.3.7 Approaches to youth development

Any youth development programme has an underlying philosophy and set of assumptions about youth. An underlying philosophy can be thought of as a framework and principles guiding the implementation of a programme. Youth can be seen as 'co-creators' or problems to be 'managed' or 'fixed'. Small and Memmo (2004:3) characterise the dominant approaches to youth development under the banner of prevention, resiliency and positive youth development. They point out that all of these approaches contribute towards our understanding of human development and how to cope and adapt to circumstances, and they share critical features and a vision to improve the lives of young people. However, they believe that the approaches differ with regard to the emphasis they place on issues of risk, protection, assets and outcomes (Small & Memmo, 2004:4).

In order to understand their characterisation of the different approaches, they distinguish between 'risk' and 'protective' factors. The notion of a risk factor comes from studies in epidemiology where the aim was to identify statistical correlations between illness and different population groups. Risk factors are markers that if present, indicate certain things may occur, and can be individual or environmental. Protective factors, on the other hand, if

present, increase the chance of an individual's achieving a particular outcome. A protective factor operates when a risk factor is present. They also refer to developmental assets that are described as building blocks important in building competence among youth and believe that it is the presence of risks (and not a deficiency in assets) that leads to problems in behaviour among youth (Small & Memmo, 2004:4).

2.3.7.1 Prevention approach

The underlying foundation of prevention approaches is that it is more “cost-effective and efficient” to prevent problems from occurring (Small & Memmo, 2004:4). From a programmatic viewpoint, the two strategies that fall under the prevention approach are “to reduce or eliminate risk” and to increase or promote protective factors, as when risks start to accumulate, the possibility of a difficult outcome is high. One limitation of this approach is that it has a tendency to be ‘deficit oriented’ and tends to focus on what is wrong and not on what is right. Furthermore, the approach gives insufficient attention to promoting norms in youth development, as it is more aimed at preventing particular problems (Small & Memmo, 2004:4-5).

Schonert-Reichl (2000:3) argues that the concept of “youth at risk” has been overused and has developed into a general concept that describes youth on a path towards a range of problems that places their current and future ‘adjustment’ at risk. These problems could range from learning challenges, poverty, interpersonal relationships, health problems, and family problems: the list is endless. She cautions that a concept that is too easily and too often used loses its meaning. Despite the popularity of the concept, there is not a uniform understanding of what the concept entails and a universally agreed upon definition of ‘at risk’ does not exist (Schonert-Reichl, 2000:4). Sometimes the term refers to children with learning difficulties, youth who are at risk of dropping out of school, or to youth who are vulnerable in respect of developing emotional problems. However, despite the different ways in which it has been conceptualised and subsequently operationalised, there are some common themes (Schonert-Reichl, 2000:6-8). Drawing on the work of other researchers, the author highlights the following commonalities:

- Risk status should be viewed on a continuum.
- Risk factors are multidimensional and interactive, which means that risk is not a ‘fixed’ quality; it differs across contexts.
- The ‘at risk’ label assumes prediction.
- Risk is multiplicative, which means that exposure to risks could increase the likelihood of problem outcomes.

- The nature and timing of risk factors may affect outcomes if they appear at particular stages of a child or adolescent's development.
- Risk probability is higher during periods of transition.

It is critical to remember that risk is only one factor in the broader domain of 'adaptation' and 'competence' and it is important to clarify concepts so that the best intervention strategies based on 'sound' conceptualisation and 'sound' research can be designed (Schonert-Reichl, 2000:10-11). If there are ambiguities and inconsistencies in the way the concept is applied, it can inhibit the design of successful intervention strategies (Schonert-Reichl, 2000:5). Research and policy should move from a 'risk' to a resiliency framework, which means that the focus shifts to facilitating 'positive adjustment' among youth, as opposed to simply limiting risk.

Nation et al. (2003:450) identify nine principles associated with effective substance prevention programmes based on their review of reviews of prevention programmes:

- Are comprehensive: This means a range of interventions is employed.
- Use a variety of teaching methods: This means that different teaching methods are employed such as hands-on training and interactive instruction.
- Provide sufficient dosage: This means that participants need to have sufficient exposure to the programme or a 'high dosage' to ensure impact.
- Are theory driven: This means the programme should be underpinned by a theoretical framework.
- Build positive relationships: This means that the intervention should enable participants to develop strong positive relationships.
- Are appropriately timed: This means that interventions must be timed to ensure maximum impact.
- Are socio-culturally relevant: This means that interventions should be relevant to the participants and take cognisance of "norms, cultural beliefs and practices".
- Are outcomes driven: This means that interventions should be evaluated to determine their effectiveness.
- Have well-trained staff: This means that programme staff must be well trained.

In SA, the prevention approach is widely used in the youth sector, particularly to prevent substance abuse, teenage pregnancy and crime.

2.3.7.2 Resilience approach

Resiliency approaches can be regarded as approaches aimed at enabling young people to cope with their challenging circumstances. Small and Memmo (2004:5-6) maintain that the main objective of research on resilience is to identify and understand those elements that distinguish individuals who show good adaptation when they face certain stressful or adverse conditions. Two conditions have to exist in order for resilience to be demonstrated: stress or multiple stressors and the ability of adaptation. This approach has resulted in programmes aimed at building resilience among disadvantaged youth. However, there is still a lack of consistency in its definition. They argue that it is sometimes defined so broadly that it loses its “conceptual coherence as a unique construct”. Resilience can result from at least four distinct processes:

- From the successful operation of protective processes.
- As a result of certain exceptional personal characteristics, for example, intelligence or sociability.
- By successfully recovering from a stressful situation or crisis event.
- Through the process of ‘steeling’ when an individual overcomes difficulties (Small & Memmo, 2004:6).

This approach has resulted in a range of programmes aimed at building resilience, particularly among youth from disadvantaged backgrounds.

2.3.7.3 Positive youth development approach

Small and Memmo (2004:7) point out that positive youth development (PYD) is a fairly new approach common among youth-serving agencies that provide after-school and non-formal education programmes and with community-wide initiatives that seek to build youth development and youth involvement in the community. PYD emphasises the promotion of positive development and the conditions that contribute to youth health and wellbeing.

Drawing on the work of many scholars, Small and Memmo (2004:7) indicate that the PYD approach is based on the following assumptions:

- To assist youth to achieve their full potential is the best way to ensure that they do not experience problems.
- Youth need to have many forms of support and opportunities to be successful.

- Communities need to mobilise and build the capacity to support PYD.
- Youth should not be viewed as problems to be fixed, but as partners to be engaged and developed.

They maintain that PYD appeals to all youth, as it is an approach that promotes 'assets'. It is therefore 'politically safer' to focus on what is right with youth than what is wrong. Furthermore, PYD provides a common language and a framework to enable us to think about youth development. However, a possible shortcoming of the PYD approach is that it could overlook risks that youth may face that could impact negatively on their health and development if not properly addressed (Small & Memmo, 2004:7).

Garbarino (1999:150), who largely works with young people who have committed violent crimes, is consistent in his argument over the last few decades that programmes and policies should provide spiritual, psychological and social anchors as a means to prevent them from getting 'lost' and to 'reclaim' them once they have committed crimes. These include attachment to at least one adult relationship (social); strategies to build resilience (psychological); and a sense of purpose and meaning (spiritual anchor).

McLaughlin and Heath (1993:217) believe that environments that best nurture youth are ones that resemble families with activities that are goal driven. Much of their research centres on establishing what spaces that youth enter facilitate their "sense of self, empowerment and persistence" (Heath & McLaughlin, 1993:2). They make a differentiation between 'youth-serving' and "youth-based organisations". Youth-based organisations are those that respond directly to youth needs and operate in ways which ensure the youth provide input into the organisation, as opposed to youth-serving organisations that serve young people without any meaningful and direct input from them. Furthermore, youth-based organisations view young people as "resources to be developed", as opposed to a "problem to be managed". Youth-based organisations run programmes embracing "the whole person, not just a single issue or component, such as ethnicity, pregnancy, substance abuse, or school success" (McLaughlin & Heath, 1993:217). They recognise that each young person is an individual in his/her own right, but that programmes should also have rules that apply to everyone. Even if there are rules that are strictly enforced, these rules are seen as 'fair' and 'certain', with youth knowing that high expectations are set. Effective youth-based organisations have enabled young people to "recast their identity" and their 'purpose' to have "legitimate and productive futures as workers, parents and citizens" (McLaughlin & Heath, 1993:233). They enable young people to build positive relations and connections, elements that are missing for many of them (McLaughlin & Heath, 1993:221).

McLaughlin (1993:55) argues that youth-based organisations that provide young people with a positive sense of self and who assist with the journey towards adulthood, are not “single-issue, single-purpose” organisations. She argues that even activities that can be seen as narrow, like membership of a basketball team, can address many needs of young people. The difference between effective youth organisations and those that are not centres on how they view young people. Unfortunately, many view young people as problems to be ‘fixed’ or managed. The youth organisations that attract young people are those that “give visible and ongoing voice” to the notion of young people as resources to be developed and as “persons of value to themselves and society” (McLaughlin, 1993:59).

Fine and Mechling (1993:127) are of the view that there are three important characteristics of effective organisations for pre-adolescents and adolescents:

- Maintaining strong ‘identity structures’ which connect the young person to the organisation amidst many other attractions or pulls.
- “Strong and just superego models” in the youth and adult leaders which refer to the presence of strong role models.
- A vibrant and active peer culture that ‘overlaps’, but is not the same as the institution’s formal identity structures.

They indicate that the health of an organisation depends both on the official and unofficial cultures, which may be different from each other (Fine & Mechling, 1993:135).

According to McLaughlin and Heath (1993:234), youth do not wish to participate in programmes that characterise them as “deviant, or at risk”. They wish to be involved in programmes that conceptualise them in a much more positive way. Effective youth programmes are aimed at not controlling or rehabilitating youth but to “develop and nurture their spirit and their strength to negotiate successfully the cumulative entrapment – ‘the hell crust’ of the inner city” (McLaughlin & Heath, 1993:234). Effective youth programmes must therefore reflect a deep understanding of the context in which young people are shaped (McLaughlin & Heath, 1993:234). Programmes which are capable of acknowledging that youth are “fearful, vulnerable, cynical and lonely, but also frame them as capable, worthy young people eager to grow up to a healthy and productive future” will be supported by youth (McLaughlin & Heath, 1993:236).

A youth leader, cited in McLaughlin and Heath (1993:236) contends:

What teenagers need is structured attention. And if you have something, it may not be the most sophisticated and it may not be in the most glamorous setting, but if you’ve got some caring folks that want to give some time and attention, you’re going to be able to help some

kids ... gangs are those kinds of organisations, they provide the kinds of things we should be providing.

Youth are often referred to as the 'future', indicating that they have a role in the future as the next generation of leaders and decision makers. However, this view does not take cognisance of the role that young people can play in society today and the need to seek out and listen to their voice (Smyth et al., 2000:113). Effective interventions and programmes should include "voice and choice" and there should be a 'reciprocal' interaction between youth and adults for successful programming to occur (Wegner & Caldwell, 2012:234).

A strategy that has been adopted particularly with youth defined as at-risk has been wilderness or outdoor programmes (Ungar et al., 2007; Pinnock, 2016). Wilderness programmes can take place as prevention and to build resilience within the framework of positive youth development, while outdoor programmes can make us aware not only of our relationship with nature, but also of our relationship with one another (Ungar et al., 2007:321). Human beings have a biological imperative to connect with nature to "maximise their potential and lead productive and fulfilling lives" (Besthorn, 2005:124). Similarly, Potts in an interview with Pinnock (2016:269) avers that:

Wilderness is a great healer. I can do in one session in nature what it would take me six months to do in a neighbourhood. I can't explain but it's like a psychological switch, something just drops away.

Silence provides learners with tools that they can use to cultivate "rest and renewal", as for many of them "solitude has become a lost art", as noise and technology define life for modern youth (Kessler, 2000:36-37). Solitude provides rest for the nervous system and an opportunity to visit one's inner life (Kessler, 2000:38). Ungar et al. (2007:320-321) argue that despite the synergy between the intended goals of outdoor programmes and programmes to mitigate the impact of risk on youth, the exact relationship requires further conceptualisation and research.

2.4 Neurobiological factors and youth development

An understanding of youth development, and in particular the transition from adolescence into young adulthood, will be incomplete without looking at the strides that have been made in neuroscience in respect of the brain development of young people. Without detracting from the potential and creativity of young people, there is a body of evidence that shows that brain development is incomplete until the middle to late twenties (Weinberger et al., 2005:ii). This means that the capacity to weigh up (often complicated) options is influenced, as the pre-frontal cortex, which is responsible for "executive functioning", is not yet fully developed (Weinberger et al., 2005:ii). Executive functioning, which includes decision making and problem solving, develops much later than the emotional centre, which could explain why

youth often make what can be seen as poor judgements in situations that are emotionally charged (Wegner & Caldwell, 2012:217-218).

It is important to state that although neuroscience has become an established field, research on brain development in adolescents and young adults is a relatively new field (Weinberger et al., 2005:ii; Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006:296). It was only in the 1960s and 1970s that it was discovered that the prefrontal cortex continues to develop after childhood (Blakemore & Choudhury, 2006:296).

In the space between childhood and adulthood, the wiring of the brain “becomes richer, complex and more efficient” in the pre-frontal area which is responsible for functions such as planning, goal setting and regulation of impulses, and this part of the brain is the last to develop (Weinberger et al., 2005:1). Prior to puberty, the brain produces a myriad of neural connections, and then through a process of using these connections, a pruning process happens. What is not used gets lost, resulting in the brain becoming more efficient (Weinberger et al., 2005:1). As the brain develops, it grows circuits that enable many tasks to be performed with greater efficiency. As the circuits grow and mature, they are enclosed with myelin, which is a layer of white fatty substance. It is this myelin that speeds up communication. In addition, the neurotransmitter dopamine, which is a chemical messenger, grows extensively, further increasing the ability to learn in response to reward inputs (Weinberger et al., 2005:1). There is still indecision in respect of the causes of the pruning and the building of connections, as environmental factors such as genetics, education, and socioeconomic status do play a role.

The implication of the pace of brain development is that younger people in particular do require some form of structure and guidance within which learning and growth as well as development can take place. Furthermore, they need to be supported by adults who care and by institutions that can facilitate the acquisition of skills (Weinberger et al., 2005:3). The intense emotions that youth experience, however, can be turned into a powerful and positive force. Nevertheless, these neurobiological considerations need to be considered when designing curricula and teaching and learning practices for youth. The central question however is: How does youth development (and particularly personal transformation) occur?

2.5 Personal transformation

Despite the plethora of writings on youth development, which provide significant guidelines on positive youth development and prevention and resilience strategies, there is a dearth of research that provides insights into the ‘inner’ processes of personal transformation that youth undergo on their growth and development trajectory. There is a paucity of research on what processes take place when it is said that youth ‘change’ after participating in youth

interventions, as well as how young people themselves perceive these 'catalysts' of change? What takes place within an individual when he/she says, "I have changed." What makes a young person who is disengaged from social institutions, become more engaged and productive in societal life?

In exploring what is meant by personal transformation, this section draws on a variety of approaches or models of personal transformation, both from the East, West, North and South. It is commonly contended that Western models of personal transformation sometimes fail to acknowledge Eastern worldviews, despite the appropriation of Eastern models into Western approaches. A holistic approach may be one such example.

Concepts like personal change, transformation, capacity building or self-development are themes that resonate with many people and vast personal and institutional resources are spent on a multitude of youth development programmes in an endeavour to support, grow and develop youth. The term personal transformation is often used interchangeably with personal development, personal change or personal growth. Other terms that are used to describe transformation are transformative worldview, transformative logic, perspective transformation, psychosocial transformation and transformative learning. Many theories exist on personal transformation, ranging from action or stage theories of human development to human development as life courses and life cycles (Lerner, 2002:163). Each of these theories has its own philosophical stance, values and implementation steps.

2.5.1 Personal transformation as a rebirth

Despite change and evolution taking place in a transformative process, the two concepts do not fully illustrate how complex the process of personal transformation is as it is a form of 'rebirth' culminating in fundamental changes to how one perceives one's reality (Wade, 1998:715). Personal transformation is a multidimensional concept, which is a "forming over or a restructuring", resulting in a person's becoming more self-aware. The transformation process is an individual process that enables individuals to develop a much larger and broader vision of the world. This transformational process allows the mind an opportunity to gain information at an unconscious or subconscious level. The process is very similar to the concept of the iceberg, where the subconscious and the unconscious lie below the iceberg. Consciousness can therefore be seen as one component of transformation. The transformation process is not a linear but a circular process, and when one's awareness extends beyond the physical body, aspects of 'divine love' are revealed which are difficult to define but can be experienced (Wade, 1998:713-715). Transformation is a journey without a final destination and there is a strong correlation between experiential learning and personal transformation.

2.5.2 Distinction between improvement, change and transformation

In discussing the process of personal transformation, Beckwith (2008:28) makes a distinction between improvement, change and transformation. He maintains that improvement is when we add on something, like exercise, and therefore it always fluctuates. Change is regarded as a change in our consciousness, which results in a change in our behaviour (Beckwith, 2008:28-29). He asserts, however, that one can recede into the old consciousness, where past patterns of behaviour will emerge. Change is not transformation or everlasting. The process of transformation includes change, but change does not incorporate transformation. Change has its limitations, whereas transformation is “limitless as it derives from an evolving discovery and expression of the Authentic Self” (Beckwith, 2008:29). He argues that the personal transformation journey starts with an intention to undertake the journey and maintaining that intention through the process of attention. Personal transformation takes place when we think and act from our true nature, and “drop identification with the egoic self”. The egoic self is not the real self. Personal transformation is the process of shattering the illusion that we are “separate from the Whole”; it is a conscious process of realising our ‘limitless’ true nature, which is one of “wholeness and completeness” (Beckwith, 2008:27). Furthermore, it is the process of burning old patterns of thinking and acting, and thinking and acting from a space of wholeness and completeness (Beckwith, 2008:29-30).

Similarly, Lawrence (2006:38), in exploring the links between individual and organisational transformation and drawing on a Freirean analysis, maintains that for her, transformation is more than change. Transformation is about individuals realising that they are able to change things through collective action and it involves an ongoing journey of self-development.

2.5.3 Catalysts for change

Wade (1998:716) contends that as the transformation process is so complex, it becomes difficult to separate the “antecedents, critical elements and consequences”.

- Antecedents refer to those factors that cause personal transformation, and can be a conflict or dilemma such as a car accident or a breakdown in a relationship. For transformation to occur, the individual has to exercise a choice to deal with the conflict or dilemma.
- Critical elements refer to transformation which occurs when the “energy invested in the dilemma or conflict is released”.
- Consequences refer to the feelings that arise after the transformation has occurred, which could be sadness at the sense of loss or excitement at happy events.

Drapeau et al. (2007:978) studied the processes that contributed to resilience among youth in foster care. Resilience, regarded as a competency to withstand high-risk environments (Masten & Coatsworth, cited in Drapeau et al., 2007:978), could be considered as a separate research issue, but does illuminate the process of transformation. The researchers discovered that with each of their respondents, a turning point could be identified that catapulted them onto a path towards resilience. The turning points, also called breaking points, are what caused the change. From their research conducted on 12 boys and girls in foster care, they identified the following as turning points: “action, relation and reflection” (Drapeau et al., 2007:985).

- Action: This is an achievement that gives one a sense of accomplishment. The feeling is the catalyst for the change. This allows the young person to move “beyond the impasse” in their lives (Drapeau et al., 2007:986).
- Relation: Here the turning point is associated with “meeting a new person or creating a significant positive relationship” and the concomitant trust relationship that may develop (Drapeau et al., 2007:986). Having a significant personal relationship of trust enables the young person to make a change.
- Reflection: For most of the respondents their own reflections marked the significant change. This means that they arrived at a realisation that they were at an ‘impasse’ (Drapeau et al., 2007:987). It was this realisation that was the catalyst necessitating a desire for change.

In addition to action, relation and reflection, the researchers also found four processes that were directly or indirectly linked to the turning points. These are: increase in perceived self-efficacy, distancing oneself from risks, new opportunities, and the multiplication of benefits (Drapeau et al., 2007:988-991). The turning points could not explain “the fork in the road” (the decisive change factor) towards resilience, but must be seen as the catalysts that set the change in motion.

Another significant aspect in the context of personal transformation is the importance of placement such as foster homes. Placement provide a ‘more re-assuring’ structure and changes the adolescence’s exposure to risk as he/she is removed from adverse circumstances (Drapeau et al., 2007:992). However, as placement is merely a temporary measure, the longer-term impact is still unclear. Drapeau et al. (2007:993) suggest that more research is required to explore the relationship between problems such as alcohol or drug addiction and other behavioural disorders and turning points in trajectories. However, the

researchers recognise the complexity of the transformation process in that the difference as to why one person changes after participating in an event, and why another does not, is not easily explained or predicted. Adolescents must however be at the heart of intervention processes as their desire to change is an essential element of the change process.

Jooste and Maritz (2014:91) also highlight catalysts for change, although their study also does not define how transformation occurs. In their research of youth experiences of trauma, it was found that youth were able to experience personal transformation through a process of self-leadership and self-coaching by 'mobilising' their inner resources. The self-coaching strategies consist of cognitive strategies, emotional and spiritual care, and social support. Trauma was also a profound catalyst for personal transformation. Through the cognitive strategies, the participants started their self-coaching process through setting goals and positive 'self-talk'. Becoming self-aware and mindful was also a critical part of the transformation process. Emotional care involved a process of learning to express and manage their emotions. Spiritual practices also proved critical and included a "relationship with self, others and a higher being" (Jooste & Maritz, 2014:100). Social support came through family, friends, other professionals and role models who assisted in inspiring and motivating them (Jooste & Maritz, 2014:101).

2.5.4 Personal transformation from the inside out

There are many theories or approaches that emphasise personal transformation from the inside out (Korthagen, 2013a:13). Schumacher (1978:79) maintains that personal transformation is about exploring one's inner landscape. He points out poignantly that the journey into the interior is for heroes only, which requires an inner commitment, as there is something heroic about a commitment to that which is not known. He maintains however that this heroism is within everyone's capability. In support of his ideas, he drew on many of the major religions like Islam and Christianity to illustrate the emphasis on the need for all human beings to know themselves. The process of knowing oneself is the process of personal transformation. This is in line with the views espoused by Pinnock (2016:272), who maintains that transformation is a personal process, and that no matter what "opportunities, inducements or rituals" are provided, transformation must come from within.

Parallel with the inner exploration theme and from an ancient Hindu spiritual perspective, Mansoor (2009:161) espouses a notion of *tapas*: a process of walking through the fires. This involves working with *samskaras* or imprints that have accumulated as a result of daily living. Every action that one undertakes results in an imprint in the mind and body. *Samskaras* are similar to the notion of mental models espoused by Senge (1990:8), which are those assumptions deeply embedded in us and influence what we do. Human beings are often not

even conscious of their mental models and the effects these mental models have on them (Senge, 1990:8). These mental models are deeply embedded as a result of one's experiences (Caine & Caine, 1997:22). The reason things do not change is that mental models are not changing (Caine & Caine, 1997:22). *Tapas* refer to the process of burning away the conditioning and tendencies, in other words the *samskaras* which hide one's true nature (Mansoor, 2009:161). The fire is symbolic of the intensity of the practice to remain on the path of personal transformation. The biggest *tapas* is being willing to be alone and in silence (Mansoor, 2009:165). Silence can be viewed as a vehicle to other gateways such as "deep connection to the self, transcendence, creative expression, or the search for meaning and purpose" as well as a way of "nourishing the human spirit" (Kessler, 2000:36). These words are also echoed by Moore (1992:286) when he says that "souls cannot thrive in a fast-paced life".

Foster and Little (1999:2) point out that if one wishes to discover the self, what they refer to as 'self-thus', one has to remove the "masks and costumes" and "peel away the colour, form and species" to discover the "centre of life, the essence, the force, the intelligence, the spirit, the self-thus". The authors maintain that no matter what names one attaches to the 'self-thus', without it there would not be life, death or nature (Foster & Little, 1999:2). They describe the four faces worn by all human beings as the physical, psychological, rational and spiritual and use the image of the four seasons as a metaphor for human growth (Foster & Little, 1999:4).

2.5.5 Personal transformation as a change in consciousness

Tolle (2005:21) argues that personal transformation is about the destruction of old 'mind-patterns' and the development of a "new dimension of consciousness". It is about awakening to one's true nature. According to Vedanta, which is a philosophical system associated with a collection of writings that emerged from the spoken word by sages to their students and written down to ensure its preservation (Hodgkinson, 2006:9), there are seven states of consciousness, although some are not known and acknowledged by mainstream science (Chopra, 2003:253). The commonly known three states of consciousness are the waking, dreaming and sleeping states. The seven states of consciousness can be explained as follows:

- First level of consciousness: Dream state
- Second level: Sleeping state
- Third level: Waking state
- Fourth level: When one begins to catch a "glimpse of the soul", this means that one transcends thought. This state of consciousness occurs when one becomes very still, even for a moment. It is a state of consciousness that happens through meditation

and this state of awareness results in particular physiological changes such as cortisol and adrenalin levels falling, blood pressure dropping, and a general feeling of calmness (Chopra, 2003:255).

- Fifth level: Cosmic consciousness. During this state of consciousness, one's spirit can observe the physical body. There is awareness of self and spirit at the same time (Chopra, 2003:256).
- Sixth level: Divine consciousness. During this state of consciousness, one sees the divine nature in everything and everyone.
- Seventh level: Unity consciousness. This is called enlightenment, and one sees the whole universe as an extension of one's being (Chopra, 2003:258).

Also drawing on Vedanta, Wilber (2006:75) points out that these states of consciousness are accessible to all human beings, at any stage of growth.

Tolle (2005:21) maintains that personal transformation is not about new belief systems, or religion, or a spiritual ideology, but a "transcendence of thought", where one experiences something inside of oneself that is larger or beyond thought. This means that one's identity does not flow from the thoughts in one's head, but from this vastness within. It is this change in consciousness that results in a 'new earth' (Tolle, 2005:23). He maintains that when one realises who one really is, and recognises the illusion, the illusion is dissolved (Tolle, 2005:28).

2.5.6 Personal transformation as a process of evolution

Tolle's views resonate with the insights of Vivekananda (2005:10-11) who avers that personal transformation is a process of evolution. This means that the human being evolves over time by engaging in a number of practices. Through the process of self-evolution and moving to different levels of consciousness, one enhances the ability to "express one's qualities optimally and creatively" (Vivekananda, 2005:15). This view of personal transformation as a fundamentally inner process of evolution is supported by Cope (1999:65) who maintains that it is a process of discovering our true self and that the only challenge that human beings have is that they have forgotten who they really are. He maintains that human beings are a "fantastic play of consciousness and energy, of *Shiva and Shakti*" (Cope, 1999:63). The sources of suffering can be characterised as ignorance, the belief that the body is the ultimate reality, attachment, aversion and fear of death (Cope, 1999:64). These afflictions result in alienation from one's 'true self' (Cope, 1999:63). He outlines the process of discovering one's spiritual nature as one of moving from being extroverted and caught in daily afflictions, to a process of being introverted and discovering one's spiritual reality within

(Cope, 1999:325). Relying on the work of the sage Patanjali, who is widely regarded as the sage who “codified and systematised” yoga, he outlines the eight limbs of yoga as proposed by Patanjali as the process to achieve the transformation. These are:

- *yamas* (restraints or ethical practices – non-harming, not telling lies, not stealing, not indulging in sex, not being attached to things);
- *niyamas* (daily observances or practices – purity, being content, balance, study of self, surrendering to a higher power);
- *asanas* (physical postures);
- *pranayama* (breath control);
- *pratyahara* (withdrawal of the senses from external input);
- *dharana* (the first stage of concentration);
- *dhyana* (meditation); and
- *samadhi* (ecstasy, or the dissolution of separation) (Cope, 1999:321).

He argues that *yoga*, as a philosophy and practice, is the key to transformation. The eight limbs as depicted constitute the path that must be followed to discover one’s ‘true self’. The process of discovering one’s nature involves certain ethical practices and daily observances, physical breath work, withdrawing the senses, concentration, and meditation. The process of moving from extroversion to introversion is depicted in Figure 2.3.

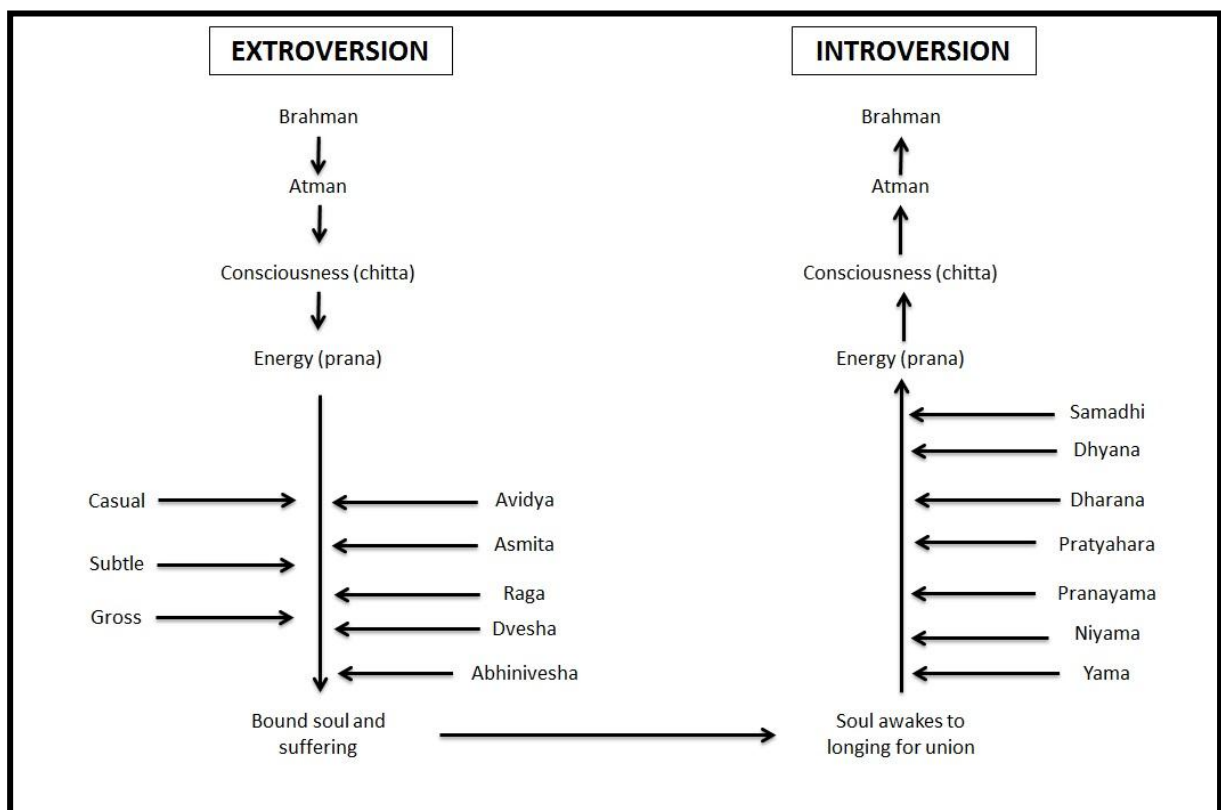


Figure 2.3: Introversion and Extroversion: The Architecture of the Path (Cope, 1999:324)

Through the process of extroversion, the individual gets caught up in various afflictions, which are largely attachment and ignorance and which result in deep suffering. The process of personal transformation and the quest for the 'true self' are through active engagement with the eight limbs of *yoga* as discussed above.

2.5.7 Reorganisational healing

An examination of the process of personal transformation would be incomplete without reference to a paradigm and model that was developed to promote “wellness, behavior change, holistic practice and healing” (Epstein et al., 2009:475). Reorganisational healing (ROH) is a paradigm that provides a map to enable individuals to assess themselves and then capitalise on their strengths to create sustainable change. Reorganisation means that the “system functions at a higher level” (Epstein et al., 2009:476). Although ROH has been used largely in the health and therapeutic care fields, it has applicability in areas of personal change and transformation. In accordance with this model, health problems are viewed as opportunities for individuals to embark on a process of change and the reorganisation means that the individual develops the competence to flourish in many domains such as the “physical, biologic, emotional, mental, social and cultural” (Epstein et al., 2009:476). The model consists of three key elements that effect change by ‘synchronising’ the timing and process of the change with the energetic aptitude required by the change (Epstein et al., 2009:478). The three elements are:

- Four seasons of wellbeing: This element refers to the processes to *Discover*, *Transform*, *Awaken* and *Integrate* which can be seen as phases in one’s journey. The metaphor of the season is used; although they are not sequential, they represent ‘moments’ in an individual’s life. Each of the seasons presents an opportunity for the individual to ensure a reorganisation of his/her life. *Discover*, *Transform* and *Awaken* are the stages an individual goes through during different phases in his/her life and to *Integrate* is the ability to “know and consciously choose” the seasons that are required in different circumstances.
- The triad of change: This is the key focus of the model and is indicative of the fact that all change includes structure, behaviour and perception. This means that for each structure, there are a concomitant behaviour and perception; for each behaviour, there are a structure and perception; and for each perception, there are structures and behaviours that both define and support it (Epstein et al., 2009:481).
- The five energetic intelligences: These refer to bio-energetic, emotional energetic, thought energetic, soul energetic and universal spirit energetic within and around the

body. Individuals have competencies within the different areas and they can use these competencies for the process of reorganisation (Epstein et al., 2009:484).

2.5.8 Towards a secular theory of personal transformation

Abrahams (cited in Pinnock, 2016:265) from the Ministry of Social Development in the Western Cape, argues that youth development requires a secular theory of personal transformation. Abrahams points out that this theory must be about “an inner process”. Pinnock (2016:266) believes that the answers lie in a ‘transcendent’ belief system and that footsteps to epiphany are not easily found in secular research but are important parts of a secular theory of transformation. Pinnock (2016:266) outlines a model of personal transformation aimed at building personal resilience:

- A role for mentors: *This is for support, empathy and guidance.*
- Altering the environment of youth: *This means that youth need to be in a less harmful environment that is safe and structured to enable them to grow.*
- Use of wilderness work, including use of ritual: *Wilderness is capable of providing a space for connection, silence and inner healing.*
- Creation of a safe space: *Learning and growth requires a safe space.*
- Allowing youth to tell their stories: *Providing youth with an opportunity to tell their stories is critical in making them feel heard.*
- Time for reflection: *A time for reflection is critical as it allows young people to think freely without the distractions that they may encounter in their homes and in communities.*

A visual depiction of Pinnock’s building blocks for personal transformation is outlined below.

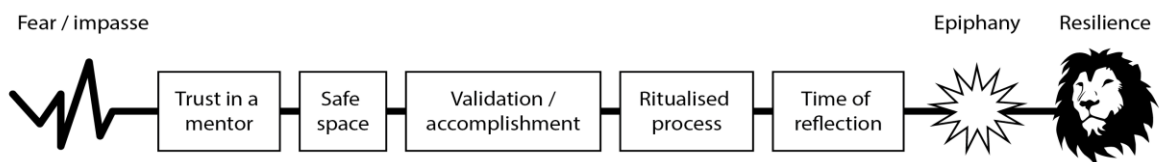


Figure 2.4: Stepping stones to resilience (Pinnock, 2016:273)

Although the model outlines critical processes that contribute towards personal transformation and considers the complex environments within which youth navigate their

lives, it stops short of dealing with the inner workings of personal transformation and exactly how the different elements ‘bring about’ personal transformation.

An approach to personal transformation that is gaining currency is the notion of a holistic approach. Chapman (2010:19) argues that many training and development programmes tend to focus on the outer domains because they are visible and easier to measure, and reminds us of the wisdom traditions that profess that it is by focusing on the inner domains that the “next level of evolutionary development” can be achieved. The objective is not to exclude any of the domains, but to integrate them into a holistic approach (Chapman, 2010:19).

2.6 A holistic approach

In reviewing what has been researched on personal transformation in SA in general and a holistic approach to youth development in particular, very little has been found. Ten theses on a holistic approach exist in the fields of nursing, the informal sector, auditory processing, and outcomes-based learning. Where I found research on a holistic approach to education, whether formal or non-formal education, the emphasis was more on combining a range of different methodologies to create a holistic approach than a focus on what the ‘whole’ or a holistic approach entails with respect to an individual.

Caine and Caine (1997:11) argue that to function optimally in an ever-changing environment requires not only different strategies, but also more fundamentally a way of viewing things using a different lens. In other words, it requires a different paradigm. A paradigm constitutes “those deeply held beliefs and ideas that determine or influence how we see the world” (Caine & Caine, 1997:12). They equate the notion of paradigm with that of a ‘field’, which is that which cannot be seen but whose effects we feel. For many in society, what is predominantly regarded as important are those things that we can see, touch, hear, disassemble, repair and pay for and that which we cannot see or touch is regarded as less important (Caine & Caine, 1997:16). The authors poignantly ask:

What do we teach our children that are not tied to how they will serve business? What of love? Of compassion? What of creativity and the arts? What of joy and feelings of connectedness to other human beings, animals, and nature? What happens to our souls as human beings and our soul as a nation?

A holistic approach potentially speaks to some of the authors’ questions, as it recognises those dimensions of our being that are both seen and unseen. Twentieth-century science and practice have emphasised a deeply held belief in a separation of mind and body (Langer et al., 1990:121). The authors argue that for many scientists the body is more ‘real’ than the mind, and therefore the focus is more on the physical world as the domain for investigation. They maintain that the time is opportune to examine the mind–body as one “level of analysis”

(Langer et al., 1990:121). Capra (1996:3) notes that all living systems are “interconnected and interdependent”. Bohm (1980:4), in his seminal work, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, also argued that humans have generally lived in ‘fragmentation’, despite intuitively knowing that “wholeness and integrity” are critical to give meaning to life.

2.6.1 Definition of a holistic approach

At the simplest level, the word ‘holistic’ refers to the ‘whole’, derived from the Greek word *holos* (*Oxford Paperback Dictionary and Thesaurus*, 2009:443). Sometimes, holistic is referred to as a whole person or an integrated approach (Caine & Caine, 1995:23).

2.6.2 Genealogy of a holistic approach

Edwards (2013:531) points out that a holistic approach, however, predates modern times, and draws on all major spiritual and wisdom traditions, but is only in recent years gaining proper recognition. He maintains that what is not given adequate attention in contemporary literature is precisely the ancient foundation of holistic psychology (Edwards, 2013:532). Bohm (1980:25) argued that in the initial stages of the development of civilisation, man’s viewpoints were that of wholeness, and that in the Eastern world that view survived. In the West, the primary reality is about measurement; in the East, the primary reality is one of “immeasurability: that which cannot be named, described or understood through any form of reason” (Bohm, 1980:29).

Bohm (1980:4) maintains that despite man being aware that wholeness is imperative for life to be worth living, he has lived in a way that has been fragmented. He points out that ‘reality’ has always been whole, but that man’s thinking has been fragmented. Once a person is able to bring his awareness to his habit of thinking in a fragmented way, the fragmentation will end. This will result in his approach to reality being whole and hence, the response to man’s approach will be whole (Bohm, 1980:9). He avers that the fragmentation is not only in man’s thinking, but also in the process of thinking itself and therefore it is both the “fragmentary process and fragmentary content” that should end together (Bohm, 1980:23).

Bohm’s (1980) and Edwards’ (2013) views are supported by Strozzi-Heckler (2014:32) who avers that the concept of an integrated mind–body process has evolved over a long period of time and has its origins in Asian and Middle Eastern cultures, philosophy and practice, as well as in other indigenous people across the world. It appeared in the Western world as a philosophy only in the 1930s with the work of Wilhelm Reich, who was a student of Freud; he maintained that by working with the body through touch and breath, it was possible to cure patients. Colley (2003:81), in tracing the genealogy of holism, points to its use in the scientific field of biology in the 1920s, contending that its use in the field of education started in the 1960s. The references to the ancient foundation of a holistic approach are important as

when concepts are appropriated from the cultural practices of indigenous people, the original intention and meaning often are lost through the process of appropriation, either deliberately or mistakenly.

Ancient Vedic texts such as the *Bhagavad Gita*, translated as the “Celestial Song”, and written in the third and fourth centuries BC, contain references to the interconnectedness and oneness or wholeness of all life forms through use of Sanskrit terms such as *Tat-Twam-Asi*, which implies that human beings are all extensions of one universal energy (Chopra, 2003:187). Another very early reference to what may be meant by a whole person is found in the Upanishads. Hodgkinson (2006:10) speaks of the ‘triple canon’ of Vedanta as comprising the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras*. Although some Western scholars have put a date to the writing of the *Upanishads* as 600 BC, it is argued that it is impossible to authoritatively date the *Upanishads*, as some Vedic scholars (Sivananda, 2012:13) claim that these existed even before the creation of this world.

In the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (*Eight Upanishads*, 1937, 1:354), it is noted:

He that is here in the *human person*, and He that is there in the *sun*, are one. He who knows thus attains, after desisting from this world, this self-made of *food*, attains this self-made of *vital force*, attains this self-made of *mind*, attains this self-made of *intelligence*, attains this self-made of *bliss* (*italicised words my emphasis*).

According to commentaries on the *Upanishads*, this text refers to the notion of five vestures, sheaths or dimensions: food, vital force, mind, intellect, and bliss (Hodgkinson, 2006:103). Nirmalananda (2009:42), drawing on these ancient Vedic texts, provides further insights on the multidimensional or ‘whole’ nature of a human being in the form of the five koshas, sheaths or bodies.

- *Annamaya kosha* (physical body or the food body)
- *Pranayama kosha* (energetic body or the vital force)
- *Manomaya kosha* (mental body)
- *Vijnanamaya kosha* (wisdom or intuitive body or the intellect)
- *Anandamaya kosha* (bliss body)

Although these sheaths are named individually, they form one coherent whole, and simultaneously influence and impact on one another. The whole does not exist without one of the sheaths. A visual depiction of my interpretation of the multidimensional nature is illustrated below.

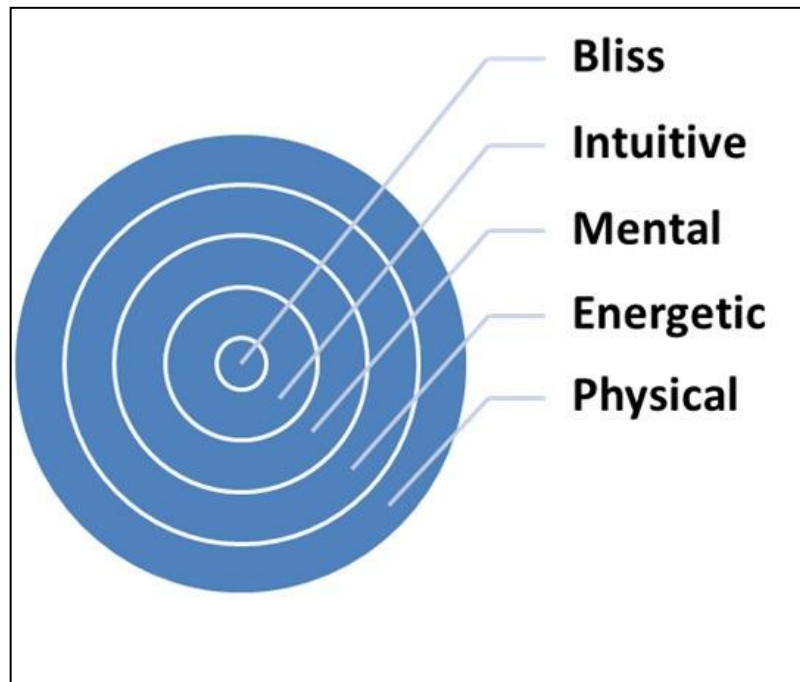


Figure 2.5: The multi-dimensional nature of a human being

With respect to an individual, the physical implies the physical body; the energetic refers to the energy (life force) within the body. Emotions can also be described as energy in motion as they come and go. The mental body refers to the mind; the intuitive body refers to the intellect; and the bliss body houses 'spirit' or 'soul'.

The *pranamaya kosha* is more subtle than the gross physical body and performs different functions of the body such as digestion, circulation of blood, and excretion (Sivananda, 2012:352). The whole physical body is pervaded by the *pranamaya kosha*. The *pranamaya kosha* along with the mental and intellectual sheaths form the subtle body or astral body (Sivananda, 2012:352). The *manomaya kosha* is made up of thoughts, and through it, one is able to say, "I think, I imagine" (Sivananda, 2012:356). The *vijnanamaya kosha* is the faculty that guides the mind (Sivananda, 2012:358). The *anandamaya kosha* constitutes the causal body of the individual soul (Sivananda, 2012:394). When one reaches the *anandamaya kosha*, one reaches the innermost Self (Sivananda, 2012:394). The *Upanishads* refer to the notion of the Supreme Self in the following way:

Whoever knows Brahman, who is Existence, Knowledge and Infinite, as dwelling in the cavity of the heart in the infinite ether, enjoys all desires at once, together with the omniscient Brahman (Sivananda, 2012:297).

This verse implies that the Self is already present, not something which needs to be achieved (Hodgkinson, 2006:105). This may imply that personal transformation is a

recognition and accessing of the 'self' within, as alluded to by Cope (1999:23), Vivekananda (2005:10), Tolle (2005:23) and Kessler (2000:36). This recognition of the self within is the transmutation itself.

The physical body is active largely during the waking state, the subtle body during the dreaming state, and the causal body during deep sleep (Sivananda, 2012:363). The objective of our lives is to 'evolve' all of the different dimensions and in the process discover our spiritual nature (Vivekananda, 2005:10). It is about harmonising all the dimensions and in the process discovering the "unity of the individual's consciousness with the ultimate consciousness" (Vivekananda, 2005:14).

Drawing on the *Bhagavad Gita*, Keepin (2016:7-8), describes the different dimensions in the following way: The lowest level is the physical body; then comes the physical senses (*indriyas*) which are incorporated into the mind (*manas*); the mind is 'dissolved' into the *budhhi* which is 'subsumed' into the *atman* (soul). The centre of a human being is the heart not in the head, which is something that ancient civilisations were aware of, but which was forgotten by contemporary society (Keepin, 2016:197). This is due to science largely not taking cognisance of "the subjective inner dimensions of life" with its advances being recognised in the technological domain (Keepin, 2016:197). The "infinite Godhead dwells inside your heart. You need only go deeply inward to discover it" (Keepin, 2016:199). Furthermore, he points out: "Interiorization is therefore the key to spiritual practice. The path of divine love is pursued deep within the heart" (Keepin, 2016:201).

Schumacher (1978:47), in support of a holistic approach, points out that many teachings describe man as comprising four bodies: physical body, etheric body, astral body and I/ego/self/spirit. These four levels can be compared to an "inverted pyramid where each higher level comprises everything lower and is open to influences from everything higher" (Schumacher, 1978:46). He asserts that knowledge of the four great levels of being is found in all major wisdom traditions and has been around for thousands of years. All four levels exist in human beings, and he uses the following formula to describe the process (Schumacher, 1978:15-25).

Minerals = **m**; Plants = **m + x**; Animals = **m + x + y**; Man = **m + x + y + z**

In this formula, **m + x + y + z** refer to specific variables:

m = mineral; **x** = life; **y** = consciousness; **z** = self-awareness.

Following a refinement of the formula, he points out that:

m + x = the body; **y** = the soul; **z** = Spirit

Using the formula, Schumacher maintains that a human being has both an 'inner' experience and an 'outer' appearance. A higher level of development means "more of the inner", whereas a lower level means "more external and more outer" (Schumacher, 1978:32-33). He maintains that we should focus not only on the outer, but also on the inner.

In addition to speaking about four levels of being, Schumacher describes four levels of knowing. He argues that information that we receive through the senses does not provide us with insight; insight is gained by the special instrument often referred to as the "eye of the heart". He contrasts experience with illumination (Schumacher, 1978:60) and asserts that:

... the great truths teach us that restriction in the use of instruments of cognition has the inevitable effect of narrowing and impoverishing reality. When using our senses alone, we attain objectivity, but we fail to attain knowledge of the object as a whole (Schumacher, 1978:64).

Schumacher (1978:64) describes four fields of knowledge: outer appearance and inner experience:

Inner experience:

I

The world (you) inner

Outer appearance:

I (outer)

The world (you) – outer

The four questions that lead to these fields of knowledge can be formulated in this way: What is really going on in my inner world? What is going on in the world of other beings? What do I look like in the eyes of other beings? What do I actually observe in the world around me? (Schumacher, 1978:75-76). Put another way: What do I feel like? What do you feel like? What do I look like? What do you look like? Drawing on insights from many of the wisdom traditions, he argues that one can only understand others to the extent that one can know oneself (Schumacher, 1978:98).

Chopra (2003:35) posits another way of understanding a holistic approach. He outlines three levels of existence: the physical, quantum, and the non-local domains. The physical domain is all that which we can experience with our five senses. What exists in the physical domain "has a beginning, middle and an end and is therefore impermanent" (Chopra, 2003:35). The physical domain includes the physical body, earth, and a table. However, everything within the physical domain consists of molecules which are made up of smaller particles called atoms, made up of even smaller particles called sub-atoms, in line with the famous formula of Einstein that $E = mc^2$.

The quantum level is all that which cannot be seen or touched by the five senses. It is the level of information and energy. The quantum domain includes the mind, thoughts and ego (Chopra, 2003:35). Whatever exists in the quantum domain is not fixed and solid, yet we all

have experienced millions of thoughts rushing through the mind. All that which is in the physical domain can be seen to reflect that which is in the quantum domain (Chopra, 2003: 37).

The non-local domain is also referred to as the virtual or spiritual domain (Chopra, 2003:43). It is the level of 'potentiality' and is termed 'non-local' as it is not confined to a particular area. Chopra (2003:43) says, "it simply is". It is an energy that organises what is. It is a difficult concept to grasp, but can be experienced. The notion of the non-local domain has been in contention for many years, but in the twentieth century it became possible for science to prove its existence (Chopra, 2003:46).

Within the context of a discussion on personal transformation, various methods or approaches can be used to access the 'inner self' such as yoga as described by Cope (1999:324) as well as the practice of somatics. Somatics signifies the "living, aware, bodily person" (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014:31). The field of somatics, founded by Thomas Hanna and developed over the last 45 years, regards the body as the "unified space in which humans act, perceive, think, feel, sense, express emotions and moods, and live in their spiritual longing" (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014:33). The mind and body are not regarded as separate. The physical body is connected to the self and when the body is worked with, it leads to the question of what is beyond the self (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014:38). This means that through the body, we develop the self. The somatic field makes it possible to have a view of the whole human being, as many views of the human being have often been incomplete (Hanna, 1988:21)

Strozzi-Heckler (2014:6) maintains that many people live a 'disembodied life' and that this living at a distance from the body places one's physical and emotional health at risk. The distance people live from their bodies equates to the distance they live from their selves and their emotional reality (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014:10). In a living organism, every "part grows in the context of the whole, so that it does not exist independently, nor can it be said that it merely interacts with the others, without itself being essentially affected in this relationship" (Bohm, 1980:219). The mind and body do not exist separately from each other. In the implicate order, "the mind enfolds matter in general, and the body in particular" (Bohm, 1980:265). In a "living organism, each part grows in the context of the whole". This implies that a part is not separate from the rest of the whole. In fact, the whole has an impact on the part (Bohm, 1980:219).

Korthagen (2013b:35) writes about the holistic approach in a slightly different way. He developed the Core Reflection Approach in education and says flow happens when people are supported to connect with their "thinking, feeling and wanting". He states that if people are stuck in one dimension like the head, then flow cannot occur (Korthagen, 2013b:35).

Core reflection is an approach that seeks to “nurture the whole student and teacher” and to pay attention to issues of “identity, mission, inspiration and passion” (Greene et al., 2013:3). This approach is a strengths-based approach and is essentially about connecting human hearts and spirits.

Connecting a person’s inner qualities and experiences is important, as Korthagen believes that very little attention is paid to the ‘internal’ and natural qualities that individuals bring to teaching and learning (Korthagen, 2013a:14). Greene et al. (2013:4) believe that if education is oriented towards a core reflection approach then deep transformation is likely to take place:

When learning becomes a joyful or meaningful experience for students, it touches the spirit in ways that cannot always be measured, but that can leave a lasting imprint on their deeper sense of being (Greene et al., 2013:5).

Core reflection stems from a positive psychology approach that focuses on people’s personal strengths. A deficiency model is to look at what is not going well and then to work at how to improve things, whereas a core reflection approach focuses on nurturing what is best (Korthagen, 2013a:14).

Bohm notes that because many people have a “fragmentary self-world view”, they begin to perceive that this is in fact “the way everything is” (Bohm, 1980:15). In similar vein, Shepherd (2010:2) argues that the biggest harm that has been done to us by society is through the divisions imposed on us. He notes that society exhorts us to ignore the intelligence of the body and to live as “prisoners in our craniums” (Shepherd, 2010:3). The human soul has an “age old quest for wholeness – that is to feel the world as a whole and the self as a whole within it, and in feeling that wholeness, to live it” (Shepherd, 2010:6). Similarly, an individual is a spiritual entity who is engaging with the world through using the body and mind as the instrument (Vivekananda, 2005:23).

2.6.3 Implications of a holistic approach for youth development

Any model of personal transformation has implications for practice and a holistic approach is no different. A holistic approach influences the curriculum, teaching methods and institutional culture, so that all dimensions of a human being are deliberately and consciously incorporated in the teaching and learning. Learning should engage the ‘whole physiology’ and it is important to acknowledge that learning is “enhanced or inhibited” by threat (Caine & Caine, 1995:25-26). This perspective points to the importance of integrating all aspects of a learner’s being. A learner cannot learn if he/she is fearful or suppressing fear, and fear is not a cognitive concept, it is contained within the physical body, as illustrated in the section on youth and trauma. Hence, learning needs to embrace more than the cognitive; it should engage all aspects of a learner’s being, including the body that ‘houses’ the fear, mind and

spirit. Once learners' emotions are separated from learning, they are limited from making 'meaningful connections' which are critical in enabling them to develop "compassion, personal interdependence and tolerance for multiple perspectives" (Jennings, 1995:73).

Unfortunately, many schools see their mission simply as imparting knowledge, while a holistic approach integrates the learner's many selves into the learning experience (Best, 2008:344). A whole person approach to education is important in that it enables the learner to integrate the power of the "mind, heart and will" and to develop a sense of identity as part of a global family (Podger et al., 2010:342). The dominant viewpoint in our society largely proclaims that learning resides within the domain of the mind or intellect. This view is one that the body is used primarily to serve the mind.

Caine and Caine (1995:23) articulate the holistic approach in the following way:

Teaching Jimmy to fly a kite may involve some direct instruction, but anyone who ever experienced flying a kite on the beach will recall that they also learned about the feeling of sand under the bare feet, the smell and sound of the sea, the feel of the wind as it pulled on the string, and at the same time managed spontaneously complex mathematic calculations of distance and speed, either pursued or abandoned the sport, and possibly learned something about parents' patience and so on.

Our concept of education must be expanded to include domains other than cognition (Delgado, 2002:278). Martin (1985:80) argues that emotions and feelings must be regarded as "positive rather than untrustworthy elements of personality". He points out that if an integrative approach is not taken, learners will not be able to feel injustices, and will have no desire to solve real problems in the world (Martin, 1985:73).

According to Campbell (2006:29), holistic education sets out to "encompass and enlist" three key aspects of the whole person: mind, body, and spirit in the learning process and environment. This is critical as the education system fragments each discipline. Campbell (2006:29) maintains that teachers should see their students as whole developing humans with a variety of needs, including their need for personal transformation and should not suppress things like spirituality. Kessler (2000:x) argues that the "body of the child will not grow if it is not fed, the mind will not flourish unless it is stimulated and guided and the spirit will suffer if it is not nurtured".

In what can be seen as a support of a whole person approach, Garbarino (1999:154), who has worked with youth who have committed violent crimes, outlines what he calls a conceptual toolbox to save lost boys; this includes the spiritual dimension. He points out that of all the things he found when working with violent youth, "a spiritual emptiness" was the most common thread. He notes that spirituality is a recognition that as human beings, we are not only "humans with a brain", but spiritual beings as well, and that not having one's spiritual needs met can be as harmful as not having one's physical or emotional needs met.

Garbarino's perspective is shared by Kessler (2000:ix) who maintains that despite some children having their "inner lives numbed" by drugs, neglect and abuse, many continue to come to school "with their souls alive and seeking connection". For her the issue is how spiritual development is addressed in schools. She maintains that there is general agreement that a spiritual emptiness or a 'spiritual hunger' is what many youth face, and that these issues are largely omitted from our analysis. She defines a spiritual void as those feelings of "emptiness, meaningless and disconnection" (Kessler, 2000:xi). In her view, although the socioeconomic issues which are the source of much violence must be addressed, there is a need to meet the spiritual needs of young people (Kessler, 2000:xii).

Delgado (2002:97) maintains that spirituality is more 'inclusive' than religion and one can be spiritual and not be religious. He argues that spirituality can be cultivated in many ways in youth development programmes and that youth practitioners should not be fearful of including it in their activities (Delgado, 2002:97).

[Spirituality] in a family context grounds youth in an operating unit, provides them with a common symbolic language for interaction, and provides them with a sense of future direction and can be an excellent vehicle for the development of competencies (Delgado, 2002:98).

Spirituality plays an important role in "instilling and sustaining hope" and in making meaning of a 'disadvantaged existence' (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:586). Although research has shown that spirituality supports a resilient outcome, she cautions against simply accepting research outcomes that support faith in a 'higher power' as a mechanism with which to cope (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:586).

Holistic youth development questions the view that youth are not whole right now. It is an approach to think about the ways in which children and youth grow, learn and evolve. There are many aspects that make up the 'world' of youth. These aspects are: the emotional, physical, familial, social, spiritual, ethical, educational, and cultural (Fletcher, 2014:6). It is vital that all these aspects are included in programmes aimed at promoting child and youth development. Holistic youth development does not rely on one aspect only. It strengthens the 'whole' person. It is critical for adults to regard children and youth as "uniquely important people right now", instead of seeing them as "adults-in-the making" (Fletcher, 2014:7). Young people are often viewed as "problems in the making or as current problems" (Fletcher, 2014:10). This is a view that disregards that youth are capable of changing the world they live in, rather than only 'consuming' the world that they have inherited. One central tenet of a holistic youth development approach is that "all young people have inherent value no matter how they are identified by others" (Fletcher, 2014:12).

2.7 Social and cultural capital and the notion of *habitus*

Important in appreciating the youth landscape in South Africa and the complexity of the personal transformation work is the work of Bourdieu (1986:245) with respect to social and cultural capital and the notion of *habitus*. He defines capital as any resource that holds symbolic value within a field and which therefore acts as a currency that actors bring with them to the field (Bourdieu, 1984:446). In an interview with Wacquant (1989:50), he identified the following three types of capital: economic, cultural, and social capital. *Economic capital* is regarded as “immediately and directly convertible into money”; *cultural capital* refers mainly to the products of education, whether these are visible in individuals (such as accent, vocabulary, behaviour) or connected to the type of schools they have attended; and *social capital* is an individual's social connections or networks of lasting relations that have been established and which continue to expand (Bourdieu, 1986:245).

Bourdieu (1986:245) ascribes success in education to cultural capital, both in the quantity and type inherited from one's family background. He regards cultural capital as cumulative and explains that students with higher levels of cultural capital, largely acquired from primary socialisation in the family, tend to be able to use this investment of cultural capital to gain further cultural wealth through the secondary socialisation process in schools and/or higher education. As asserted by Chetty (2014:97), it is this social and cultural capital that is the basis upon which learners are rewarded at school. Those seen to have ‘high’ social capital are rewarded (largely the wealthier students), and those seen to have ‘low’ social capital are punished (often learners from poorer homes) (Chetty, 2014:97).

Habitus can be described as a set of values, practices and norms that people assimilate as part of who they are and how they operate. It represents how individuals make use of their past and present experiences to address a current situation. *Habitus* is manifested in ways of “standing, speaking, walking, feeling and thinking” (Bourdieu, 1990:70). Colley (2003:93), in discussing the notion of *habitus*, explains that *habitus* among others, is a combination of a person's sense of who they are, lifestyle, personality, beliefs, values, and background, and that the concept is not always properly understood. It is a ‘structure’ as it is systematically ordered rather than random or haphazard. This ‘structure’ comprises a system of dispositions that generate perceptions, appreciations and practices (Bourdieu, 1990:53). So, *habitus* can be regarded as the social world embedded within the individual body (Lamaison, 1986:113). However, a caution is sounded that *habitus* is not about fate, but is an open system that changes with experience, hence it is not deterministic (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:133). Reay (2004:443) regards *habitus* as a “deep, interior epicentre containing many matrices”. She maintains that despite *habitus* making allowance for individual agency, it also makes an individual more predisposed to particular ways of behaving (Reay, 2004:433). An individual's

history is important in understanding the notion of *habitus* (Reay, 2004:434). The *habitus* developed in the family becomes the basis for the school experience, which in turn becomes the basis of all subsequent experiences (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:134). The structuring of *habitus* can be understood as part of a continuum. At the one end of the continuum, *habitus* is duplicated by interacting with a “field that reproduces its dispositions”, while at the other end of the continuum, a habit can be changed from “one that raises or lowers an individual’s expectations” (Reay, 2004:435).

Understanding the concept of *habitus* is an important foundation for an authentically holistic approach, as in too many instances youth are viewed as ‘passive recipients’ of programmes and when they do not respond to the programme in the manner required by the organisers, they may be seen as deviant (Colley, 2003:95). Furthermore, the concept *habitus* can help us understand how young people may respond to certain ‘turning points’ in different ways. When *habitus* encounters a ‘field’ with which it is not familiar, the subsequent disjuncture can result in change and transformation (Reay, 2004:436).

In exploring engagement mentoring for socially excluded youth in the United Kingdom, Colley (2003:77) argues that the original meaning of holism is being challenged and policies and practices which lay a claim to being holistic should be examined. She questions the holistic nature of engagement mentoring as practised within a local project in the United Kingdom as the model regards personal disposition (*habitus*) as a “raw material to be changed into an employable disposition” without due consideration of institutional or structural fields of power (Colley, 2003:77). Drawing from Bourdieu’s theory, she contends that personal disposition is extremely complex and that a thorough understanding of the concept of *habitus* might translate into a more holistic approach, rather than a ‘totalitarian’ approach to engagement mentoring. She argues that there are clear criteria for assessing whether an approach is holistic or not and maintains that an inappropriate application of a holistic approach is to confuse “totality, or sum of the parts” with “whole, which is an organically related entity”. This means that in the context of *habitus*, an individual’s personal attributes are seen as separate from the wider contexts in which he/she lives. Two criteria could be used to assess whether an approach is holistic or not: purpose and outcomes of an approach, and how a whole person is defined. Do the practices allow for ‘emergent’ and ‘unpredictable outcomes’ or do they look for general laws or traits and are they prescriptive? Secondly, is the individual viewed as an “organic, complex dynamic whole” in which all the parts of the whole are understood “in relation to each other” or is the individual seen as the “sum of the parts” and where the parts are ‘reconstructed’ in relation to objectives that are externally determined (Colley, 2003:83-84).

The notions of social and cultural capital and *habitus* are synergistic with the work of Garbarino whose work is based on an ecological approach. He argues that some young people experience an “accumulation of risk” as a result of their primary socialisation, while others experience an “accumulation of opportunity” (Garbarino, 2001:362). It is this social and cultural capital or accumulation of risk or opportunity that largely determines whether youth succeed or not in the education sphere and in life more generally.

2.8 Conclusion

The chapter outlined the youth landscape and architecture both globally and in South Africa and engaged with the theories on how youth and youth development are defined and the different approaches to youth development. It illustrated that youth constitute around 36% of the total population. Despite the common title of ‘youth’, young people are not homogeneous and have varying needs. The challenges youth in South Africa face are largely as a result of a racial and class system. However, they have the potential to be active participants in their personal transformation process and long for their voices to be heard.

The study is embedded in an ecological perspective illustrating how children and youth develop in a context of a “system of relationships”. The chapter reveals both the simplicity and complexity of processes that characterise the personal transformation journey, including the aspect that as some dimensions cannot be seen, we may never be able cognitively to understand the personal transformation process. The theories of personal transformation have significant overlaps and range from personal transformation from the inside out to personal transformation as a ‘forming over’ or a “process of evolution”. There is extensive scholarly writing contending that personal transformation is largely an ‘inner process’ involving a shedding of ‘masks’ or *samskaras* to discover our ‘authentic nature’.

Although not all authors use the same names for the different dimensions, there seems to be a general recognition that the human being does consist of dimensions other than the physical body. A holistic approach implies recognition that a human being consists of different dimensions such as the physical, mental, energetic, and spiritual, and therefore by implication, personal development involves the engagement of all these dimensions owing to their interconnectedness as one whole. In fact, a holistic approach can be seen as a quest for wholeness, or a discovery of one’s wholeness. In the words of Briggs and Peat (1984:271), “For thousands of years wholeness has been mute. Now it can speak. Who can tell what it will say?”

Chapter 3 introduces the Chrysalis Academy, including its history, philosophical stance, values and approach to youth development.

CHAPTER 3: GETTING TO KNOW THE CHRYSALIS ACADEMY

We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty – Maya Angelou

3.1 Introduction

To contextualise the experiences of the five respondents who participated in this study, this chapter describes the Chrysalis Academy (CA) and its three-month programme. The content of the chapter is a presentation of the policies, practices, programmes and evaluation reports. My intention is to provide the history, philosophical approach and programme of the institution as accurately as possible. The chapter is nuanced to state ‘fact’ as opposed to mere ‘impression’. The objective of the chapter is to ensure that the reader is introduced to the CA and its programme in a comprehensive way and therefore serves as the backdrop to Chapters 5 and 6 in which the respondents voice their experiences of a holistic approach. The chapter provides an overview of the CA by discussing the following areas:

- The formation of the Chrysalis Academy
- Phases and envisaged outcomes of the three-month programme
- Principles underpinning the programme
- Core values
- Target audience and criteria
- Geographical areas
- Application process
- Reasons why youth apply to the CA
- Refinements effected to the programme after 2011
- Family reintegration
- CA as a trainer of youth instructors
- Significance of CA name and logo
- Studies involving CA as a case study

3.2 The formation of the Chrysalis Academy

The Chrysalis Academy programme has been described in scholarly literature as a ‘wide-ranging’ and ‘intensive’ programme over five years (Cooper & Ward, 2012:252). It is a ‘high-dose’ programme that includes an emphasis on youth employment skills and parental training. In 2006 it was described as a best practice example in youth crime prevention (Cooper & Ward, 2012:252). The authors aver that what good prevention programmes have in common, is that they work in more than one area of a young person’s life.

The CA was established in 2000 by the provincial government of the Western Cape as a non-profit, Section 21 Company. It is housed on the Porter Estate, Tokai, in the Western Cape, on land bequeathed for youth development by Sir William Porter, the attorney-general of the Cape Colony from 1839–1865. The CA was set up originally as a crime-prevention programme aimed at enabling young people to experience viable alternatives to drugs, crimes, and gangs. From 2000–2015, a number of ministers of the Western Cape Provincial Government served as trustees, including ministers of Education, Social Development, Community Safety, and Cultural Affairs and Sport, as youth development was seen as a transversal issue, spanning many departments. The first Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Academy was Mr Mark Wiley.

During its formative years, the CA’s vision and mission were defined as follows:

Table 3.1: Chrysalis Academy Vision and Mission (2008:4)

VISION	To develop and build ‘youth at risk’ into strong community leaders
MISSION	To contribute to youth development by developing social consciousness, values and attitudes in young people, enabling them to grow personally and acquire knowledge and skills through training, empowering them economically, morally and spiritually

A provincial Cabinet decision in 2015 paved the way for only members of civil society to be eligible to serve as trustees. The rationale was to ensure that the CA has a much broader appeal and is able to raise funds from any of the provincial government departments. The Department of Community Safety (DCS) remains the CA’s biggest funder as the programme is still viewed by the provincial government as a contributor towards enhancing safety in communities, as youth who are not participating in any developmental initiatives are viewed as having a greater propensity to be involved in behaviour that may be seen as anti-social.

The CA’s current trustees are:

Dr Marlene le Roux (Chairperson)

Dr Don Pinnock

Retired Judge Deon van Zyl

Mr Solly Moeng

Its current Chief Executive Officer is the researcher, Ms Lucille Meyer.

3.3 Target audience and criteria

The CA recruits youth who are aged 18-25 years. The reason for focusing on this age differential is in recognition that a quest for identity and meaning seems synonymous with the transition from adolescence into young adulthood.

Three cohorts are recruited per year: two male and one female. Per course, 180 male and 200 female students are recruited. Since 2012, each course has exceeded the graduation target set by the CA. Currently the graduation targets are 160 for men and 180 for women. On average between 170 and 177 students graduate per course. Approximately 1000–1200 applications are received per course, with applicants often being on a waiting list for more than one year. The CA's 2015/2016 figures are tabled below, illustrating how each cohort is categorised to distinguish one course from the next.

Table 3.2: 2015/2016 graduates (Chrysalis Academy, 2016a:8-10)

Course	Number recruited	Number graduated
15 ALPHA (male)	180	177
15 BRAVO (female)	182	178
15 CHARLIE (male)	180	173
TOTAL:	542	528

The criteria for appointment onto the programme are: no criminal record, residents of the Western Cape, a minimum of a Grade 9 certification, and not in employment, education or training.

3.4 Geographical areas

Applicants reside across the Western Cape, with large numbers applying from Khayelitsha, George, Knysna, Worcester, Plettenberg Bay, Ladysmith, Gugulethu, and Nyanga. The majority of students come from income-poor and working-class homes, with many being unemployed at the time of entering the programme. On average, students come from homes where they live with 5–6 other occupants and on one cohort, both parents of at least seven students were deceased (Chrysalis Academy, 2016b:10).

3.5 Phases and envisaged outcomes of the programme

At the heart of the CA's programme is the intention to support youth to 'wake up' and discover their inner potential so that they are able to transcend and change their often-challenging circumstances in a meaningful and empowering way. It is a programme aimed at fostering connection, resilience, personal mastery, youth leadership, active citizenship and social change.

The three-month residential programme is conceptualised and enacted in different phases:

- A *three-week orientation phase* aimed at providing skills to build personal mastery and agency as well as to introduce learners to a structured and regimented environment.
- A *two-week outdoor phase* aimed at enhancing youth leadership capability and introducing learners to the beauty of the Western Cape and basic biodiversity issues. The outdoor phase consists of a 24-hour 'solo', which is a period of solitude to enable reflection, contemplation and connection with Self.
- A *four-week skills phase* aimed at providing basic technical and vocational training as a foundation for further training when exiting the CA programme or for entry-level employment in various industries or sectors. These include firefighting, welding, electrical circuitry, basic cookery, office administration and so forth.
- A *two-week community phase* which includes a focus on careers and professional behaviour in the workplace; cultivating citizenship and a spirit of voluntarism through community service; and a three-day route march from Tokai to Cape Point in the Western Cape as a symbol of their determination and achievement over the three months.
- A *one-week exit phase* focusing on financial literacy, preparing students to reintegrate into families and communities and how to sustain the transformation back home. Various ceremonies take place during this phase, such as a prize-giving celebration to honour student achievement and a graduation ceremony where their achievements are publicly acknowledged by family, friends and the CA.

A five-year aftercare programme commences after students graduate. This includes refresher days, counselling when required, career information, and assistance to access bursaries and job opportunities. This is in recognition that transformation and self-development are incremental and ongoing, and need to be supported, especially in view of graduates' challenging home circumstances.

Appendix A provides an outline of a three-month programme. All cohorts largely follow the same programme, regardless of gender.

3.6 Principles underpinning the programme

The CA's programme is underpinned by the principles of structure, discipline, order and regimentation, self-awareness and personal mastery. This means that the daily programme is structured commencing with 'waking up' at 04h30 and 'lights out' at 21h30; students wear the same uniform and are taught drilling and a structured way of making beds, organising their rooms and cleaning their hostels.

The key rationale for the structured and regimented nature of the programme is to cultivate discipline and mindfulness. Many young people who enter the programme have been out of school for a number of years or are not active in the labour market. Hence, the need exists to introduce and foster time management, discipline and professionalism. Mindfulness is cultivated through most of the activities and the drilling in particular, which require of the students that they pay attention and be fully present to be able to follow the various instructions. The structured and regimented nature of the programme is therefore a 'mechanism' to foster discipline, mindfulness, and cohesion, and to build personal mastery and uniformity. The CA believes that a structured environment facilitates learning and teaching but at the same time ensures predictability and routine. Predictability and routine serve to create safety, considering that many students reside in geographical spaces where violence, including domestic violence and public shootings by local gangs and law enforcement agencies, are commonplace and can occur at any time.

Apart from the principles mentioned, the CA's approach to youth development is shaped by *andragogy*, which is an adult learner-centred approach using experiential learning. This means that facilitators recognise that youth enter the classroom with experiences that can be used as a basis for the learning and teaching experience. Generally, learning sessions involve a variety of activities as a way of honouring and drawing on youth experiences. Teaching sessions usually incorporate a discussion on 'house rules' or collective agreements, which stipulate the expected behaviour that participants expect from one another in the teaching and learning session. This is a way of generating commitment from all participants, including the facilitators.

The CA also places importance on cultivating citizenship and nation building by daily rituals of singing the national anthem, hoisting the SA flag and advocating community service. The CA celebrates diversity but places a strong emphasis on the commonality all its students.

Lastly, the CA believes in the potential and wholeness of its students and this is embedded in its holistic approach to curriculum development. Before every course, all staff members are

reminded that students should be treated in terms of their potential, and not how they present themselves on commencing the programme. In this way, students are encouraged to reciprocate this high regard with dedication and commitment.

3.7 Core values

The CA is governed by a number of strategic values presented below.

Table 3.3: Core values (Chrysalis Academy, 2015)

CORE VALUES	• Professionalism • Excellence • Integrity • Accountability • Respect & Dignity • Passion • Love for Humanity • Sustainable relations with nature
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The CA firmly believes that its staff should model these values to students, as the practice and behaviour witnessed by students are more important than what is documented, including CA's code of conduct. The CA believes that modelling of expected behaviour is critical as youth learn from the behaviour of others, and not only from what is written in a code of conduct that outlines the behaviour expected of staff, students and volunteers. In other words, students are enrolled into a different way of being in the world.

3.8 Application process

Youth apply to the CA through completing and submitting an application form. **Appendix B** is an example of the latest application form. Youth who meet the criteria are invited for an interview at the CA over a three- to four-day period to cater for the large number of applications received for each course. The interview process consists of:

- Forty-five minutes to an hour's presentation on the CA programme so that students are familiarised with the nature of the programme and are able to make an informed decision about their application. The programme is voluntary as the CA believes that youth perform substantially better in a programme if they are aware of the outcomes of the programme and on their own commit to completion of the programme.

- An individual (one-on-one) interview lasting between 15 and 20 minutes to ascertain whether the applicant meets the criteria and more importantly to assess motivational levels as well as willingness and readiness to participate in the programme.
- Fitting uniforms to enable the CA to provide the correct size uniform.
- A physical fitness assessment to ensure that there are no injuries and that the applicant has the ability to participate in the various physical activities.

The data collected is screened followed by a final selection of applicants, in accordance with the CA's recruitment policy. All successful applicants are informed timeously of their selection to enable them to purchase their own toiletries, some clothing, and basic stationery. Successful applicants pay a non-refundable R400 deposit on arrival; the provision of the programme is subsidised by the provincial government through an annual grant to the CA. Priority is given to students from poorer homes and those who display high levels of motivation.

3.9 Reasons why youth apply to the Chrysalis Academy

The reasons that youth apply to enter the CA programme are varied. In a study completed by Dreke (2008:46), she outlined the following reasons why youth apply to enter the CA programme.

- To sort out their lives
- To become a positive community leader
- To discover themselves
- To get a job
- To get a better job
- To get away from negative peer pressure
- To improve relationship with family
- To use their time (efficiently) until a new job is found or they return to school
- To get CA certificates
- To overcome substance abuse
- To have an exciting time

Although the sample used was small, the highest number of respondents applied to “sort out my life”; “become a positive community leader”; “discover myself” and “get a job”. Most of her respondents were from 2004–2006, with smaller numbers from 2001–2003, and an even smaller number from the year 2000. The reasons voiced in 2008 are still valid six years later, with the predominant ones currently being a desire to sort out their lives and to obtain

meaningful employment. However, there has been an increase in youth talking about wanting to build their confidence and self-esteem.

3.10 Refinements effected to the programme after 2011

Over 8000 students have graduated since 2000. Over the last 17 years, the programme has evolved and been refined. In 2011, after some management challenges from 2009–2010, a new management team was appointed to lead the CA into the next few years. This management team embarked on a strategic thinking session upon their appointment and reformulated a new vision and mission as illustrated below and outlined in its strategic documents since 2012.

Table 3:4: Vision and Mission (Chrysalis Academy, 2015:6)

VISION	To become the leading academy for youth development in the Republic of South Africa
MISSION	To unleash the potential of youth through mental, physical, emotional and spiritual empowerment, enabling them to become positive role models and productive citizens of the Republic of South Africa

The rationale for the new vision and mission was to ensure that the CA programme was more aligned to principles inherent in positive youth development. The CA decided to delete reference to “youth at risk” from its mission statement as staff maintained that no young person would ordinarily wish to be referred to as an ‘at-risk youth’. Furthermore, it was more appropriate to focus on the potential of young people as opposed to the notion of youth as ‘problems’. The CA describes this as an approach emphasising “abundance and potentiality” as opposed to a ‘deficit’ approach. However, the original structure of the programme as divided into different phases was fully embraced and strengthened over the last five years. The CA management currently reviews each course so that the programme is dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs of young people. Each phase of the course is reflected upon and reviewed, lessons are learned, policies are reviewed, and changes effected where required, which are then enacted in the subsequent course leading to another cycle of practice. The CA is of the view that this ongoing review and reflection contribute to the quality

of the CA programme and ensure that it remains responsive to the needs of youth in the Western Cape.

Although the basic phases of the three-month programme remained the same, certain key changes were effected to the programme after 2011. These changes are discussed below.

An enhanced therapeutic care programme

Therapeutic care is an umbrella term for psychosocial and spiritual support. The underlying impetus for this programme was the realisation that youth entering the programme were subjected, among others, to abuse, neglect, sexual assault, and deprivation, and unless some of these aspects were given attention, young people would not benefit substantially from the programme. The philosophy underpinning the therapeutic care programme is that youth are 'whole' persons with potential, and that facilitators should work with youth not in terms of how they present themselves when entering the programme, but in terms of what they are capable of becoming. As a result of years of abuse and neglect, many young people may not be able to feel this potential, let alone believe it exists. The objective of the three-month programme in general and the therapeutic care programme in particular is to enable the students to remove the layers of conditioning that prevent them from feeling and accessing this potential.

The entire three-month programme is seen to be a vehicle through which personal transformation can take place. The therapeutic care consists of individual counselling on request and eight sessions of group therapeutic care of about two hours each. The modalities offered over the eight weeks include Yoga, Yoga and Mindfulness, Journaling, Trauma Release Exercise (TRE), nature-based healing and meditation. Each group is led by an experienced facilitator. The sessions comprise different practices, sharing students' feelings, and relaxation time.

The centrality of personal mastery with its foundation rooted in mindfulness practices

The centrality of personal mastery is in recognition of the importance of youth developing an 'internal locus of control' and the importance of self-awareness. The CA believes that one cannot change what one is not aware of. If young people build the capacity to realise their potential and recognise the need to work with what arises moment by moment, they are able to build personal mastery and independence, and increase their resilience. A range of tools is taught, such as breathing practices, spending time in solitude, and techniques to manage emotions such as anger or anxiety.

Greater appreciation for a holistic approach to personal transformation

This implies that all aspects or dimensions of a student are recognised and catered for. The programme has a daily physical fitness routine, a strong focus on balanced nutrition with three meals a day and snacks in between, therapeutic care to assist with mental and emotional issues, and a programme of devotion to explore issues around the meaning of life and human beings' inter-connection with one another and the environment.

Deepening the use of rituals

The CA has always recognised the importance of ritual as an integral component of youth development, but over the last number of years, there has been an increase in the use of ritual as part of the teaching and learning process. Rituals provide a formality, a sense of occasion, a sense of predictability and a way of honouring youth experiences. Rituals include the hoisting of the SA flag; use of the 'council' methodology, which is a circle of students and facilitators where equality is respected and each one has an opportunity to speak without interruption; and the lighting of a candle for each course in honour of each student's journey. During the outdoor and after the solo experience, the facilitators wash the feet of students to honour their participation in the ritual of the solitary experience.

Re-Introduction of societies and clubs

Different clubs have been introduced such as debating clubs, conversational isiXhosa and arts and crafts to foster creativity and to respond to the broad range of interests of young people.

A renewed focus on formal and non-formal education

A strong focus on re-entering the formal education stream by completing matric, studying at Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) colleges or at universities through career days and career interviews, as the CA views education as a key driver of poverty alleviation and eradication.

Institutionalising a 12-month work placement after graduation

A 12-month work placement is provided to each student who completes the three-month programme to ensure the acquisition of practical work experience. This not only allows for youth to gain work experience and earn a stipend which contributes to the family income, but ensures that graduates are able to sustain the transformation that they have set in motion through their participation in the three-month programme. Placement organisations include local municipalities, the CA, local city improvement districts, and government departments. Although there are some teething problems with some placements, they remain a key

component of sustainable youth development for young people who are not in employment, education or training.

3.11 Family reintegration

The CA hosts three family workshops as it recognises the importance of family as one of the central socialising institutions for children and younger youth. Often some of the challenges faced by students emanate from within the family and their development is linked to the development of the family as a whole. The workshops focus on strategies to foster effective parenting, how to improve interpersonal communication and understanding youth development. Families are also kept abreast of the progress of the students during these three workshops as students are only allowed two face-to-face visits during the three months. In between these visits, they communicate through old-fashioned letter writing. The family reintegration component of the three months is largely sponsored by the Western Cape Department of Social Development (DSD).

3.12 The Chrysalis Academy as a trainer of youth instructors

In addition to the principles outlined above such as structure, order, regimentation and predictability as well as the holistic approach, the CA enacts the three-month programme through a corps of youth instructors who play the role of peer mentors and coaches. Instructors are all former students of the CA and are all defined as youth in the SA context. Youth instructors follow a training and development pathway after graduating as students. Generally, they undergo a one-month training programme to prepare them as junior instructors-in-training followed by ongoing on-the-job training as junior instructors-in-training. As they develop experience over time, and complete further training, they are absorbed into the CA establishment as junior instructors and then over time as senior instructors. The junior instructors teach the students the basics of bed making, drilling, and the code of conduct of the CA and accompany them on all their activities. Furthermore, they have room engagements with students on a range of topics such as code of conduct, gender reconciliation, and so forth.

3.13 Significance of the Chrysalis Academy name and logo

The name 'chrysalis' means a cocoon. Students enter the CA as an 'egg' or a 'caterpillar' and then step into the three-month cocoon (chrysalis). The cocoon is the space for transformation. As with the biological process of the caterpillar becoming a butterfly, the transmutation within the cocoon or chrysalis is a 'messy' process as the cocoon melts before the butterfly emerges. If the butterfly is removed from the cocoon before it is ready, the butterfly could die. It needs to emerge when it is strong and ready. The symbolism of the

cocoon and butterfly personify how the CA understands the transformation process. It may be different for every individual because of his/her experiences, but it is anticipated that the three-months programme may significantly impact on the individual at a physical, emotional, mental and spiritual level to allow for a self-transformation process to occur.

3.14 Challenges

Over the last few years, the CA management has recognised the following challenges that the programmes faces:

- Owing to the nature of a residential programme, including the cost per student, the number of students catered for is relatively small compared with the need in the WC province.
- Despite the fact that one of the strengths of the programme is the use of former students as youth instructors, this also poses a challenge as many of these youth instructors are young, relatively immature and are often still engaged in dealing with their own psychosocial issues.
- Although the CA services youth across the WC, it is difficult for some families, particularly those from rural areas, to attend the three family workshops as well as the family visits. All these engagements are simply too expensive to attend. This means that not all families derive the full benefit of the family integration programme.
- Although the programme is extremely well received in many communities and waiting lists to get onto the programme are long, there is among some a perception that the programme is for 'naughty boys' or drug addicts. Over the years however, this perception has changed significantly.
- Although the programme includes an after-care support component, the intensive nature of the annual programme and limited staff capacity do impact on the quality and depth of support that is provided. Dedicated capacity is required to ensure that the full range of services is provided to youth who have completed the programme.
- An ongoing challenge remains the poor quality of education that many black youth receive when at school, resulting in low levels of numeracy and literacy that impact on their ability not only to find meaningful work, but also to progress in their placements.

3.15 Evaluation studies of the Chrysalis Academy

Three academic studies have been conducted over the past 17 years, although the first one was more of an evaluative study.

The first one was an evaluation of the CA completed in 2003 by an independent consultant, Mr Herman Kotze. The evaluation study made a number of recommendations for

improvement of the programme, but the evaluator stated that, “in balance the overall finding is that the Chrysalis Academy is an unqualified success and it is deserving of the full support of the people of the Western Cape” (Kotze, 2003:1x)

Secondly, a master’s thesis was completed in March 2008 by Dayana Dreke titled “*Social integration of youth-at-risk through empowerment programmes*”. This was a case study focusing on the CA as an empowerment programme through which resilience can be built and youth can be integrated into communities. The researcher confirmed through her data collected that the CA’s programme contributed to the social integration of youth at risk. However, despite the positive results, she concluded that there was still room for improvement, particularly in relation to the after care and support of graduates.

Thirdly, a communications study was conducted by a group of Master of Business Administration (MBA) students from the Henley University in the United Kingdom in 2014. Their study focused on notions of reputation and responsibility in the context of their MBA studies, of which one module focused on Reputation and Responsibility. Their study used qualitative and quantitative methods to interview a number of CA stakeholders to assess, among others, their perception of how the CA communicates with its graduates. They proposed that the CA make specific interventions to improve on its service offering, which largely relate to establishing an entrepreneurship phase within the programme offering graduates the opportunity to do an apprenticeship with a social entrepreneur running small-to-medium enterprises. This they felt would provide the youth with more hands-on experience and build their confidence to find gainful employment (Kipepeo, 2014:25).

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the history, philosophical stance, programme and outcomes of the CA three-month residential programme. It is a programme aimed at youth aged 18–25 with no criminal record, resident in the Western Cape and with a minimum Grade 9 education. The three-month programme comprises various phases aimed at fostering leadership, cultivating resilience and promoting active citizenship. Upon graduation, students are placed on a 12-month work placement aimed at building a professional work ethic and gaining work experience. The CA provides a five-year aftercare programme, as it believes development is ongoing and that youth require mentoring and support on their journey. Since 2000, over 8000 youth have graduated. The CA programme rests on anchors of structure, discipline and regimentation, and a whole person approach.

Chapter 4 discusses the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

When we pay attention to what young people say and do, not only in the classroom but in interviews, we refer to the politics of knowing and being known (Gallagher, 2007:7).

4.1 Introduction

The fundamental question that this study seeks to explore is how do youth who are not in employment, education or training experience a holistic approach to personal transformation? I sought to align the research approach, choice of research design and methodology to achieve coherence throughout the data-collection and analysis process.

The chapter commences by outlining the dominant meta-theories in research and why a phenomenological approach, as one such dominant meta-theory, was selected. It then maps the research design and methodology. Narrative inquiry is discussed in detail as the methodological framework selected to generate rich data. The chapter delineates the processes of sampling, data collection, and analysis as well as the ethical considerations that guided the research study, with particular reference to my positionality as an employee of the organisation that I am studying. I also discuss how the practice of Mindfulness has informed how the interviews were conducted. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a summary of the essential elements of the chapter.

4.2 Meta-theories

Generally there are three influential meta-theories within which social research can be located (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:20). These are positivism, phenomenology, and critical theory. Historically, the two most dominant meta-theories have been positivism and phenomenology (Cohen et al., 2007:7). In general each meta-theory has a concomitant methodological paradigm associated with it: a quantitative approach has been associated with positivism; a qualitative approach with phenomenology; and action research with critical theory (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:49). The table below illustrates the general features of the two dominant metatheories.

Table 4.1: Features of the two main paradigms (Collis and Hussey, 1997:55)

Positivistic paradigm	Phenomenological paradigm
Tends to produce quantitative data	Tends to produce qualitative data
Uses large sample	Uses small samples
Concerned with hypothesis testing	Concerned with generating theories
Data is highly specific and precise	Data is rich and subjective
The location is artificial	The location is natural
Reliability is high	Reliability is low

Validity is low	Validity is high
Generalises from sample to population	Generalises from one setting to the other

This research study is a phenomenological study most suited to research that seeks to explore and understand people's perceptions and experiences of a particular phenomenon (Delpont et al., 2011:305). Inherent in a phenomenological approach is the tenet that people are continuously involved in "making sense of their world" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:28). As argued by Collis and Hussey (1997:53), a phenomenological study is aimed at understanding human behaviour from a respondent's "own frame of reference". This implies that the study is aimed at understanding how youth and parents perceive, understand and interpret their day-to-day experiences.

4.3 Research design

The research design can be understood as a roadmap to plot one's research journey in order to reach the final destination of arriving at answers to the research questions. Babbie and Mouton (2001:72) contend that the two important aspects of a research design are that the researcher should be clear what he/she wants to establish and then decide what is the most appropriate method to establish the answers. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2007:78) maintain that there is no one 'blueprint' for research. Any research design must however be "fit for purpose". A research design consists of a research framework and various tools and instruments that are employed to gather the required data.

4.3.1 Methodological framework: Narrative Inquiry

The research methodology refers to the research process and the tools and procedures that will be used (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:75). Clough (2002:86) notes that educational researchers should develop an "honesty and integrity of language" to state their 'moral positions' as well as their justification for the methods they choose. As the aim of this research was to explore youth experiences of a holistic approach from their frame of reference, I chose narrative inquiry as the methodological framework. Narrative inquiry has also been referred to as narratology or narrative research. Since the 1980s, these terms have been used almost interchangeably (Caine et al., 2013:574). This method of research arises from an interest to know more about people's lived experiences (Caine et al., 2013:575). Narrative inquiry, which is the term employed in this research study, is a method which is particularly useful in understanding the stories of respondents and the emotional impact on them of a range of phenomena such as poverty, crime and unemployment (Bleakley, 2005: 534). Furthermore, it provides a useful medium through which the voices of those who are marginalised can be heard, and by so doing possibly influence future policy, strategy, programmes, research and resource allocations (Elbaz-Luwisch, 2010:274). In this

research study, through their narratives, the youth respondents provided rich sources of data on how they made meaning of their world and in particular their experiences of a holistic approach (Bleakley, 2005:534).

McLaughlin and Heath (1993:214-215) argue that those who develop policy are not close to what happens on the ground and often rely on statistical reports and headlines in newspapers. They maintain that policy makers do not directly hear the voices of young people in their own contexts, including their 'frustrations' and 'fears', which tend to influence the belief among many youth that society has a disregard for them and their families. Furthermore, social scientists often attach more value to an "objective outside view" and less importance to the voice of 'insiders.' A need also exists for a bigger research focus on the more informal learning and how youth learn from one another, which may be referred to as the 'hidden curriculum' which they can best articulate (Gallagher, 2007:7).

The literature reviewed identifies different narratives that are not mutually exclusive: a *Life story* is a chronological account of a respondent's life; a *personal document* outlines short 'snippets' of experience; an *opinionated narrative* is a brief story outlining a respondent's views on a particular topic (Goodley & Clough, 2004:340). This research study tends to straddle all three areas of narrative inquiry.

Smyth and Hattam (2001:407) use the notion of 'voiced research', instead of the term narrative inquiry. 'Voiced research' seeks to include views that have previously been "excluded, muted or silenced". They argue that 'voiced research' is political in that it has a specific agenda of bringing to the fore "opportunities for expression that have been expunged" because of dominant views and the dominant discourse that has the power to silence voices on the margins. This form of research determines who gets to speak for whom. There are strong parallels between 'voiced research' and Gayatri Spivak's theory of "who speaks for whom and whether the subaltern can speak" (Spivak, 2010:21). 'Voiced research' illustrates a commitment towards a more democratic research agenda in that it provides a platform for young people to speak their voice (Smyth & Hattam, 2001:407). In doing this form of research, there is often a realisation that youth silence themselves, implying that they may not always have the language to describe their experiences (Smyth & Hattam, 2001:410). The researchers assert that doing 'voiced research' also means "confronting the conflicting and multiple worlds" in which young people live (Smyth & Hattam, 2001:412).

In a similar vein, Knaus, (2016:5) refers to "voice-centered research", which is critical, as schools generally tend to silence voices. Schools "perpetuate and justify racism" and usually do not teach 'voice' in schools (Knaus, 2014:439). Similarly, Clough (2002:67) contends that

the objective of research is largely that of “turning up the volume on the depressed or inaudible voice”.

Wolgemuth and Donohue (2006:1022) refer to the notion of ‘emancipatory’ narrative research. This form of inquiry is about bringing to light certain topics that may not easily be spoken of, such as homosexuality or sexual abuse. The process of bringing to light certain issues changes the lives of participants. ‘Emancipatory’ narrative research has the potential to be transformative for both researcher and respondents as it involves an “inquiry of discomfort”. When the participants share very deeply about their personal lives, the process itself forms an integral part of personal transformation (Wolgemuth & Donohue, 2006:1027). They point out that this form of inquiry places a huge responsibility on the researcher in that the researcher needs to ask how far he/she may go with a particular line of questioning, and consider the impact of the line of questioning on the participants.

Although most researchers who use narrative inquiry recognise the relational dimension of this form of research, Clandinin et al. (2010:81) specifically describe narrative inquiry as ‘relational inquiry’. This means that they too emphasise how participation in narrative inquiry influences the lives of all the participants. It is in the context of relations that participants begin to understand tensions that “live between people”. One is not able to study experience without appreciating that experience is a ‘storied phenomenon’ (Clandinin et al., 2010:82). Narrative research contributes to personal and social development, as it involves a process of “deliberate storying, and re-storying” one’s life or the life of a group.

Clandinin et al. (2010:82) maintain that researchers engaged in narrative inquiry

... do not stand outside the lives of participants, but see themselves as part of the phenomenon under study. As narrative inquirers, we study the lives of participants, as we come alongside them and become part of their lives and they part of ours. Therefore our lives and who we are and are becoming on their and our landscape is also under study.

This view is similar to that echoed by Jörg (2009:1) who draws from the seminal work of Vygotsky (1981) and argues that it is in a “web of reciprocal relations with others” that we ‘co-create’ ourselves, pointing to the possible transformational aspects of research. The relational aspects of life are particularly relevant for youth, as children and youth grow and develop in the context of many relationships like families, schools and religious institutions as discussed in Chapter 2. In fact, Kramer (2007:3) maintains that an enormous amount of our suffering in life is therefore in relationship to other people. He asserts that:

Many of our stresses in life arise in relation to other people; much of our imprisonment, fear, and longing have to do with relationships. Our relational lives are often quagmires where ignorance is fostered and sustained (Kramer, 2007:15).

He argues that not only are we complex social beings, but our identities evolve in relation to others (Kramer, 2007:80).

Although this research study uses the term 'narrative inquiry', my approach is heavily influenced by the interpretation of 'voice' offered by Smyth and Hattam (2001:407) and Knaus (2016:5). The study therefore incorporates tools that enabled both youth respondents and their parents' voices to be heard. The voice of parents was solicited to explore how they experienced the influence of a holistic experience on the youth in their care. The voice of the parents ensured source and data triangulation, discussed later in this chapter. Hearing the voices of *both* youth and their parents or guardians was critical in gaining insight into how young people's exposure to a holistic approach may or may not have influenced them, and how their participation in the programme was perceived by the parents or guardians.

Schonert-Reichl (2000:10) argues that it is particularly important to gather data that allows children and youth to describe their perceptions of their experiences. She points out that many researchers have expressed concern about the lack of descriptive and qualitative research that illustrates children and young people's own interpretation of their experience, as this data has the possibility of influencing the implementation of effective programmes. Gallagher (2007:7) reminds us:

When we pay attention to what young people say and do not only in the classroom but in interviews, we refer to the politics of knowing and being known.

By drawing our attention to this point, the author seeks to give effect to the work of Spivak (1988) who points out that it is critical to listen to the voices of those who are normally seen as others and hear them as "constructors, agents and disseminators of knowledge" (Gallagher, 2007:8). In similar vein, Hopkins (2013:3), points out that not only do strategies need to be contextually specific and address the meanings that people involved give to them, but they need to be framed in the form of a narrative that links a lived past to a desired future outcome.

4.3.2 Data collection

To give expression to the 'voice' of parents and youth, the interview method was chosen. Heath et al. (2009:79) are of the view that qualitative interviews are generally the most used method when working with youth. They maintain that as youth are often marginalised, the interview can therefore be a valuable "expression of voice".

Patton (1980:206) distinguishes four types of interviews: informal conversational interviews, interview guides, standardised open-ended questions and closed qualitative interviews. Cohen et al. (2007:358), on the other hand, delineate interviews as structured, unstructured, non-directive or focused. In this research study, the instrument for primary data collection

was a semi-structured face-to-face interview, using an interview guide with each respondent to allow for the exploration of his or her experiences (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:76). A semi-structured interview is a formal engagement between researcher and respondent where the respondent is asked a series of questions through an interview guide or schedule that the researcher has developed (Collis & Hussey, 1997:167). A semi-structured interview is often used when the researcher has a 'clear focus' in the research, in this case the exploration of a holistic approach (Heath et al., 2009:80). Semi-structured interviews, however, have sufficient flexibility for data collection, as they allow for "many sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, heard and spoken" (Cohen et al., 2007:349). Furthermore, a semi-structured interview enables the respondent not to be restricted in telling his/her story (Greeff, 2011:352). The issues that are discussed could change from one interview to the next owing to the process of 'open discovery' in response to different aspects of the topic being 'voiced' by the respondent (Collis & Hussey, 1997:168).

Drawing on the work of Yin (2003), all interviews were conducted as conversations. Yin (2003:89) refers to "guided conversations rather than structured queries". He argues that interviews can be open-ended or more focused in pursuance of a line of enquiry. Using Yin's interpretation, the interviews were open-ended, meaning that although they followed a set of questions that I wanted to investigate, they nevertheless allowed for a conversation to take place with sufficient probing (Yin, 2003:90).

Some of the challenges associated with face-to-face interviews are that they are time-consuming and expensive, but they offer the researcher direct access to the world of the respondent, which is the essence of narrative inquiry.

The units of analysis in this research study are youth respondents and their parents or guardians. Two interview schedules were designed: one for the youth and the other for their parents or guardians, attached as **Appendix C** and **Appendix D** respectively. The questions went through a number of iterations before they were finalised to ensure that the appropriate data were collected to answer the research questions. Only the youth respondent interview schedule was piloted by having an interview with an intern based at the Chrysalis Academy who had completed the three-month programme. The student interview schedule was piloted on 6 September 2016. The conversation took almost two hours, resulting in two questions (Question 5 and 32 in **Appendix C**) being refined to make them clearer. The intern, who named herself 'Purple Bubble', remarked that she enjoyed the interview as it took her back to her three-month journey. The objective of the pilot was to ensure that the questions were clear and unambiguous. Pilot testing an interview guide is particularly useful as it helps in identifying researcher bias and experimenting with the data-collection method (Chenail,

2011:257). The interview schedule for the parents or guardians was much shorter and specific and I therefore felt no need to pilot the questions.

4.3.3 Sampling

I chose five youth respondents and their parents or guardians, through the process of sampling, totalling ten respondents. Sampling is the process of choosing observations (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:164). Two forms of sampling can be identified: probability and non-probability sampling (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:166). Probability sampling refers to the use of “precise statistical techniques” (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:273). With non-probability sampling, the researcher chooses which ‘subsets’ of the population to choose (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:202). Non-probability sampling is a form of sampling where the researcher targets a particular group with the full knowledge that the sample does not represent the entire population (Cohen et al., 2007:78). However, the sample chosen best represented my needs and was selected based on my judgement.

I solicited volunteers for the study using the Chrysalis Academy Facebook page, which is a site frequented by some CA graduates. An email was posted on the Facebook page in September 2016, outlining the purpose of the research and the process to be followed in the interviews. A copy of the email is attached as **Appendix E**. About 32 responses were received immediately, with many more ‘liking’ the post and sharing it but not indicating their availability. From the list of respondents, and using nonprobability *purposive sampling*, five youth respondents were selected (Bailey, 1987:94). The five respondents were contacted telephonically and through email to confirm their willingness to participate in the research study. The purposive method of sampling was chosen as it is less complicated and the emphasis was on the depth of the information being sought, as opposed to focusing on the representivity and size of the sample (Bailey, 1987:87).

The Inclusion criteria for the five youth respondents were:

- those who had completed the three months programme over the last five years;
- had been back in their communities at least for six months. The rationale for the six-month period was to ensure that there was a form of integration back into the families after the three-month programme;
- were representative of the demographics of the Western Cape, including where possible youth from areas where the burden of poverty is high (Stats SA, 2016: 64-74); and

- gender representivity.

Selecting the five parents or guardians was done through a form of **snowball sampling**, in that each of the five youth respondents was asked to suggest one parent or guardian who could be interviewed to speak about how he/she perceived the influence or impact of a holistic approach on the youth respondent. I made telephonic contact with the parent or guardian to enquire whether he/she would be willing to participate in the interview. The table below presents the pseudonyms of the respondents, some of their biographical details and their residential areas.

Table 4.2: Tabulation of data sources

No	Data source	Gender	Race	Area of residence
	Youth respondents			
1.	Jacob	Male	Coloured	Macassar
2.	Gary	Male	Coloured	Paarl East
3.	Timothy	Male	Coloured	Mitchells Plain
4.	Libo	Male	African	Kuils River
5.	Vatiswa	Female	African	Kayamandi
	Parents or guardians			
6.	Mother of Jacob	Female	Coloured	Macassar
7.	Father of Gary	Male	Coloured	Paarl East
8.	Mother of Timothy	Female	Coloured	Mitchells Plain
9.	Guardian of Libo	Female	African	Kuils River
10.	Mother of Vatiswa	Female	African	Kayamandi

4.3.4 Setting up and conducting the interviews

In line with some of the literature noted above on the importance of interviews, Cohen et al. (2007:361) caution us that interviews are not just data-collection exercises, but are “social interpersonal encounters”. They are “part of life itself” (Cohen et al., 2007:349). I therefore

prepared carefully for each interview and followed a general structure to ensure that all logistical and ethical requirements were met. I travelled to the homes or venues suggested by each respondent on a date and time agreed to.

Once respondents had agreed to the interview, the timetable for the interviews was adhered to. I arrived on time for each interview. After the formalities of greeting all the respondents, I thanked each one for agreeing to the interview. Respondents were requested to be comfortable and I informed them that the interviews could be seen as conversations about their experiences. I explained the objective of the research, the nature of the interview, and went through the consent letter. I also informed them that the interviews would be recorded and obtained their informed consent to participate in the interview and to have the interview recorded. Once they had agreed to and were comfortable with the process, they signed the consent form. The audio-recording machine was then switched on and respondents were asked to speak as loudly as they could.

All interviews were conducted in English, but as discussed in Chapter 5, some respondents switched from English to Afrikaans, and I obliged with some of the questions in Afrikaans. I am fluent in both English and Afrikaans and experienced no problems in code switching.

The order of the questions was followed in accordance with the schedule, except when respondents answered a question while addressing another. I probed many of the responses, which generated further answers and questions. This differed from respondent to respondent. Generally interviews with youth respondents lasted between 90 and 180 minutes, while the interviews with their parents or guardians were generally shorter, lasting between 45 and 60 minutes. Data collection commenced in September 2016 and ended mid-January 2017.

4.4 The researcher as an instrument of data collection

Although the interview was selected as the method of data collection, the notion of the researcher as the instrument of data collection is equally important (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003:418). They point out that as the researcher is the person collecting, analysing and interpreting the data, he/she can therefore also be the 'Achilles heel' of the research project. Some of the issues that could pose a possible threat to the research project include: a researcher's discomfort in the interview as a result of the topic; not being sufficiently prepared; not doing member checks on the findings; conducting the interviews in an unprofessional manner; and superficial analyses of the data (Poggenpoel & Myburgh, 2003: 419-420). They draw on the work of other researchers such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) with regard to strategies to maintain trustworthiness and the credibility of the research study, discussed later in this chapter. Suffice to say, Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2003) refer to

strategies such as triangulation, reflexivity and peer review methods as means to counter the threats posed by researchers themselves. In Chapter 7, I discuss how I managed some of the threats that they allude to. However it is important to state that as researcher, I was guided not only by the framework of narrative inquiry, but also by the practice and principles of Mindfulness, more specifically during the interviews, as they involved deep listening to all the respondents. I must acknowledge that I have not seen much in the literature on research methodology on best practices in narrative inquiry; in other words, how the researcher is guided through the process of inquiry.

4.5 Mindfulness and its application in interviews

Essentially, mindfulness means paying attention to what is happening in the moment, without desiring anything else. Chaskalson (2011:xiii) defines it as a “way of paying attention, in the present moment, to yourself, others and the world around you”. Schuyler (2010:27) describes it as “the process of learning to pay attention and be aware of what one is sensing and noticing”. Mindfulness has been made popular in mainstream society, largely but not exclusively through the work of Kabat-Zinn in the late 1970s (Kabat-Zinn, 2004:8). However it has its origin in Buddhist traditions with the original goal being that of self-realisation (Analāyo, 2006:27). More than 2 500 years ago, Siddharta, commonly referred to as the *Buddha*, addressed his followers on what he called the four foundations of mindfulness: mindfulness of the body, mindfulness of the mind, mindfulness of feelings, and mindfulness of objects of the mind (Hanh, 2012:118-119). In the context of the interviews, this means that the researcher pays attention to these four dimensions of mindfulness.

Kramer (2007:109-163), an international teacher of Mindfulness, proposes a methodology that is helpful in paying attention, no matter what is said by the respondent, and conveying what is said in a truthful and honest manner. This methodology incorporates the following elements:

- Pausing
- Relaxing
- Being open
- Trust emergence
- Listen deeply
- Speak the truth

These processes refer to being open to what is being said; trusting what is emerging and listening deeply. Kramer (2007:150) describes the process:

Listen deeply opens the senses, heart and mind to receive this moment fully. To listen deeply is to listen with mindfulness, surrendering fully to the unfolding words and presence of others in our lives. We are a receptive field touched by the words, emotions, and energies of our fellow human beings, grounded in clear awareness and sensitive to the speaker's offering ... The ears are attuned, but the heart too is open. You are listening to a fellow human being. Listen with kindness. Let the words, the stories, touch a compassionate heart.

Kramer (2007:152) reminds us that it is important to note that a respondent's words, "may trigger my story" in a conversation. This view resonates with the views of Poggenpoel and Myburgh (2003:419), referring to discomforts experienced by the researcher in the interview process. However, it is critical to absorb all that is happening, "without reaching out or going anywhere" (Kramer, 2007:155). The process of listening implies that we listen to "meaning, emotions and presence", which means that words carry meaning, have emotional overtones, and indicate a quality of presence. We pay attention to pauses, tone of voice, facial expressions and gestures, and posture. Mindfulness assists us in paying close attention to that which we may otherwise miss (Kramer, 2007:155). He points out that emotion is revealed in "prosody, pauses and vocal timbre".

When we shift from focussed listening – to meanings, emotions or energetic presence – to a wide listening, the overall flow and direction of the dialogue is more easily perceived. Rather than attend to individual words, we allow the river of sound to pour over us and reveal its larger contours ... The different facets of our communication may merge into a gestalt, or whole pattern, of changing experience. As we dwell in this gestalt, we attune to others (Kramer, 2007:157).

Kramer's views give poignant expression to the experiences of many researchers who use narrative inquiry and who argue that all participants are transformed in the interview process. In Chapter 7, dealing with my reflections and my personal narrative, I reflect on how mindfulness influenced my deep listening in the interviews and my responses to the stories of the respondents.

4.6 Data processing and analysis

4.6.1 Transcriptions

Before analysing any data, it needs to be transformed into a "form appropriate to manipulation and analysis" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:98). After the interviews, the data were downloaded onto my computer and sent via a web-based system for transcription by an independent private company. Each set of recordings took about five to nine days to transcribe.

Cohen et al. (2007:367) caution correctly that during the process of transcription, data does get lost as it is a process of translating one "set of rule systems", which is the oral and interpersonal to another "remote rule system" (written language). They argue that because transcriptions abstract from the "live social interactive, dynamic and fluid dimensions" to something 'frozen', it is important not to lose sight of all aspects of the social interaction

(Cohen et al., 2007:367). Taking heed of their advice, I not only read each transcription a few times, but combined this with listening to each audio-recording and referring to my field notes.

4.6.2 Data analysis

The data was scanned and cleaned manually. It was then analysed using conceptual content analysis (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:493). Each transcription was read from start to the end. At the first level, various categories were highlighted using different coloured pens. The categories were then tabulated for all the transcriptions. The next step was to thematise the categories, using some of the key concepts that emerged in Chapter 2. I then consolidated the variety of themes into 21 themes, making sure that all the categories were covered.

A holistic approach was followed by looking at the story narrated by each participant as a whole. This meant looking at the content and form of how the story unfolded (Bleakley, 2005:534). Data from the reflective journal that I kept throughout my fieldwork was also analysed in a thematic manner and integrated into the discussions, particularly in the section where I reflect on my experiences in Chapter 7. The themes were then explored against the set of questions posed in Chapter 1. Cohen et al. (2007:370) point out that it is critically important to ensure that the researcher maintains a “sense of the holism of the interview” while analysing the data, as there is often an inclination to fragment the data into smaller parts. Listening to the interview ensures that the focus remains on the interview as a whole. I then convened a panel of peers active in the field of youth development to discuss the various themes that emerged. This process served as a form of validation of the themes by outside reviewers as well as assisting in the consolidation of the themes.

The themes were then interpreted and analysed in the context of the three research questions.

4.7 Commitment to research standards

With any credible research study, the researcher has an obligation to be rigorous in pursuit of the truth and not to be biased in the way phenomena are described and interpreted (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:273). With qualitative data, where the researcher seeks to come close to the respondents to generate meaningful data, objectivity can still be maintained through the criteria of credibility and trustworthiness.

4.7.1 Credibility and trustworthiness

The work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) is important in understanding the notion of objectivity in qualitative research. Conventional terms used to indicate trustworthiness of the data are

internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, whereas qualitative inquiry revolves around notions of trustworthiness and credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:218). Trustworthiness of data is tested through four processes: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:189).

Credibility and trustworthiness refer to the extent to which the reader is able to have confidence in the integrity of the data. Over the last few years, great strides have been made to show the rigour and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Shenton, 2004:75). Aspects of trustworthiness include, but are not limited to, issues of *credibility* (the data that is presented is what was elicited from respondents); *transferability* (sufficient information is provided of the context in which the fieldwork took place); and *confirmability* (that the findings arise from the data, and not from a researcher's own views) (Shenton, 2004:63). Lincoln and Guba (1985:218) point out the following questions that must be asked of any naturalistic or phenomenological inquiry:

- How can a reader develop confidence in the 'truth' of the data?
- How can one determine the extent to which the findings of a research study may be applicable to other contexts?
- How can one determine whether the findings of one research study can be repeated if the research was done in the same or a similar context?
- How can one establish that the findings are derived from the "characteristics of the respondents" and perspectives of the "biases, motivations, interests and perspectives" of the researcher?

The table below by Lincoln and Guba (1985:328) presents trustworthiness in a research study.

Table 4.3: Summary of techniques for establishing trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:328)

Criterion	Technique
Credibility	(1) Activities in the field that increase the probability of high credibility: (a) prolonged engagement (b) persistent observation (c) triangulation (sources, methods, and investigators) (2) peer debriefing (3) negative case analysis (4) referential adequacy

	(5) member checks (in process and terminal)
Transferability	(6) thick description
Dependability	(7a) the dependability audit, including the audit trail
Confirmability	(7b) the confirmability audit, including the audit trail
All of the above	(8) the reflexive journal

Elo et al. (2014:3), identified a checklist for researchers seeking to improve the trustworthiness of a content analysis study. Although their research is largely in the domain of nursing science studies, it nevertheless is applicable to educational research and I used it as a checklist during this study and at the stage of writing the final chapter.

Table 4.4: Checklist for researchers to improve trustworthiness (Elo et al., 2014:3)

Phase of the content analysis study	Questions to check	My checklist
Preparation phase	Data collection method	
	How do I collect the most suitable data for my content analysis?	Guided by research questions
	Is this method the best available to answer the targeted research question	Yes
	Should I use either descriptive or semi-structured questions?	Semi-structured
	Self-awareness: What are my skills as a researcher?	Mindfulness training; research experience; support from supervisor
	How do I pre-test my data- collection method?	One pilot
	Sampling strategy	
	What is the best sampling method for my study?	Non-probability sampling
	Who are the best informants for my study?	Youth and parents
	What criteria should be used to select the participants?	The criteria have been detailed
	Is my sample appropriate?	Yes
	Is my data saturated?	Yes
	Selecting the unit of analysis	
	What is the unit of analysis?	Youth and parents
	Is the unit of analysis too narrow or too broad?	Appropriate

Organization phase	Categorization and abstraction	
	How should the concepts or categories be created?	Through an identification of themes
	Are there still too many concepts?	No
	Is there any overlap between categories?	Yes, there is overlap between categories
	Interpretation	
	What is the degree of interpretation in the analysis?	Fairly extensive
	How do I ensure that the data accurately represent the information that the participants provided?	I listened to the audio-recordings, and tabulated the narratives from the transcripts
	Representativeness	
	How do I check the trustworthiness of the analysis process?	Use of a reflective journal. I also listened to the audio-recordings
	How do I check the representativeness of the data as a whole	Re-reading the transcriptions
Reporting phase	Reporting results	
	Are the results reported systematically and logically?	Yes
	How are connections between the data and the results reported?	Ongoing review whether there is a golden thread running through the data and the results
	Is the structure and content of the concepts presented in a clear and understandable way?	Yes
	Can the reader evaluate the transferability of the results (are the data, sampling method, and participants described in a detailed manner)	Yes
	Are quotations used systematically?	Yes
	How well do the categories cover the data?	Fairly well
	Are there similarities within and differences between categories?	Many similarities
	Is scientific language used to convey the results	As far as possible, the language of the participants is used
	Reporting analysis process	
	Is there a full description of the analysis process?	Yes
	Is the trustworthiness of the content analysis discussed based on some criteria?	Yes

I now define the process of triangulation, before discussing how this study complied with credibility and trustworthiness.

4.7.2 Triangulation

Triangulation is seen as an operational technique to enhance the credibility of a research study. Triangulation refers to the process where the researcher uses more than one method or technique in the same study, thereby contributing directly to the trustworthiness and credibility of the data as well as insights gained (Collis & Hussey, 1997:78). This use of more than one technique enables the researcher to explore a phenomenon from more than one angle, thereby enhancing the richness of the data (Cohen et al, 2007:141). Lincoln and Guba (1985:283) state:

No single item of information (unless coming from an elite and unimpeachable source) should ever be given serious consideration unless it can be triangulated.

It is important to note however that triangulation must form part of a good research design, and cannot be used to remediate a poor research design (Collis & Hussey, 1997:78).

4.7.3 Strategies employed to enhance credibility and trustworthiness

This study complied with the requirements for credibility and trustworthiness as evidenced by the following activities:

Credibility: Each audio-recording was individually transcribed by an independent transcription company. All respondents were asked whether they wanted to review the transcriptions, and three youth respondents took up this offer. With the data analysis process, all transcriptions were read and quotations were often cited directly from the transcriptions. Credibility was further enhanced through the triangulation of data sources and a peer review panel convened to review the themes that emerged from the data. Triangulation was effected through the two sets of data collected from youth respondents and parents or guardians, literature reviewed, use of a reflective journal and my participation in a peer-review panel. The reflective journal was used to record my reflections after each interview, including what I observed during the interview and my emotions on hearing the stories shared by the respondents. I also recorded whether the respondent had difficulty in recalling certain facts or did not explain things too clearly or was biased in his/her responses – all of which are common problems encountered in interviews (Yin, 2003:92). A peer-review panel consisted of an engagement with two peers not involved in the study, but who work with youth development. They were a sounding board during the analysis of the data where I presented some of the themes that emerged from the data.

Transferability: This chapter and Chapter 5 provide information on the context in which the fieldwork took place, making transferability possible.

Confirmability: As illustrated in Chapters 5 and 6, the findings emanate directly from the primary data generated as well as from the secondary data outlined in the literature review.

4.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are critical in any research, more so when researchers are “attending to, inquiring into and representing participants’ experiences” (Clandinin et al., 2010:88). Furthermore, with narrative inquiry, researchers need to be particularly mindful, as the lives of respondents do not end with the research (Clandinin, 2006:5). There is therefore a responsibility that researchers have to work with care with the personal stories told by respondents.

As argued by Clandinin (2006:5), naming narrative inquiry as relational inquiry

... calls us to consider our long-term responsibilities, responsibilities that may not end when we negotiate that final research text but that may linger and reappear, may, in some sense, haunt us, for neither our lives nor the lives of our participants end when we hand in our dissertations or write our final research texts. Lives continue.

Cohen et al. (2007:52) argue that the foundation of ethical procedures is informed consent. They point out that the following principles are inherent in informed consent:

- Competence
- Voluntarism
- Full information
- Comprehension (Cohen et al., 2007:53)

The principles imply that respondents in a research study must be competent to participate, do so voluntarily on the basis of a full disclosure by the researcher and they must understand what the research is about. The process of informed consent is something that needs to be negotiated with respondents throughout the research study. Other ethical principles that guided this research study included confidentiality, obtaining ethical clearance for the research, managing all data in a sound manner, and being sensitive to the respondents so that no harm was done to their wellbeing during their participation in the research project.

Before commencing with data collection, I applied to the Chrysalis Academy Board for permission to commence the research involving graduates. Once I received permission from the Board to pursue the research, I submitted my application to the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee for clearance to proceed with the research. The letter to the Chairperson of the Chrysalis Academy is attached as **Appendix F**. The ethical clearance certificate is

attached as **Appendix G**. Data collection commenced in September 2016, once permission had been granted by the CPUT Faculty of Education Ethics Committee.

Respondents were informed of the process and purpose of the research prior to each interview in an email communication with the letter of informed consent. The consent form is attached as **Appendix H**. All respondents interviewed signed a consent form. To give effect to the principle of confidentiality, I requested each youth respondent to provide a pseudonym to be used in the final report. The same pseudonym suggested by the youth respondent was used for their caregivers or parents. Hence, the names of the respondents were protected throughout the research process and in the final research report. However, as discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, all the youth respondents wanted their own names to be used. This need expressed to use their own names, possibly speaks to the desire of young people to have their voices heard and acknowledged. As my ethical clearance application enunciated confidentiality with regard to the identity of the respondents, I decided to assign pseudonyms, but wish to acknowledge their desire in not wanting to keep their identities a secret. I highlighted that no major risks to the respondents were envisaged, and that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any stage, or refuse to answer questions that made them feel uncomfortable. I was very mindful that I did not wish the respondents to experience any psychological harm, secondary trauma or intense discomfort as a result of their participation in the interviews. I discuss this critical aspect under my reflections in Chapter 7. Fortunately, although, the discussions were sometimes emotional, the respondents reported no major discomfort during the interviews. I also informed all the respondents that they should contact me should any discomfort arise after the interview. None was reported.

Respondents were also assured that I would use all means to secure the data that was collected and that rules of confidentiality would apply to the transcriber of the data.

4.9 My positionality

I am part of the team that engages with the holistic approach to personal transformation at the Chrysalis Academy; hence the study took cognisance of the principles guiding insider research (Costley et al., 2010:25-43). As researchers doing qualitative research, the stories that are shared with us, including how they are told, are influenced by our position and research experience in relation to the respondents (Greene, 2014:1). Insider research is a form of research where one studies an organisation or area of work where one is actively involved. However Greene (2014:2) argues that both insider and outsider researchers have to contend with similar methodological issues. She points out that there are differences in how each position may be regarded, how it affects the data that is gathered and how the data is analysed. She argues that insider research is 'complex', but that it has many benefits and opportunities (Greene, 2014:11). However, she maintains that although much has been

written about insider research, there is insufficient documentation on how to do this form of research. Drawing on experiences of other researchers, Greene (2014:3) highlights the following advantages and disadvantages of insider research:

Advantages

- Insider researchers have intimate knowledge of the research environment and respondents.
- Insider research may be more natural than that of an outsider who has to become familiar with the research environment and respondents.
- Being an insider may mean easier access.

Disadvantages

- Insider research could be seen as too subjective.
- Insider researcher may be seen as 'inherently biased'.

Greene (2014:5) points out additional methodological issues with insider research with regard to how the data is gathered and analysed. These are:

- Objectivity may be difficult for an insider researcher as a result of his/her involvement in the research environment and the respondents.
- Again drawing on the work of researchers, and in particular Lincoln and Guba (1985), she points out that the inclination to 'go native' may be as a result of prolonged engagement with the literature (Greene, 2014:5). 'Going native' may therefore compromise the validity of the data.
- Gaining access could also be seen to be a problem, as the insider researcher could be seen as too much of an insider, and hence disclosure of information may not be too forthcoming.
- Confidentiality may be an issue.
- Power struggles could also be an issue.

Similarly, Costley et al. (2010:6) outline certain considerations when embarking on work-based insider research, such as the potential bias in researching one's own practice, lack of impartiality, and a vested interest in a particular outcome of the research. However, despite the potential pitfalls, Greene (2014:7) argues that there are techniques and tools that can assist the insider researcher to deal with some of the methodological challenges. She argues that issues identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985) on how a study can maintain credibility and

trustworthiness tabulated above in Table 4.3 can assist in limiting or avoiding methodological issues.

The notion of reflexivity is critical for any researcher, but more importantly for the insider researcher. Chapter 7 discusses the processes that I employed in more detail. These relate to being mindful of bias and being vigilant in assuming and presuming what interviewees mean. The use of the reflective journal enabled me to reflect on my stance in the interviewing process with regard to bias and possible presumptions.

Despite the potential challenges, insiders ought not to be precluded from doing rigorous research and from drawing on the trust that may exist between respondents and the researcher. It is imperative that practitioners not be precluded from engaging in research to deepen both their practice and their theoretical framework, for fear that their research may be labelled 'subjective'. There are ways in which an insider researcher can guard against bias, such as triangulation and evaluation of data (Costley et al., 2010:6).

Brannick and Coghlan (2007:59) argue that within all streams of research, there is no reason why 'being native' is an issue and that insider research is worth 're-affirming'. 'Being native' can be of great benefit in research. Breen (2007:163), while doing his PhD research, chose to consider himself as neither an insider nor an outsider. He argues that the insider/outsider dichotomy is too 'simplistic' and that the distinction does not fully explain the role of all researchers. Instead, the role of researchers is better conceptualised as being on a 'continuum', and he considered himself in his research as somewhere in the middle (Breen, 2007:163). For him, rigour was enhanced through the data collection and analysis by employing triangulation, having a comprehensive audit trail, and providing detailed descriptions on the context within which the research took place.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the dominant meta-theories in social science research. These are positivism, phenomenology, and critical theory. Phenomenology is discussed as the meta-theory best able to explore people's lived experiences and how they make meaning of their worlds. The research design and methodological framework were then discussed. Narrative inquiry was selected to enable youth and parent voices to be heard about their experiences of a holistic approach. Narrative inquiry enables voices that are often on the periphery to be heard. The interview as the method for data collection was discussed, as well as the role of the researcher as the instrument of data collection. The chapter further discussed issues around sampling, ethical considerations and how I was guided by an application of mindfulness during the research process in general, but particularly during the interviews. As I engage in my full-time work with the holistic approach, I discussed the

sensitivities and pitfalls in respect of insider research. However, as indicated, being an insider does not preclude rigorous research. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

Chapter 5 presents the findings that emanated from the ten face-to-face interviews that were conducted over a five month period.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

The 21st century is experiencing a critical mass of ethnographers who are moving beyond telling journalistic, apologetic, 'rogue' stories about marginalized peoples. This generation of scholars promises to change the way we understand marginalized populations and to dislodge those gatekeepers who claim to speak for the masses (Rios, 2011:174)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings emanating from the ten face-to-face interviews that I conducted over a period of approximately five months. It commences with the five youth respondents providing insights into their lived experiences prior to joining the Chrysalis Academy, their experiences during the three-month programme and their overall reflections of the holistic approach that underpinned the programme. Within the spirit of narrative inquiry, reference is made, as far as possible, directly to the voices of all the respondents, including the use of their home languages, which may not be English. I wanted to capture the authenticity of their voices, hence the retention of their language usage. However, where appropriate, I provide translations into English as footnotes.

5.2 Introducing the youth respondents

This section provides a window into the lived experiences of five young people who offered their time to participate in the research project. I read each transcription and listened to the audio-recordings of the interviews. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of all the respondents in accordance with my ethical clearance conditions. I wish to note that all five respondents expressed a desire for their real names to be used in the study. The request to use their names has deep implications for hurt and traumatised youth who constantly search for meaning in their lives and an identity that needs to be enhanced and restored. I found it interesting how the use of their authentic names created a tension between the wishes of the youth and the notions of ethical conduct in academe.

In an attempt to stay faithful to "what young people say and do" (Gallagher, 2007:7), I chose to pen the biographical stories in the first person as if the youth were authoring their own stories. The language, tense and style are kept as close as possible to how they voiced their experiences. Their stories detail much of what they shared in the interviews. I believe that some of the respondents' straddling of English and Afrikaans (two of the dominant languages in the Western Cape province where the study was conducted) not only demonstrates language versatility, but also illustrates how youth use code switching and 'play' with language to construct the most appropriate meanings of their experiences. No story is authored in the same way; the length, flow and content of each interview varies, depending on the level of detail with which the respondents chose to engage with the questions that were posed to them in the respective conversations. The views of their parents are

integrated into the biographical stories, as they provide further texture and richness to our understanding of the lives and experiences of the young people. Direct quotations are placed in inverted commas, where I intuitively felt that the verbatim words used by the parents or guardians best conveyed their sentiments. The triangulation of the parents' stories confirms much of what the young people shared about their lives in general and their experiences of the holistic approach in particular.

I encountered many similarities in how the youth had been socialised during their childhood and early adolescent years as evidenced by the stories. Although I found broad similarities in the narratives, I hope that the similarities are illuminating ones, not based on ignorance of differences. Spivak (1990:228) cautions us eloquently that the place where all human beings are similar is lodged in their being different. The respondents live in working-class communities that are still spatially defined by the legacy of apartheid (the statutory separation of communities based on race as promulgated in the Group Areas Act, No. 41 of 1950). I encountered openness, honesty, laughter and a reflective stance during our conversations. Some of the youth showed visible emotion, particularly around issues of family connections and interpersonal relationships. All of them, in one form or the other, attached importance to family and the need to connect and belong. I was humbled by the courage and open-heartedness they displayed when discussing issues of domestic violence, gender identity, death and lack of support within the family. Some parts of the conversations were incredibly animated, and my personal reflections, including my own visceral responses and experiences, are discussed in more detail in the final chapter of this thesis.

Both the youth and their parents alluded to township life as characterised by poverty, unemployment, crime, gangsterism and substance abuse. It is very compelling however, that four out of the five young people who spoke about challenges in their communities never used the word 'poor' to describe themselves and their families. Four of the youth respondents shared that their parents had not completed their schooling, performed domestic work, or worked in the informal economy. Four of them were unemployed when they started the programme. The fifth left his work before starting the programme, as he wanted to further his education and thought that the Chrysalis programme could be that 'gateway'. Two of the respondents had matric and one a post-matric diploma. One exited school early in Grade 11 as a result of his mother's death, and one exited because of his suspension from school for drug use and sales to other learners, and subsequently enrolled at a TVET college. All youth and their parents reported changes experienced by the youth as a consequence of their participation in the three-month programme.

The biographical stories are presented in no particular order. However, they are presented individually to provide a holistic overview of each of their lives.

I regret perpetuating the old apartheid racial categories in this thesis, but the different life experiences of the various ethnic groups in South Africa are likely to have resulted in different experiences and life narratives among the youth.

Narrative One

Jacob's story

"As a child you go through trauma".

I am a 25-year-old coloured male residing in Macassar. I live with both parents and four other siblings. Since birth, I have lived in the same area, completing my primary and high school education. In my community, there are two to three primary schools and two high schools, but people are always hanging around on street corners, like they are purposeless. Crime and violence is rampant. My community is disorganised; there are no more shacks, but children and families are neglected. Dropouts from school are high. I have never used alcohol, dagga or any other drugs.

Although I could think critically, I was always very shy. I think it was more like a kind of fear to get exposure; it's like fear of the unknown. However, when I was in Grade 10, there were quite a few moments when I knew that I wanted to improve my life. During my school years, things were not adequate at home for me to study and I often used the library. I really started focusing on 'academics' in Grade 10 and although I did not have many resources, the community had resources like sports fields and libraries. Whenever I needed something, I always looked around to see what systems there were in my community that I could get help from. My parents were not educated and my mother barely passed primary school. My father did not go to school and was 'quite illiterate'.

Over the years, I have come to understand, that my fear was almost like a "genetic trait". I think it was a fear from my parents. I think that whatever my parents feared was almost like transferred to me. Both my parents are Christians, and they were very protective and concerned about my safety. They therefore did not want me to do many things I may have wanted to do. So there was always a fear inside of me. That like kept me in that situation where I did not have the courage to speak up and that trapped me and delayed processes of not achieving my potential at that time of my life. That's the fear I had, and the shyness was just like an overlay, a mask, like a protector of the fear, you know, just smiling when people were speaking to me. At the time, however I was not aware of the fear.

While I was growing up, my father consumed alcohol, which caused him to be very abusive and sometimes violent. This is a very sensitive issue [shifted in his chair]. He was not a great type of leader for me. He was always violent when he was drunk. There was often physical violence towards us as children and particularly towards my mother. I did not know what the

cause was of him being violent. I only now understand and know what it was, but I was afraid of my father.

As a child you go through like the trauma and I was traumatised by that. At the time we lived in a shack kind of house. It was not a proper house that my father built out of zinc plates and wood. There was always a fear because houses burnt down at that time and you never knew when your father was going to be reckless and then the house burns down. So that was the kind of fear that I was dealing with. Through his violence, I was traumatised because I was not big enough to stand up for myself, yet I was supposed to learn from him. So, the anger stage, the fear stage that I was talking about, I didn't know how to deal with that. So I grew up with that.

When I was about six, seven or eight, my father sent me to the shop for him, and when I came back, he became violent with me. Although I did not know the reason for it, he started hitting me and I started crying. However, I had an imaginary friend that I created. This imaginary friend served as my internal motivation, someone I looked up to.

My father and I were not really close. There was not much connection between me and my father. We were close by virtue of living in the same house, but at times we had like broken relationships, we just lived together, ate together and talked, but it is not intimate bonding as it should be. I used to go out and then come back and go straight to bed. We do not do camping, we do not have outings, and we just function in the household. It's like something is missing. It was a broken relationship because we did not know how to connect and how to nurture the relationship. We did not know how to motivate, we did not know how to lead, we did not know how to like, take control.

After I matriculated in 2009, I volunteered as a sports coach at a local high school and later worked at a packaging factory. However, I knew that the work I was doing in the factory was not meant for me. I knew I had potential and wanted to be challenged. During that time, I heard about the Chrysalis Academy from a former graduate of the academy, and decided to apply. My cousin was also at the academy, and when I visited her, I thought that the academy would be a place that could really challenge me. When I was finally accepted onto the programme towards the latter part of 2011, I borrowed money and some of the items I needed to get onto the programme [laughs heartily]. My mother did not really want me to go as she still thought the place was a 'reformatory', but I was determined to go.

Physically, I was in a good shape when I went into the programme. All the instructors had a connection with me because they knew I was doing physical training. My mental state was quite focused. I knew that there was fear in me, but I was focused. I cried sometimes. Leaving home was quite an emotional experience for me as I was never away from home.

At a spiritual level, I used to go to church and was connected with Christianity. I was quite disciplined in my spirituality and was guided by pastors and youth leaders. I was in contact with God and believed in God. I knew I had different dimensions to me, as it started with my imaginary friend. I always thought that there were more aspects to a human being, although I was never educated about it. I just knew that there were aspects that I wanted to develop. I also knew that prayer had to go with physical changes.

During the three months, there were many times, when I thought that the programme was not for me [laughs]. My biggest moment of the course was the solo [shifts in chair and leans forward]. I will never forget that moment ever; it was only 24 hours but that was my first encounter where I engaged with my trauma and all my pain and all my emotions and at once I decided this is not for me. It was too much and it was overwhelming. The solo is that part of the programme where students spend time with water, half a loaf of bread and an apple. During my solo, I realised how I had suppressed all those emotions that I experienced during the violence in my home. I think all the pain, trauma, and emotions came out in the solo. It came out during the night. It was dark all around me. I was not afraid of the darkness, but it was like being trapped in a space sitting with the bulk of the emotions, and I realised that I did not wish to be there. My body was full of emotions and I did not know how to contain it, and called an instructor. The emotions were like based on years of experience of trauma, of fear of pain and hate. They just came in bulk, you know. I was aware that I cried but I did not know it was going to come out in bulk.

I received therapy during the solo from one of the service provider staff that assisted Chrysalis with the outdoor [sic]. The person told me something that just changed my whole mind, my whole perception. It was quite deep. She told me a story where someone was shot in the chest, but when the paramedics came, he was not hurt by the bullet, as he had a coin in his pocket that stopped the bullet, just in time before it hit his chest. That story changed my whole perception and took my mind away from my own situation. I thought what if the person was me and I had no coin in my pocket? I could be dead and this made me stay at the CA. The coin story was a turning point for me. I realised that just as the coin saved the person, I had to save myself.

Missing my family was a difficult part of the course, but there were definitely changes I experienced throughout the three months. Physically, I lost some weight. My emotional changes were interesting. I received counselling at the academy and feel that I became more mature emotionally. I was able to connect with my emotions and educated to speak about my emotions in the same way. For me, my biggest change was definitely mentally. My perspective changed completely. Chrysalis also had the five-year aftercare programme where I could be supported. What I learnt was that Chrysalis is all about in the moment and working with what you have. Don't complain and do not make excuses [extensive use of

hand gestures]. I felt that those were the biggest changes in me and that's where I started. I do not make excuses and do not complain. I work with what I have and like it that way. I am also now much more aware of what is happening around me.

I enjoyed the outdoor [activity] the most of the entire programme. I enjoyed the fact that during the long hours of walking, I could think. A lot of thoughts went through my mind, and it was so beautiful man. For me getting exposed to nature was very beautiful [smiles].

What I did not like was sometimes experiencing the instructors. Because Chrysalis takes on different youth, some who use substances, and others who do not, the instructors must be educated to work with all youth. For me, it relates to the overall level of education of the instructors. They must receive training and education and get regular feedback.

I believe that the CA runs a holistic programme as they develop all aspects of a human being, which means that there is optimum development. The CA programme makes provision for all the systems in your life. What we get at schools is not holistic, because they teach you in a passive way. The CA teaches in an active way. What the CA does is to identify things but you must experience it. You engage and experience it. You don't only receive the information, but you go through the experience.

I was very uncomfortable when I went home. People at home came into my room and asked why my room was so neat. After all the discipline at the CA, I almost felt dysfunctional at home. When I arrived back home, Macassar appeared grey. When you were at the CA you were in nature where it is all green. So I had to adapt back to my environment. I must say that I coped and knew that the discipline needs to stay intact within me. My family did not really know how to communicate. They did not know how to have conversations. So how they receive you, is like just greet you, and be quiet, they don't bother asking and tapping into real-life situations. Within my community, people do not really deal with their emotions. Dealing with emotions is a very sensitive issue. I feel that this is due to ignorance. They see talking about one's emotions as a sense of weakness. They do not know that it is the beauty inside of letting go. In the community, they never want to go deep [leans forward].

I would definitely recommend CA to other young people. At the moment, my physical, emotional and mental state is good. I lost a cousin in June who was in prison who died and I was able to deal with my emotions. I would not rate my spirituality as high as I am not going to church now.

Currently I am studying at one of the local universities. I found the first year challenging, particularly with respect to the language and written work, but I am coping better now. I had to get used to the material. I am studying social work as I wish to help my community. I am also a mentor at the university and use the CA as my reference point. My colleagues often

ask me about my discipline, but I know that they are seeing Chrysalis reflected in me. I will never let go of the discipline in me [uses hand gestures]. I intend doing five years of studying, but I am also doing short leadership courses. I am using a lot of what I learnt at Chrysalis, including the fire-fighting skills.

Jacob's mother⁴

(Although the interview was arranged with Jacob's mother only, his father joined us without saying a word.)

Jacob's mother does domestic work once a week. Currently there are nine people living in the house; some are her grandchildren.

She said that Jacob was very proud when he came from Chrysalis. She said he emphasised the cleanliness and neatness, and could not stand it if things were not on its place [sic]. She says that Jacob was not a difficult child before he went to Chrysalis. She taught them neatness and none of her children presented her with any challenges. *"Hulle het net wit sokkies gedra tot hulle hoërskool en ek moet sorg dat daai lyn vol wit sokkies is, dit moet gewas word met die hand."*⁵ He was much more fixated on the cleanliness and neatness when he came from Chrysalis. He always said he wanted to study and this would be the first achievement in their family. She felt he wanted to go to Chrysalis to experience more and to have a future. The family could not send him to college, as they did not have money.

She could not attend the workshops, but went to the two visits. The academy was a lovely place. She felt that he got a bit thin at the academy as he was not getting enough food. They felt blessed to visit him at the academy. Now everybody looks up to Jacob. It was his dream to stand out in life.

She felt that he learnt a lot at Chrysalis. The neatness was the biggest change she saw and he enjoyed talking to other young people about the changes. He is always ready to help, and when someone recently got ill in the road, he rushed to help as he had done first aid at Chrysalis. She has also seen spiritual changes. He is now very strong in God, after coming from the academy. He has displayed more respect; he speaks properly. He also attended a twelve-day Heart Quest after the Chrysalis programme. She was not sure what they learnt at Chrysalis, but felt they learnt a lot. She does not really have recommendations to make on how the programme can be improved. She knows of other young people who have done well since coming from the Academy. She is very proud that her son is now at university, as he is

⁴ The views of the parents and guardians are not given verbatim; however I have tried to retain the 'voices' of the respondents by adhering to their patterns of speech and patois, and accordingly have not adjusted the grammar.

⁵ Her children only wore white socks until high school and the washing line was always full of white socks that she washed by hand.

the first in the family to go to university. Her community is rife with crime, drugs and unemployment and she hopes more youth will go to Chrysalis.

Narrative Two

Gary's story

"I thought dagga⁶ was cool".

I am a 22-year-old coloured male from a town called New Orleans, dubbed as 'Chicago' by the local community due to the gang fights in the area. 'Chicago' is situated in the Paarl East area. This area is characterised by gangsterism, substance abuse and poverty. My primary schooling was very challenging while growing up in the area, as my mom was a single parent who could not afford many things, including transport to school.

My mom was in Grade 11 when she was impregnated by a married pastor. My mom and dad were not that serious about each other. Because my dad's family initially denied me my birthright, I often wondered why. That's also why I went to look for things outside the house, because there was not acceptance on my father's family side. It was hard on me as my parents were not together, although they lived in the same area. Many of my friends who have both parents in their lives would often talk about it at school. When it was father's day and stuff like that, it kind of got to me, although my father is not dead, he is living in the same area. It was quite hard on me, because I knew I had brothers and sisters but don't have a relationship with them.

I was introduced to drugs and alcohol very early on in my high school career. My reason for smoking dagga for the first time was that many people in my circle of friends were smoking. I thought smoking was cool, as I did not know the after effects. When my friends smoked, they laughed a lot and looked as if they were enjoying themselves. The more I smoked, the bigger my appetite became, although I started losing weight. I noticed my memory losses in that I was beginning to forget things.

In Grade 11, I was suspended as a result of smoking at school, and introducing other learners to drugs, as I used to sell drugs for a while. After that, I simply dropped out of school. At that stage, I was addicted to dagga, and also moved on to other drugs like Mandrax and Tik.⁷ So I tried it out because I'm in this kind of circle, where these people are trying these things out, we're going to clubs and stuff like that. All of us are trying it so why mustn't I? So I am also trying it out there.

I grew up in a house just with females. However, I was longing for that brother or an uncle that's in the house that could just tell me, Gary, *"Kom ons gaan tuinmaak of ons gaan dit*

⁶ A South African term for cannabis or marijuana.

⁷ Street name for crystal methamphetamine.

*doen in die huis. Ek het nogal baie verlang aan dit gedurende my kinderjare.*⁸ I do not wish to use the absence of a father as an excuse for my life, but I believe if I had a father figure he would have advised me not to move in the circles in which I did.

After being at home for a while following my suspension, I realised that that this life was not for me. Although my family motivated me to stop, I took the decision to stop using drugs. I started to get more involved with people who are at college, who have a more positive influence in my life. I think that's where things started to happen for me. During that time, I started studying civil engineering at a TVET college. However, during my first year I was assaulted and could not write my exams. I then dropped out of college. However, one of my lecturers, whom I will never forget, contacted me and said he had a plan for me. I then went on to study plumbing through a learnership as I could not get another bursary. I completed the plumbing learnership, and got my papers but because plumbing was not my passion, I did not pursue it after the learnership. I then completed a short bridging course at Boland College and was then introduced to the Chrysalis Academy by someone. My passion is working with people, and specifically with youth [smiles].

I grew up with many challenges. The community is ridden with crime, gangsterism and poverty. People in my community just live on a day-to-day basis. There are many absent fathers, poverty and stuff like that. Families are broken because there is no communication. This is half the reason why this community is the way it is, because mothers and fathers don't support each other. You start to develop the kind of mentality that this is how things are supposed to be. The main challenge in the community is when things are not right in the family. I feel that if it is not right at home, children go look outside of the house [looks around, and leans back and frowns].

I was very affected by my father's family disowning me. My mother was there for me, but it was very challenging when other people spoke of their fathers. It really got to me, as my father was not dead; in fact he was living in the same area as me. I also had brothers and sisters from my father's side, but had no relationship with them at the time. My father's wife denied that I was his son. She was denying me up till I was ten. That kind of hit me. 'Jo, I don't like this [looks visibly sad]. Only later did they begin to accept me into the family. Now we have a much better relationship, but I could not understand why my father would not stand up to his wife. I expected my father to come and fetch me and take me to his family, which he did not do [gestures with the hands]. I joined a gang only to try it out. For a young person, a gang means that you belong somewhere. It's also part of a status kind of thing you give yourself.

⁸ Gary, let's go and do some gardening or do something in the house. I longed for that in my childhood.

At Chrysalis, I picked up lots of self-confidence and how to speak with people. I not only developed the ability to speak to people, but now know how to speak with people. This is a lesson that I will never forget, because nowadays I interact quite a lot with people. I also learnt how to manage my emotions, particularly when in a group. I know exactly what I am talking about, as before I came to the academy, I could not control my emotions in the house. There are many examples I can give of the tools I learnt to control my emotions. Firstly, I was influenced by the way the instructors behave; they have different personalities, but when things don't work out, you see them talking and afterwards things are well again. This is a good example, as things like that were not taught in school. So in my room, they would practise what they saw, in that when things were not well, they would discuss it. I would tell my roommates, did you guys see that today this happened and this happened, and did you see afterwards, they all decided to stand together and then things were good. My roommates would then reflect on that and agree with me. I apply this a great deal in my workplace, at home and in the community. What I learnt therefore was not only what was taught, but what I saw in practice.

Physically, I became much fitter. I also put on some weight, as I lost weight during my drug usage [smiles]. I grew much stronger spirituality. My spirituality was affected not only by how things were done at Chrysalis, but also because I experienced things that I never experienced before. During my outdoor and solo, I experienced something in the wilderness, which I do not know how to explain. I don't know what it was but I know it was spiritual. "*Ons as geestelike beings ons connect met mekaar en somtyds kan ons 'n negatiewe influence hê op iemand anders se spirit.*"⁹ However, this can only happen if one allows it. I grew spiritually because of the time I spent alone. When you are alone, "*dit is net jy en jou siel. Jy connect met spirit.*"¹⁰ The time spent alone, allowed me to connect with what is inside, my soul. I could ask questions and think things. I feel that time is not something that one can get easily at home.

What also contributed to the change was that I was exposed to nature, and learnt how to behave in nature. This helped me to grow spiritually, as I came to Chrysalis with a different mind set about nature. I knew that nature is a creation of God, but "*die Natuur was net daar.*"¹¹ However when I came to Chrysalis, I realised that nature and me had something in common. I realised that I need to become much more aware when I am in nature and now I attach much more importance to nature as what I did before coming to the academy. I now also give more of my time to nature.

⁹ We as spiritual beings connect with each other and sometimes we can have a negative influence on someone else's spirit.

¹⁰ It is just you and your soul. You connect with spirit.

¹¹ Nature was just there.

For me my biggest change was the self-confidence. I still smoke cigarettes and am a bit lazy to get up in the mornings. I enjoyed the entire programme and cannot single out any specific aspects. However, I did not like the fact that I had to shave off my hair, as it did not suit me.

Something I will never forget about the Chrysalis experience was the three-day route march. One day we were waiting for food, as we were hungry. We were then complaining as we were tired and were still supposed to put up tents. The food eventually arrived but we still had to wait for the food. So that when the Operations Manager, Mr Piet, saw all of us sitting and complaining, he told us to stand up and just turn around. When we turned around, we were looking at the ocean, but it was the sun setting. We then said what are we supposed to look at? Why must we look there now, we are waiting for our food as we are hungry? Mr Piet told us that we have so much to be grateful for. He was trying to make us realise that we have so much to be grateful for, but we were worried about our tummies. He meant that we were worried about food, which we could still get, but this view that we have now, with this vision in front of us, we will never get it again. I will never forget that incident. Never. This was the day that I realised that you will not get back every moment of every day.

I did not know what the word holistic means although I have heard it many times. [I then explained what holistic means]. A holistic approach is very important, as one discovers your strengths and weaknesses.

When I came back into my community, many things had changed for me. When I now catch one of my friends in a fight, I am able to calm that person and talk to him because the person can see the change in me. Now, some people in the community even call me to come and speak with young people. People who did not greet me before are now greeting me. I now have a whole different image in the community I am enjoying as I love doing community work, and was previously involved in the community. *“Ek voel amper soos n person wat daai publieke figuur is in the gemeenskap.”*¹² I feel I am now an example to others.

My whole family received me very well. When I returned from the academy in 2016, I went straight into a work placement and got involved in community projects. I was placed at the Violence Prevention Through Urban Upgrading project in Paarl East (VPUU), which is a non-profit development organisation. I will never forget the Chrysalis experience, never in my lifetime will I forget the experience [leans back in the chair and then leans forward].

If I could bring about changes in my community, I would work with men, as men are at the head of the family and they set the tone for the home and give guidance in the home. If the family structure is good, then the community will be good. I believe that the sustainability of the changes that young people go through at the academy, depends on how much they pay

¹² I feel like that person who is a public figure or celebrity in the community.

attention when they were at the academy, and also if they were serious about making changes. I paid attention most of the time and therefore the changes will last a long time. In terms of the emotional aspects, I remind myself of the programme and what I learnt. I am practising what I learnt at the academy and this is what makes the change sustainable. I do not gym every day, but I do some physical activities. At a spiritual level, I pray regularly. I also try to spend some time alone with myself when I can. It is not always easy, but I try to leave the area or just find a way to be by myself. When I eat unhealthy food, I talk to myself by saying, "Gary, at Chrysalis you did not eat these things".

Gary's father

Gary's father is a local pastor in the community. He has seven children. He says Gary was born "out of wedlock".

His relationship with Gary was not good before he went to Chrysalis. "But he is my son now. My son is back." He is very proud of his son who is active in the church. He feels that there was a "tremendous turnaround" in Gary's life, as where they are staying, gangsterism and drug abuse are rife. He is not sure how Gary ended up at Chrysalis, but after he came back, he could really see the change and said that it was tremendous. He says that Gary is now with him in the church; he is active and has a vision. We share with each other and I talk to him, my son is back and I am proud of him.

He feels that before Gary went to Chrysalis, he was not listening to him. "*Hy was ongehoorsaam.*"¹³ He said it started when Gary was at school when he was called in by the principal. It was about Gary experimenting with drugs and playing truant. Then he went to college and that also did not go well as he still had the same friends. When he went to Chrysalis, "I don't know if the Lord is with them, with the people there, but it was really a turnaround."

He did not know about Chrysalis before Gary went there. He also did not attend the workshops or visit him there, but Gary's mom attended. He feels that Gary's behaviour and his discipline changed. He feels that Gary is a "living testimony" of the programme. He feels that in one's journey, one sometimes meets people who can help you on your journey. This is how it was with Gary. He feels that sometimes young people learn better from others, than from people in their own family.

He felt that the biggest change in Gary's life was that he no longer uses substances. He also 'cut' the friends from his life [gesticulates]. He also has a different mind set now. His communication is better, and he is able to make the right choices and stick to these. His own

¹³ He was disobedient.

wife is now also very supportive of Gary. Gary even reprimands him now if he feels that his dad is not speaking properly to his wife. Gary calls his dad's wife "Aunty S".

He is not able to comment much on the emotional side of his son's changes as he is not with him daily, but he feels that the spiritual changes are very strong. He can also see that the fitness has improved. His son is very active in the community, which makes him very proud. He feels that Chrysalis works with the whole person. Chrysalis works with the "whole package". Chrysalis works with the "soul, spirit and heart". This is also their approach in the church. For him, you have a body and the soul lives in the body and the heart operates the body.

He would definitely recommend Chrysalis to other families. Their area is a "red danger area". He says that one must be very strong to live there, as the gangsterism and availability of drugs is deep. "If you are a young person, to fit in, you must maybe smoke dagga, you must do the bad things, have a knife in your pocket, and wear certain types of clothes, and maybe belong to a gang, so that you feel safe." He has been living in the area for twenty years and feels that it has gone worse. Tik has now been introduced into the area and he has seen an escalation in the crime rate. Young girls are even smoking substances. Tik also leads to an increase in sexual activity and the respect is lost. Poverty is a challenge in the area. He and his wife run a feeding scheme, as there are many hungry children in the area. The church prays a lot about the crime situation in the area. It is a bit calmer in the area, as some of the gangsters are now in prison.

More publicity is needed to spread the word of Chrysalis. He would love for Gary to be employed by the Academy as this will help and strengthen him further.

Narrative Three

Vatiswa's story

"Why would a person lose interest in your own child?"

I am a 28-year-old black African woman from Kayamandi, Stellenbosch. I live with my mother, my sickly grandmother, my mother's two brothers, my mother's brother's daughter and my son, who is one year and four months. I was born in Stellenbosch and was regarded as the child of my grandparents. My mother, who I did not know was my mother, fell pregnant when she was about 20 years old, and she had to go back to university in the Eastern Cape. Therefore I became my grandparents' child.

I knew my mom as my sister, because everyone referred to her as 'sisi'. I have never met my father. So the story is deeper than that, why he was never part of my life and it did come back later in my life to become a challenge and it's still an unresolved issue, but yes, mom

and I will one day probably work on it [gesticulates and waves hands in the air]. I found out by chance from a community person that my grandparents may not in fact be my parents. You know how people of the township just crack family secrets and stuff, you understand. Eventually, I sat down with the whole family and they explained to me that the person I thought was my sister is really my mother. My family said, "Your mother did not do anything wrong. Do not blame her for your father not being there. At least now you know that this is your mother. We are also sorry but we were waiting for a chance to discuss this with you." I asked, but when, because I was 24 then? I told them that they had deprived me of the joy of my mom and dad. Eventually on another occasion I was informed that my mom fell pregnant when she was still at school from a boyfriend in the Eastern Cape. My father paid damages and my mom went back to school to complete her education. This situation contributed to me smoking drugs with friends who also had nothing. With these friends, there's comfort, there's loyalty, there's a strong friendship, there's keeping promises and stuff like that, so that also contributed to that side of my teenager's years and stuff.

My question will always be to my mom, one day when I get the chance to or I feel strong enough, why a person would lose interest in your own child? I do understand that perhaps my grandfather was blocking my father off. There are still many things I do not understand. My grandfather was a taxi owner.

I went to a primary school where the medium of instruction was Afrikaans. During my high school, I moved from Afrikaans to English. It was difficult to move from Afrikaans to English, and I failed my first year, but luckily I pushed through. I eventually graduated from school in 2007. My netball coach played a big role in my life. She used to say, "You know what, you're black. Black young people don't smoke, especially ladies." She used to identify the 'coloured' in me, which I am not, but I am grateful as she tried to get me back on track.

After high school, I went to a college in Cape Town and lived in a female hostel run by nuns. They built me spiritually because there I was at the bottom of the ladder as most kids were from rich families. I obtained a national diploma after four years and I passed each year. At college, I had freedom. I was meeting peers from '*Gugs*'¹⁴ and elsewhere. It's clubs, it's this and that. It's sleeping out. I am lucky to be alive today, as it was drinking and driving and sleeping out. We were very irresponsible. I was very scared that I would get hooked on drugs and therefore stuck with my dagga. I used dagga for about ten years. Once you smoke, everything is funny. If you are a neat freak, you will be more of a neat freak. If you are lazy, you will be lazier. If you are clever, you will be cleverer. If you are dumb, it will make you dumber. I also used a lot of alcohol over weekends.

¹⁴ A shortened name for a township in the Western Cape, called Gugulethu.

After college, I worked at First National Bank on a year-long contract on a pilot project. However, after the year I was unemployed and sat at home. My grandfather taught me a lot. He taught me sharing and respect. He played a big role in my life but also confused me.

I was inspired by my cousin who went to Chrysalis, as he came out looking good and he was very heavily on Tik. When I went to visit him at Chrysalis, I thought the programme looked 'army-ish'. However I took the Chrysalis form and completed it and my mom faxed it to Chrysalis. I wanted to go on the programme 'to draw back from the *'deurmekaarness.'*¹⁵ At home, there was a lot of scolding and when you drink, you also get enemies. I wanted a change in lifestyle. We were not poor but better off than most, as my grandfather, who I thought was my father, owned a taxi and my mom, who I thought was a sister, was a teacher.

I was not exposed in my immediate environment to any violence, but was emotionally and mentally impacted upon by not knowing my dad. Through my solo and one-to-one counselling, I achieved much forgiveness although there is still a lot my mother and I must work through. A big search for me has been how a parent could not own up to his child.

I was always determined and knew that I would one day succeed in life. When I applied to Chrysalis, I knew I wanted a change in lifestyle from dagga and alcohol and partying. I am a person that dreams something. If I assign myself there, I am already there before it happens. I was born with this quality in me. I have a need to be better. I have a vision and goals, but got side tracked, but Chrysalis gave me a second chance.

I started the course in September 2013 and thereafter became a junior Instructor.

Physically, I was fairly good before coming to Chrysalis, as I used to play netball. On a spiritual level I do pray. At Chrysalis, I prayed secretly in my bed or I sat outside and prayed. My faith started growing that everything will be okay and I will make it.

My changes came about because I wanted to get better, but it's the Chrysalis approach that made the difference. Its approach is Gratitude First, making you grateful for the smallest of things. My first big realisation when I started the programme was that I have so much, now what is my fuss in life [frowns and becomes very animated]. In my first week, I was quiet and moody because I was not able to smoke. I also thought of home a lot, as at Chrysalis, the bathrooms were full and I did not want to rub people up the wrong way. My instructors saw the potential in me even though I was still in my shell.

My changes that I went through were more mental. I realised how many chances I wasted before. I realised that I could have been something in my life, and was therefore more

¹⁵ To withdraw from the chaos and confusion.

focused during my three months. The Chrysalis programme healed, cleansed and refined me.

My solo was very difficult for me. The dad issue was the big one that surfaced during my solo. There was quite a lot of forgiving of my mom and forgiving myself for messing up chances I had. I realised that it is never too late to forgive oneself. I used journaling to speak out and what was healing for me was that others heard my story. My story is out to another human being. Telling a story to another means that someone feels what you feel. The solo was good, as I am a person who never sits alone. In solo you sit alone, and the nature, just the silence is contributing to the loneliness and I was forced to think, because I did not want to. I am the type of person, who when she is hurt, would rather 'park' her feelings than talk about it. Total healing for me was about releasing that which I have 'parked' for a long time. The programme was like a ladder getting me closer to where I wanted to be. I always had a vision, but was side tracked along the way.

What contributed to my change was a combination of things. As young people if you have a father figure missing, the academy has youth instructors who can provide the father figure support. Secondly, you have counsellors who can help you to understand a problem and to work on it. Thirdly, the challenges that are provided help you to feel that you are achieving things. It is also about the food we ate; we became healthier and we were provided with so much attention, whether we were sick or not. The programme instilled a lot of things that were missing and it gave me a purpose in life. Now that's the thing that makes it concrete as you came out with a purpose.

What was good about the programme is that it helps you learn what you are good at. Knowing what you are good at helps you to want to improve it. I have never done anything so perfectly as my drilling. I love the drilling so much, I used to polish it every night, going to the bathroom and doing it. I also loved the discipline as it gives order because I struggle in chaos. What I did not like about the programme was being punished when someone else does wrong. When someone in the room does something wrong, we all have to do push-ups or sit-ups. I did not like that practice.

The practice of making of a pledge on my first Sunday at the academy was very important. The pledge kept me on track, and I even carried it beyond, because as I have said, when I assign myself something I want to stick to it. The pledge was important as it was about making a pledge and living with it. I realised if I could make a pledge for three months and remain true to it, I could do it on other aspects as well when I was back home. I also feel that a protected environment is what kept me on track. You are protected from outside influences.

The Chrysalis programme is definitely holistic in that the support for the student is there. There is peer support and your faith grows. Your soul grows stronger as you have someone

to talk too. Students become more energetic which is about the physical, the body becomes lighter, so you are ready for anything. When you need food it is there, when you need support it is there. What is also critical about the holistic approach is that it is about 'you'. You don't need to worry about what your brother is going to eat, is the laundry done, boyfriend or whoever, it's you and your time and you are working with you and people are working with you as a person. You are free when you are here, very much so. The programme gives you enough to do to be busy with yourself and not with other things.

I was scared when I went home after the three months. There were many people who wanted to come home and visit. I was not scared of the people. It was not because I was not ready but because I still wanted to sit and reabsorb what had happened [holds and taps on her head]. I need to flash back, remind myself, go back to my pledge, go back to see what I am building and see where I'm going. I went to the salon the same day because I wanted people to see this change. I was proud of myself but also scared.

Chrysalis helps young people with purpose. With purpose, you are dwelling towards something; you are dwelling "in mission". There's teenage pregnancy, there's crime, the gangsters, all of these and then young people neglect their purpose. It is also good to draw the family in as they are impacted by the workshops. The workshops helped my mom set goals to better our relationships. My relationship definitely improved with my mom, who even bought a pair of training shoes for us to jog together. Whatever I do now makes my mom proud. Now, my actions make them smile, instead of saying shame, she's doing that and she is drugging around with gangsters and stuff.

When I returned, my family's trust in me was shaky as they did not know whether I would go back to the old friends, dagga and partying. I believe that I have achieved much since graduating. I became an Instructor after graduating. I became much calmer and more patient. I also had more satisfaction of who I was. I had more care for people because the whole thing that Chrysalis does, I started to fall in love with it.

I was selected by the Academy to go to France for six months. This was a wonderful experience to be an ambassador for the academy [visibly animated]. While being an instructor, I fell pregnant. I gave birth and looked after my baby for a few months. Then I applied to the academy for a position and now work as a student administrator. Life is good, I've been achieving and I have been pushing and opportunities are just opening. It's been a journey.

I will definitely recommend the Chrysalis programme to other youth, as for me it was a second chance. It is about discovering the potential within one. It also helps to provide a job opportunity even for those students who only have a Grade 9. The programme can bring about lasting change. What kept me off drugs afterwards was that I knew I could be tested

any day by the Chrysalis staff, as Chrysalis does random drug testing. The fact that students are placed on an internship immediately after graduation and they are kept busy is part of what is sustaining the change. What also helps are the tools I learnt at the academy. Tools like yoga, which helps to control the breath and keep one calm. Thinking before reacting. Showing appreciation to our mothers, relationships have grown more. Learning to forgive and to ask for forgiveness. A lot of things, they just come naturally in practice, because they make life better. However I am not gymming much as I am a mother now.

Vatiswa's mother

Vatiswa's mom is an educator. She has been teaching for 23 years in a primary school. She lives in a house with six people.

She gave birth to Vatiswa when she was 20 years old. She then had to go back and complete her studies. Vatiswa did not know that her mom was her real mom as she lived with her grandparents. Vatiswa went wrong after finishing college and did not work. She 'mixed' with the wrong peers. Most of her peers were 'coloured' and not educated. She noticed that when she was at school in matric, she started smoking and drinking. She felt that Vatiswa's smoking was largely due to peer pressure because at the time she was mixing with 'coloureds'. She was very embarrassed by Vatiswa's smoking as she used to teach her learners not to smoke. Vatiswa then came to live with her but felt that this was a mistake. During weekends, she would go out and then come home at 03h00, sleep, wash and then go out again. When Vatiswa's grandmother had a stroke, Vatiswa had to help her care for the grandmother.

After she came back from Chrysalis, there was a change in Vatiswa. There was a big change, now she is stable and has a son. Vatiswa is now helping with everything and they sit down and talk about what she wishes to do. She also now knows that her mom is her real mother. Over weekends, when her mom is not feeling well, Vatiswa cooks and she cooks well. There was a further change in her life when she met her boyfriend, as he is also a quiet person. She can see that Vatiswa loves her work that she is doing at academy.

During Vatiswa's stay at the academy, she managed to attend one workshop only and the two visits. When the social worker gave the parents some stories narrated by the women in the course, she could relate to one of the stories as that of Vatiswa's, which was wonderful.

She believes that one of the activities that influenced Vatiswa was the "24-hour whatnot" [reference to the solo]. She thinks that the solo experience really helped her. "When she was at Chrysalis, maybe she could see that most of the time she was lost. She probably realised that she had lost a lot of time as she is a hard worker and brilliant."

The biggest change she saw in Vatiswa was with regard to her smoking. “It is embarrassing to find your daughter smoking as a black lady ... at least drinking beer is better.” What has also changed is that they now do things together. Her mom thinks she changed as she realised that her peer group was progressing, and she was not; her peer group has cars. The interpersonal communication was also a big change. Now she stays home, and helps her a great deal. She is even encouraging her mom to go out. She has become very tidy. She loves to clean the yard. She takes the whole day to do the cleaning. She is also recruiting other people in the community. Young people and their families come to look for Vatiswa for advice. She feels that Vatiswa has grown in many areas. Mentally, she wants to see herself somewhere. At a spiritual level, she has not really gone to church and her mom has been telling her to go so that her son can be baptised. Her mom’s youngest brother drinks and does bad things, and she can see how Vatiswa is sitting down and talking with him. The mom feels her influence is on the whole family now. She feels that the Chrysalis programme has helped her see Vatiswa as a whole person.

However in order for young people to keep up the changes, they must be motivated. One of her recommendations is that Chrysalis should look at bursary opportunities for those who wish to study and she wondered why Chrysalis did not have more courses for women.

Narrative Four

Timothy’s story

“My spirit was like crushed”.

I am a 23-year-old coloured male from Mitchells Plain. I live with a single mother and three other siblings. I have been living in Mitchells Plain for the past 23 years. We had food and shelter, but because we had a two-bedroomed house only, I had to share a room with one of my sisters. The other sibling shared with my mother, and the youngest sibling came later. Poverty is high in our community. We had a house, shelter and food, so my physical environment was good.

There is nothing in particular that stands out for me as a fond childhood memory as I was a very introverted person. I did not have the necessary communication skills. I only really related to my family members. I am aware of my father’s presence, as he lives a few houses away from us, but I have not had a close relationship with him during my teenage years. As time progressed, I developed a relationship with my father but I would not call it a solid relationship between a father and a son. I feel that there were parts of my life that were missed out from my father’s side.

Although my area is characterised by gangs and drugs, I never used drugs, only some alcohol. During weekends, there is a lot of ‘wildness’, young people roaming about the

streets and having fun even up to 02h00-03h00 in the morning. I started drinking due to peer pressure. I was about 18 years old when I took my first cider. I completed my matric, followed by an internship for a year in the wholesale and retail sector. Following the internship, I was unemployed for a few months, before being informed by a community member about the Chrysalis programme and then decided to apply.

My teenage years were fairly challenging as my mom met a boyfriend who later moved into our house and whom she married quietly. The domestic violence started in 2009, when my mother and her boyfriend had an argument. He was very jealous and part of that jealousy was because he was using Tik and conjuring up images. I never saw a physical sign that they were hitting each other, but I was aware that there was physical violence done towards my mother. As time moved on, I began seeing the physical signs of the abuse, and that my mom's husband was being aggressive and physical with my mother. In 2011, on my sister's birthday, my mom was covered in blood on her face. There was a lot of convincing and asking her why she was putting up with the violence. She was always very reserved and softer, she wasn't aggressive or wild and she was not built in a masculine way to defend herself. She started to fight back and that gave me a bit of hope that okay, she's not just sitting there moping and allowing him to beat up on her. There were many instances, however, where the roles were reversed. When he went out and came back, she would take over the role he played and give him his own medicine back. This was very confusing for my siblings. I remember during my matric year, I decided to go and live with my father. Part of me going to live there, was to break away from everything that was happening in the house.

My mom's boyfriend would stay in the room and only come out when he wanted to use the kitchen or the toilet. We were living under one roof, but it was very uncomfortable as I felt that he was robbing us of our mother. We became very disconnected from my mom. What made me uncomfortable was that I was leaving my sisters with this man when I was going out and that made me uncomfortable and unsettled. Although he was not threatening my sisters, the fact that he disrespected my mother in front of my sisters was respect lost for him. With that came the emotional abuse and the blackmail as well. It was only when I went to the academy that I felt a sense of peace as prior to coming to the CA, I had suicidal thoughts and there was a time when I was very depressed. The reason why I used the word depression was because I felt like my spirit was, to an extent, crushed inside and that just made me give up on looking at life as this wonderful and exciting journey. I wanted to not so much teach a lesson to my mother but I wanted to do something like that, so that she can look at the value of a relationship between a mother and her kids. I used to visit my cousins and aunt just to break away from the space in the house, so I would leave, and this was while I was unemployed. I would leave in the mornings and then I would come back to the house at about 18h00. However, I did have a strong connection and strong faith to know that

if I prayed, my prayers will be answered. After I came back from the CA, my mom and her husband separated. I now work as an administration intern at the academy. I graduated from the academy in December 2012.

I feel my sense of identity was very much shaped by different women in my life over a period of time. I became more aware of who I really was and more accepting of my identity. For me, a lot of the transformation that happened was around my self-identity. A lot of what I learnt during the first three weeks of orientation centred on issues of self-identity. When I speak of identity, I look at my being and not at the exterior things that you can identify with. Identity is more how I feel inside, because for me identity is a feeling that I can't describe. As much as identity is a physical thing to look at it, there is also a 'mysticism'. In my life, there is no male figure that I look up to. Even though there are two prominent male figures that I look up to in the church, they are not what I would call influential people in my life. There should have been a greater presence of men in my life, from my father's side, and my outlook on men would probably have changed in terms of how I view men today. At school, I was also never really drawn to play with boys. I was more in the space of being either on my own or just sitting with the girls [waves his arms].

I was definitely influenced by not having a father in the house, as there are things that a mother cannot teach her son, which require a father to sit down and talk. At Chrysalis, and during subsequent 'gender' training that I was exposed to, they spoke a lot about body imaging and body mapping. I realised that I had never openly spoken to men before about the issues that I was dealing with. Opening up to them was very nice and I could explore and speak to another man on men's issues and not speak to women about men's issues. It is difficult for a woman to answer men's questions if they have not experienced it. It's not awkward, but it's challenging when you have to answer a question if you have never experienced it. This led me to be very uncomfortable as being more masculine, I do feel that there is more of a balance in me, where I am not more feminine as in girly, but more softer. I have always asked myself whether I am more comfortable with my gender because of who I am or because of the way I was raised. So I am comfortable saying that I'm identifying myself as a man because I am born with the male sex organs. It's interesting to see how that conditioning has shaped my way of thinking. I am now much more comfortable as a man after my gender training. There was something very interesting I learnt in an article called 'Do Men Heal in Drag? I like experimenting with the 'dressing up', as it is a way of exploring how I feel when I 'dress up' as a woman. When I started 'dressing up', it was more in response to a dare and to see the responses of people. When I 'dressed up' for the first time, I did not know if there was a sense of shame or a sense of embracing my identity, and not identifying at that time with myself as a man, or woman or identifying myself by my name. It was interesting to experience the emotions, but I would not do it at home because of my identity.

I am a very introverted person, who does not necessarily socialise much. I did not really have the necessary skills, and the only people I could really relate to were family members. I do not have a close relationship with my father. I liked the way in which my mother positioned herself as a single mother and admired the way she took charge of the household even though there was not a male person present in the house for a long time. My relationship with my mother is very open. I also have an open relationship with my siblings.

Before I went to Chrysalis, I was not really someone to do physical fitness. Emotionally, I felt stable. As a result of what was happening at home, I was not unstable but it did affect me a lot. The domestic violence that I witnessed from 2009–2012, became just an everyday thing that really sucked the life out of me. On a spiritual level, I was not born yet, but had a strong connection and strong faith and knew that if I prayed, my prayers would be answered.

The most difficult part of the three-month programme was during the orientation phase, as I was in a closed space with nine men in a room. Before I came to the academy, I did not really have solid relationships with any men. The big role models in my life were my mother and women in the church. During my high school days, I was very withdrawn from the neighbourhood, particularly from the men. I therefore felt very uneasy about being in the room with nine other young men.

I underwent many changes during the three months. Firstly, I became more self-accepting of myself. The three months were almost like a booster. I became more aware of my identity in terms of who I was. Much of my transformation was therefore around issues of self-identity. During the outdoor phase, I had to rely not only on myself, but also on the group that I was part of. The outdoor [phase] was also a phase that made me much more aware of my identity and I could think more deeply even though they were hiking and doing a lot of walking. During outdoor I personally felt that it was my talking time as I walked the paths of the mountains. I also looked at my identity as someone who has value.

Another transformation was control over my spirituality. Although I was not actively practising it, I felt that there was something I gained in terms of spiritual connection. I became more aware of who I am on a spiritual level. Every Sunday the Academy had devotion, but I thought that devotion was more about religion, than spirituality. The spiritual aspects surfaced during my therapeutic care where I did yoga and reflexology. I found that the spiritual aspects were touched on more in those sessions. For me spirituality is more a sense of being. It is the thing you cannot see, or rather the essence in you that you cannot describe but you know it is there. That for me is spirituality, as opposed to how I perceive religion. Religion is more of a practice that I do each day. Spirituality is more understanding. It is not just the higher power that you are now, but also looking at how your inner being is connected to that level.

Before I came to the academy, I was not aware of what holistic means. However, in practice I became more aware of a holistic approach because it touched on the physical, emotional, spiritual and cognitive development. A holistic approach is in fact a chain, where the one needs the other in order to function because if we are left without the capacity for spiritual development, then there would be something missing. It's like a human body with the organs.

The most significant change for me was cognitive development. There were not many physical changes but there was an inner change that I could identify with. There was a little bit of physical change in the image building, but it was more looking deeper than what the physical produced, and more of how the physical felt inside. My understanding of a holistic approach has now deepened. For me it means the various dimensions that make up a human. When a dimension is left out, it would probably not be holistic, as holistic touches so many things.

On the emotional level, I knew that when I left the academy, I had to go and redress the 'wound'. I knew that it was going to be painful, but I knew that it had to be done in order for me to be at ease on a personal level. When I arrived home I found myself in the same physical situation in that nothing had changed there, but I was not in the same mental frame of mind. My way of thinking had changed. I knew that I had to tap into the hope and faith I had. When I came home and my mom and her new husband had another fight, I told myself that I want change; I am not going to live like this. If it meant that I had to leave my home, I was prepared to do that. I didn't make a physical change to the situation, but it was more calling on something I knew was there that I had to tap into to intervene.

I was disappointed that my mom and her boyfriend got married in secret in community of property and was worried that the siblings might lose the house. However, I felt that when I returned home from the academy, my presence had an uplifting feeling in the home. What changed for me was that I spoke positive things into the environment. It felt like my higher power who I confided in came through and intervened. We were going into a new year, 2013, and I wanted to release 2012. I am not sure what led to my mom and her husband separating, but they did, even though a child was born of their union.

The changes that people undergo at the CA are sustainable. Four years later, transformation is still happening in me. It would be interesting to see what my life would have been like if I were not working at the Academy. The whole three-month experience contributed to my change, and not just one thing. The course made me open up more with others on an interpersonal level, instead of being introverted. I would definitely recommend the programme to others as it develops the leadership capacity of youth. It helps young people in constructing who they are as a young person. It is also helpful to get people to understand what they are lacking.

In the future, I would like to see myself in a position of formal teaching or education, as this is something I am passionate about and I would like to improve my facilitation skills.

Timothy's mother

Timothy's mom works as a packer. She reported that just before Timothy went to Chrysalis, things were "not so good between us". She has always depended on Timothy, but things were not as good as there was a "form of abuse" in the home. After her baby was born, "I decided that I had enough, I'm going to say no; no more abuse and kicked my husband out."

Unfortunately she was not able to attend any of the workshops during Timothy's stay at the academy, as she was working and things were not going very well financially. She however participated in the visits.

When talking about the changes she observed in him because of the course, she remarked that Timothy was not a very outgoing person. However, he opened up more to people after the course. She says he is much more outgoing and talkative, which is not how he was before. At night when he comes from work now, he will share with her what he has done during the day. She also noticed a greater generosity. When he sees people who don't have, he will take out and give even if he doesn't have a five rand.

Another change she noticed was that when she and her husband used to fight, prior to him going to Chrysalis, he would not get involved. However one day after the course, he decided to take a stand. He then confronted her husband and said that he was not going to allow the abuse any more. She felt that the Chrysalis experience definitely gave him much more confidence. She also feels that he acquired many technical skills at the academy, like the computer, facilitation and gender courses. She admits that she did not know as much about what he was doing as she does now. This was due to her husband's presence, but also that she and Timothy are communicating more. Her husband did not really want her to have time with the children as he was threatened. She felt "very torn about her husband and her children". Now, she and her husband have been separated for four years, and things are much better at home.

On the impact of the holistic programme, she says that Timothy is on the thin side, but he is very strong. He is very mature emotionally and knows exactly what he wishes to say. He also felt that he wanted to work to assist her, and not study immediately when he completed the programme. He is also very strong spiritually. The Chrysalis experience opened up new experiences for Timothy as he also went to Johannesburg for further training.

She does not understand what a holistic concept means. Following my explanation of a holistic approach, she pointed out that she felt that Chrysalis was definitely offering a holistic programme. She feels that the holistic approach has advantages for the youth. She would

definitely recommend the programme to other youth; she even wears the Chrysalis jacket sometimes, and once was asked whether she works at Chrysalis. She feels that the programme is a youth empowerment programme. It is a place where young people can unleash their potential, and something like the route march prepares the students mentally to depend on each other. The residential nature of the programme is important and the fact that the youth do not have contact with the family for six weeks. She would change nothing about the programme.

There are many shootings going on in her community. At the circle where she lives, there is somebody who sells drugs and this has a “negative energy in the community”. “The children don’t have a vision where they want to be, they get up in the mornings and sit on the corners and don’t know what to do with their time.” Being in this community is very challenging for parents and young people and she recounted an incident where somebody was shot dead on the corner near where they live. It was a “drive-by shooting” so it is actually very dangerous to be outside at night. Furthermore, youth get attracted to the way of life of a gangster. “*Jong mense sien die gangsters, hulle trek lekker aan, kwaai tekkies, en dink ek will ook sulke tekkies kry.*”¹⁶ So young people are attracted to that lifestyle, and as many parents work, they don’t really know what their children are doing during the day. If she had the power of a mayor, she would get rid of the people that sell drugs. She recalls that the community had the ‘*bambanaries*’¹⁷ who worked the community. This needs to happen again as a deterrent.

Narrative Five

Libo’s story

“My life was not right; it was just an empty vessel”.

I am a 25-year-old black African male living in Kuils River. I grew up in Worcester, but am originally from Lady Frere in the Eastern Cape. We came to the Western Cape, as my grandfather was working this side as a qualified electrician. My father was working for the Department of Health. However, I grew up on my mother’s side, which was the poor side of the family. I learnt a lot from my mother and first went to a Xhosa school and then to a coloured school. My father was not close to me as he was always working shifts. My father only married my mother later. My mother was not educated and made a living from selling fruit. I learnt a lot [about] how to be strong from my mother. I grew up largely with my mother and when we did not have a place to stay, we sometimes went from family to family. My life was okay when I lived in Worcester as it is a rural area, but there are very little opportunities for youth. Recently, I have seen an increase in drug use and an increase in the “negative

¹⁶ Youth see the gangsters: they dress well, wear smart shoes and feel they also want to get such shoes.

¹⁷ People from the community, who assisted the South African Police Services in monitoring and reporting crime at schools and in the general community.

energies” of Cape Town in Worcester. My mother passed way in 2008, before my matric, when I was in Grade 11. When my mother passed away, it was unbelievable and I lost myself along the way [shuffles in the chair]. She taught me a lot about believing in myself and having faith.

My father remarried and things started to change. I then worked for a construction company when I was about 17 or 18, after dropping out of school. I was introduced by a lady to the Chrysalis programme as she could see that my life was not right. I was just an empty vessel, if I can put it that way. There’s a body but there’s no soul inside. But luckily, God was by my side and I didn’t use drugs and all that stuff. But as you can see I lost something in my life. I lost myself as my mother passed away. I had no support, and then I performed poorly at school, and then blamed myself and decided to leave school to work. The reason why I said that I lost my way was because my mother was always there to encourage me. I have no other people who played a big role in my life. When I had to go into the ‘bush’,¹⁸ my father and I became a bit close, but when you come from the ‘bush’ you are a man, you must be responsible. I am one of those guys who take the laws of manhood very seriously. I am now a grown man and need to be responsible. The thing that is holding me back is my qualifications. I would like to study law one day and be a Speaker of Parliament. I like law from the bottom [*sic*].

As I grew up in Worcester, there were not really opportunities for youth to develop themselves. Lately, I have seen a lot of people smoking drugs and people have got this mentality of Cape Town: the negative energy of Cape Town, like robberies and all that stuff. I do not take drugs and don’t have a low self-esteem, what I need is education. I did matric later but did not rewrite when I did not pass some subjects. I attended the CA during 2013.

I am now unemployed and still live with a guardian, who is a mom of another graduate who took me in when I lived under a bridge after graduating from the academy as I did not want to stay with my father in Worcester. In Worcester, you can become only prison security, nurses and teachers, or work for the Department of Labour. The graduate’s mom is now my guardian. It was very challenging living on the street and then having to be ready at your work placement. I used to take my clothes to friends to wash and iron. It’s not a nice feeling when you leave Chrysalis, because you become attached to the building, to everything that is going on there, to the people. When you start at Chrysalis, you are against everything as they make you wake up early, and you and your roommates fight, but during the last week before you go home, everyone bonds, because people’s mentalities change.

I am realising that I would not like my own children to grow up without connection with family, so I am now trying to become closer to my father.

¹⁸ A colloquial term that describes the process of Xhosa males going through their rites of passage.

For me the biggest change was to my self-confidence and self-trust. I developed the belief that things would get better. I deepened my spirituality and my mind set changed. My mind set became much more positive. Chrysalis boosted me because there were always opportunities to express myself. I also became stronger physically. At Chrysalis, I learnt that I could go the extra mile. People at Chrysalis were telling us that we can “climb the mountain and see the other side”. I also realised that I am actually a leader as there were other students who said so and who followed me. Students wrote me letters, which I read when I arrived home. They said, “Stay the person you are, no matter what people say, you’ve got it in you, just believe.” I think I was born with these leadership skills; I just need to learn the theory.

I have never seen God “in flesh”, but I can see that he has ways of answering what I need. I won’t tell you a lie; I experienced it under the bridge. I said, “Lord, if you can get me out of this, at least put me somewhere where I can still not feel that I am above others, just still to be afraid of you, so that I can do things according to your will” [stretches his arms out on the table and clasps his hands together].

At the academy, I enjoyed the sharing with others, particularly the yoga sessions, devotion as well as the solo. The solo had a big impact on me. I was told by the social worker that my soul is around me. I believe that a holistic programme is one that can change a lot of people. It’s a bit like a chain, which you have to practise, however. In order for the CA programme to work however, students must be committed.

My father and his new wife came to visit me while I was on the programme, but they were always late. When I left the CA however, I went home to Worcester to make peace. I received my father’s blessings, and then came to Cape Town, where I was homeless for a while. I went to make peace with my father because I was very angry. I was not showing it, but inside, I became very negative. I wanted peace and forgiveness. I realised that my father also needed someone in his life, and that’s why he remarried. I realised that if I stay negative, I will not grow.

I am still using what I learnt at the academy, which is to be patient and have a positive mind set. I feel that what I learnt was the basics in life. If you don’t have the foundation, then where do you go? Chrysalis is able to uplift us and help its students to share. I liked that Chrysalis people always asked us, what we wanted to change in the programme. I also realised that the social worker at Chrysalis realised that I was unique. She always gave me extra attention. She was very kind and I will not forget her. She knows how to work with students and can get into your shoes.

The changes that you learn at Chrysalis can only be maintained if you practise them. Attending Chrysalis is a personal affair. Are you coming to Chrysalis to get a job, or because

you want to change? You need to understand why you are coming onto the programme. I came onto the programme to get further education, as I was working before I came to Chrysalis.

Before I came to Chrysalis, I was spiritually strong. I always used to pray, but physically I was unfit. Emotionally, I was very down, I won't lie. At Chrysalis, I definitely learnt more about myself and realised my own uniqueness.

Although I wanted to further my education, there is a problem that some of the courses at Chrysalis are not accredited. This is something that must be looked at. Most of the certificates, you cannot use. Chrysalis must give people something that is accredited. I am also still looking for work now, as my work placement has come to an end. It is very challenging finding work nowadays, but I am trying to remain positive. I think that the Chrysalis programme should have a longer skills phase. I wanted to do basic administration, but was placed in basic cookery as the administration class was full, but as power was not in my hands, I had to go with the flow.

I think Chrysalis staff must also visit the placement organisations where the youth are placed. It is also important for Chrysalis to have 'stable' instructors and for them to get the assurance that their work is useful.

All I need now is a job to become stable and buy my own things. I cannot run around and ask for sponsors, I'm done begging.

Libo's guardian

She has three children of her own and became Libo's guardian when her son, who was also at Chrysalis with Libo, told her that he did not have accommodation. She feels that if she were another person, with another heart and character, her son would not have asked her. Her house is like an extended family as her mother-in-law lived with her for 16 years.

When he arrived at her house, Libo asked her for her clan name. They realised that his clan name is the same clan name as her mother's clan name. They realised that there is a relationship as the common clan name is '*Manzima*'. Libo shared how his mom died and about his relationship with his father. So there was a connection.

She began to rely on him as he was very helpful. She trusted him with her keys and her car as he is very responsible, more so than her own children. When she enquired from Libo why he went to the CA, he spoke about his anger about his mother's death of cancer and his anger towards his father and stepmother. She said that Libo had much anger as his mother died so young, and his father remarried. She thought that he was still clinging to his mother and did not move on. She reports that Libo is better with his father now that he is back from

the CA. He went to see his father after he graduated. She believes that his mind has definitely opened. He also told her how the value of education was emphasised at the academy. He said that they were told, "If you did not finish Grade 12, go back to school." She feels that his spirituality has also grown.

When asked what she thought triggered the changes, she reported that the staff who work with the students talk and engage with the students in a way that the students want to listen. The staff are well trained, they are patient, and they take the students as their own children. The environment is also very peaceful. "It's as if the facilitators were chosen from on top of a big tree, a tree that is full of knowledge, a tree of patience, a tree of perseverance." The facilitators bring more than the content; they have a particular attitude towards the young people.

She feels that Chrysalis should re-look at the idea of Chrysalis clubs in the communities. They should also get a team leader and start a WhatsApp group. She also recommends a reunion after five years, where graduates could talk about what they have achieved over the five years. In fact, it should be more than a reunion; it should be a full-day workshop.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings that emanated from the ten face-to-face interviews that were conducted over a period of five months. It provided insights into the lived experiences of the five youth respondents prior to joining the CA's three-month programme, their experiences during the three months, and their overall reflections of a holistic approach.

The youth discussed a broad range of socioeconomic and psychosocial challenges that they encountered in their homes and broader community, ranging from domestic violence, absence of a father figure during childhood and adolescence, the burden of poverty, inequality and unemployment, substance use, issues around gender identity, foregoing chances in life, and the need to belong. Yet, a common thread among all the narratives was a desire for change in their lives and a determination to succeed. Some voiced that they knew that they were meant to succeed, and that they had potential or leadership qualities. All the youth respondents reported that they experienced change on different levels during their three-month exposure to a holistic approach. These changes were confirmed in interviews with their parents or guardians. The changes varied from physical, mental, emotional and spiritual changes. Among some of the changes they witnessed were greater self-confidence, improved communication and interpersonal skills, a deepening of their spirituality, a change in mind set, a sense of purpose, courage to deal with some of their challenges and recognition of their leadership potential. A number of them alluded to the power of nature and particularly being in silence, which 'surfaced' some of the psychosocial issues that they were dealing with. They also shared how they thought the three-month

programme could be improved in order to enhance the efficacy of a holistic approach, including the need to improve educational levels of instructors, the need for greater sensitivity among instructors to deal with a heterogeneous student population and the provision of accredited training in order to facilitate youth employment.

In the following chapter, the data is coded, categorised and analysed in order to explore and interpret how youth made meaning of their experiences of a holistic approach.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

How can we know if we do not ask? Why should we ask if we are certain we know? All answers come out of the questions. If we pay attention to our questions, we increase the power of mindful learning (Langer, 1997:139)

6.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with an outline of the process followed in the analysis and interpretation of the findings illustrated in Chapter 5. I began the analysis by categorising and assigning themes to the data corpus in order to explore, in a structured way, young people's experiences of a holistic approach. The core categories are summarised in tabular form, showing their applicability to each of the respondents and then grouped into a number of over-arching themes. Following a further consolidation of the themes, I discuss them in the context of the three research questions this study sought to explore by employing the ecological perspective and concepts such as social and cultural capital and *habitus* as conceptual lenses. The research questions that guided the study are:

- What is a holistic approach to personal transformation?
- How do NEET youth experience the holistic approach to personal transformation used at the Chrysalis Academy?
- Why do NEET youth experience the holistic approach to personal transformation in the way they do?

The chapter concludes with a summary of the key learning points emanating from the interpretation of the findings.

6.2 Process of data analysis

Qualitative data analysis is a process aimed at making sense of the data that is collected in order to answer the research questions. There is no one correct way of analysing data as it is about "fitness for purpose" (Cohen et al., 2007:461). I chose to proceed with the data analysis using no rigid pre-designed analytical framework, although I followed certain steps during the process, as the objective was to understand how young people made meaning of their experiences of a holistic approach to personal transformation. The exploratory nature of the study served as an injunction to remain attentive to whatever emerged during the conversations. This injunction was reinforced by the perspective advocated by Langer (1997:121) that the "ability to explore the world and understand experiences is different from the capacity to achieve an outcome". I interpreted this perspective as trusting what emerged from the data and not being fixated on achieving set outcomes. I elaborate further on my own reflections of this process in Chapter 7.

In analysing the data, I was cautious not to fragment the data into too many narrowly defined categories, as I deemed this at odds with the spirit of a holistic approach. I discovered however that most of the categories and themes have a connection with one another, and often overlap. I drew guidance from the broad approach suggested by Miles et al. (2014:10) who describe the following steps when analysing qualitative data:

- Assigning codes or themes to the data.
- Sorting and sifting through the coded data to identify “similar phrases, relationships between variables, patterns, themes, categories, differences between groups”.
- Isolating the patterns and processes.
- Recording reflections in journals.
- Elaborating and noting the assertions, propositions and generalisations.
- Comparing the generalisations to the body of knowledge in the form of theories or constructs.

Foregrounding the research questions, I developed the following steps:

- i. Categories in the data were highlighted
- ii. Categories were then manually recorded
- iii. Categories were reviewed and clustered
- iv. Overarching themes, based on the literature review, were formulated
- v. A panel of two youth development practitioners was convened for a review of the categorisation of the themes
- vi. The themes were discussed through the lens of the theoretical framework and some of the concepts that were examined in Chapter 2

The categories that I identified from the findings are tabulated overleaf. The table also depicts how the categories coalesced into a number of over-arching themes.

Table 6.1: Summary of the categories and themes

Respondent's personal details	NEET status on joining the programme	Categories	Themes
Jacob: Coloured, Male, 25 years.	Unemployed	Crime; Violence; Substance abuse; High school drop outs; Living in same community for many years	Socioeconomic context
		Fear; Domestic violence; Trauma	Psychosocial challenges
		Limited or no schooling; Family upbringing; Intergenerational issues; Family values	Family Ecology
		Connection with mother; Connection with father	Need for belonging or connection
		Determination to succeed; Belief in potential; Inspired by family; First generation university student; Coping strategies	Resilience
		Difficult to adjust to Chrysalis programme; Discomfort on returning to community	Out-of- <i>habitus</i> experience
		Influence of nature	Influence of nature
		Impact of solo	Impact of silence
		Physical, mental, emotional and spiritual changes; Spirituality	Holistic approach
		Improvements to programme	Recommendations to improve the programme
		Sustainability of change	Sustainability of change
		Learning by experience	Teaching/Learning methodology

Gary: Coloured, Male, 22 years.	Unemployed	Gangsterism; Substance abuse; Poverty; Peer pressure	Socioeconomic context
		Single parenting; early pregnancy	Family ecology
		Reasons for joining a gang; Effects of substance abuse; Coping strategies	Resilience/Risk-taking
		Connection with mother; Connection with father; Absence of father figure in childhood and adolescence; Belonging; Absence of role models	Need for belonging or connection
		Further education	Education trajectory
		Physical, mental, emotional and spiritual changes; Spirituality; Placements; Some experiences cannot be explained	Holistic approach
		Influence of nature	Influence of nature
		Impact of solo	Impact of silence
		Sustainability of change	Sustainability of change
		Improvements to programme	Recommendations to improve the programme
		Modelling how to deal with conflict	Teaching/Learning methodology
Vatiswa: Black African, Female, 28 years.	Unemployed	Extended family; Influential figures; Inspired by family members	Family ecology
		Connection with mother; Absence of father figure; Impact of not knowing father; Peer pressure	Need for belonging or connection
		Substance abuse and the	Risk-taking behaviour

		effects of alcoholism	
		Unemployment	Socioeconomic context
		Further and higher education	Education trajectory
		Determination to succeed	Resilience
		Physical, mental, emotional, spiritual changes; Spirituality	Holistic approach
		Influence of solo	Impact of silence
		Therapeutic care; Counselling	Psychosocial support
		Pledge-making	Teaching/learning methodology
		Fear to go home	Out-of- <i>habitus</i> experience
		Suggestions for improvement	Recommendations to improve the programme
Timothy: Coloured, Male, 23 years.		Coloureds smoke	Othering
		Living in same community; Unemployment; gangsterism	Socioeconomic context
		Lack of communication skills and introvertedness	Lack of social capital
		Absence of father figure; Connection with mother; Connection with father	Need for belonging or connection
		Substance abuse; use of alcohol	Risk-taking behaviour
		Domestic violence; Depression	Psychosocial challenges
		Confusion around gender identity	Identity
		Physical, mental, emotional and spiritual	Holistic approach

		changes; Spirituality	
		Discomfort at Chrysalis Academy	Out-of- <i>habitus</i> experience
		Influence of nature	Influence of nature
		Therapeutic care; Counselling	Psychosocial support
		Sustainability of change	Sustainability of change
		Future aspirations	Resilience
		Improvements to CA programme	Recommendations to improve the programme
Libo: Black African, Male, 25 years.	Employed at the time of entering the CA programme	Migration; Influence of urban areas on rural areas; Poverty; Substance abuse; School drop out	Socioeconomic context
		Connection with mother; Connection with father; Absence of father; Death of mom; Connection to others; Belonging; Clan names	Need for belonging or connection
		Influence of upbringing; Lack of support; Family values	Family ecology
		Yearning for education; Becoming a man; Life in rural areas; Homelessness	Resilience
		Discomforts about programme	Out-of- <i>habitus</i> experience
		Forgiveness and peace; Therapeutic care	Psychosocial support
		Influence of solo	Impact of silence
		Physical, mental, emotional and spiritual changes	Holistic approach

		Sustainability of changes	Sustainability of change
		Improvements for change	Recommendations to improve the programme
		Values of staff; Staff training; Opportunities to express yourself	Values of staff

As depicted in the table illustrated above, the following themes were identified:

- Socioeconomic context
- Family ecology
- The shaping of identity
- Psychosocial challenges: Exposure to domestic violence, trauma, abuse, neglect
- Psychosocial support
- Need for belonging or connection, including absence of father figure
- Resilience
- Education trajectory
- Lack of social capital
- Risk-taking behaviours
- Out-of-*habitus* experiences
- Teaching/Learning methodology, including use of rituals
- Values of staff
- Influence of nature
- Impact of silence
- Inner workings of transformation
- Impact of a holistic approach
- Othering
- Parents' perceptions of the influence of a holistic approach
- Sustainability of change
- Recommendations to improve the programme.

In order to test the validity of the themes, I convened a panel discussion with two youth development practitioners on 12 May 2017. The themes were further refined as a way of preventing any fragmentation. The discussion highlighted that the themes titled *socioeconomic context and family ecology* as well as the *psychosocial challenges* described by the respondents, relate to macro-societal issues, as opposed to personal problems of one individual. This perspective is argued more sharply by Fine (1989:173) who expresses

caution about not ‘psychologising’ social issues, as this detracts from the underlying structural foundation of many seemingly personal problems experienced by youth. Similarly, when risks are viewed as a consequence of problems in society, then youth do not have to carry the ‘blame’ for the problems they experience (Stevens, 2005:45).

Aside from the confirmation that a number of the issues raised stem from the macro-societal issues, the categories of *teaching/learning methodology* and *values of staff* were seen to be elements of a particular approach to *adult learning* and hence were grouped together under the theme *approaches to adult learning*. Lastly, the theme of ‘*othering*’ can be understood in the context of the deep divisions in society and can therefore be grouped under the theme of *socioeconomic context*.

From a methodological perspective, I now engage with the over-arching themes, not as single fragmented themes, but within the context of the three research questions that the study sought to explore.

6.3 A holistic approach to personal transformation

The existing literature on personal transformation locates the roots of the holistic approach in the *Upanishads* in 600 BC and conceptualises it as one that recognises the many dimensions of a human being (*Eight Upanishads*, 1937, 1:354; Nirmalananda, 2009:42; Edwards, 2013:532; Strozzi-Heckler, 2014:32; Keepin, 2016:7-8). The holistic approach recognises that a human being is ‘whole’, but consists of different dimensions: the physical and energetic, and the emotional, mental and spiritual, or the body, mind and spirit. The concept of ‘holistic’ recognises that the functioning of the ‘whole’ cannot be completely understood in relation to its individual components but in the functioning of the ‘whole’ and that the ‘whole’ is not ‘whole’ without recognition and inclusion of all the different dimensions (Nirmalananda, 2009:42).

From the findings it is evident that not all respondents were conceptually familiar with the word ‘holistic’. Gary and the mothers of Vatiswa and Timothy could engage with the concept only after I had provided a description of the word ‘holistic’. However, despite not everyone being familiar with the concept, all the youth respondents described their experiences of a holistic approach as multi-faceted or multi-dimensional, resulting in clearly identifiable changes on a number of levels. This illustrates some measure of commonality between how the youth experienced and described a holistic approach (as evidenced by their descriptions of changes on a number of different levels) and the literature described above, particularly in relation to a recognition that the ‘whole’ human being consists of different dimensions.

Vatiswa’s description of a holistic approach was thought provoking and incisive. She described a broad spectrum of needs that many young people have which a holistic

approach is capable of fulfilling, such as the need for a 'father figure', "someone to talk to" as well as 'peer support'. She indicated that the holistic approach meets the needs of food (describing the physical dimension), which enables one to become energetic and lighter (describing either the physical or mental dimensions); it provides peer support and someone to talk to (the emotional dimension); and assists one's faith and soul to grow (the spiritual dimension). The stories of the youth showed that their needs were many and varied, and straddled a number of dimensions including their need for food and safety, to be challenged, recognised, and acknowledged, to be paid attention to as well as their deep longing for connection and positive role models. Her description of these needs possibly suggests that interventions directed at youth should be directly responsive to their particular needs. However it also illustrates the notion echoed by many that youth are "never just one thing", and provides some measure of caution about programmes that may be seen as one-dimensional or too utilitarian, such as a skills or a work-readiness programme, as opposed to one aimed at developing and nurturing the 'whole' person.

Other descriptions of the multi-faceted nature of the holistic approach include how it results in 'optimal development' and builds on an "individual's strengths and improves the weaknesses". Two of the youth respondents' reference to a holistic approach as "like a chain"; a "human being with organs", can be likened to what Nirmalananda (2009:42) describes as the 'whole' not being complete without each of the dimensions.

The youth perspectives not only converge with the literature on a holistic approach as espoused by Nirmalananda (2009), Strozzi-Heckler (2014) and Keepin (2016), but they exemplify a process of transformation where the body, mind and spirit are integrated into one process, that is, where the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual needs of youth are met as one integrated and inclusive process. In other words, there is no fragmentation as a variety of needs are impacted upon simultaneously. The perspectives of the youth respondents seem to suggest that the holistic approach is transformative as it embraces all aspects of who they are and fulfils many of their individual and collective needs. Their insights give credence to the perspective shared by Jennings (1995:73) that if learning experiences are to be impactful, they should engage all aspects of a learner's being; in other words, they should engage all dimensions. Once a learner's emotions are separated from learning, they are not able to make 'meaningful connections' which are very important to enable them to develop "compassion, personal interdependence and tolerance for multiple perspectives" (Jennings, 1995:73). Korthagen (2013b:35) articulates this perspective slightly differently as he maintains that when people are supported to connect with their "thinking, feeling and wanting", 'flow' happens. Perhaps this is the flow that Vatiswa was referring to when she described the body feeling 'lighter'.

This notion of working with the 'whole' human being is important in a society that often de-emphasises aspects of our being and generally seeks to divide or fragment: if an individual is ill, he/she goes to a medical doctor to 'heal' the physical body; when the same individual encounters a very deep emotional or mental problem, he/she is usually referred to a counsellor or psychologist to deal with the 'emotional' issues; the spiritual needs are catered for at a particular time or on a particular day through some form of religious practice. A holistic approach to personal transformation is therefore one that engages all dimensions or parts of an individual in recognition that they constitute a 'whole'. When one dimension is excluded, personal transformation may be incomplete or partial, and therefore not sustainable.

An interesting element brought to the fore by the majority of the respondents is the experiential nature of a holistic approach. Everything that is taught is experienced. The respondents pointed out that the CA programme not only provided them with information, but it taught through 'experience', and it is precisely these 'experiences' that culminated in changes to the different dimensions of their being. What is taught is not only cerebral, but is 'felt' by respondents in their "body, mind and spirit". Their comments seem to indicate that the experiential nature of the programme was fairly significant with regard to their personal transformation, in that through their experiences over the three months, learning and personal transformation occurred seamlessly. In fact, Gary alludes to the experiential nature of the programme, in relation to what he experienced during outdoor and solo, when he stated: "I did not know what it was, but I knew it was spiritual".

The notion of experiential learning is not new in academic discourse, but its value is not always recognised (Beard & Wilson, 2006:2). Despite its critics, "there is growing consensus that experience forms the basis of all learning" (Kolb, 1984:3-4; Rogers, 1996:107). Experiential learning can be described as "the sense-making of active engagement between the inner world of the person and the outer world of the environment", which includes the "whole person through thoughts, feelings and physical activity" (Beard & Wilson, 2006:2). Experiential learning facilitates the engagement of a learner's senses, emotions and mind, making the link between experiences and learning an important one. However, although "experience underpins all learning", it does not always result in learning, as the experience needs to be reflected upon, to draw new insights (Beard & Wilson, 2006:20). Throughout the programme, students are afforded many opportunities for reflection on their experiences through room engagements, workshops and journal writing, showing the dynamic correlation between experiential learning and personal transformation (Wade, 1998:718). Perhaps this correlation suggests that 'ideas' or theories, or even simply reading about strategies to effect personal transformation, do not lead to personal transformation, but direct experiences do. It is in the 'experiencing' that transformation happens.

In summarising what is meant by a holistic approach based on the respondents' views and the literature on the concept, it can be defined as an approach to personal transformation that recognises and does not exclude any dimensions of a human being: the physical, energetic, mental and the spiritual. It is an approach that is capable of meeting a wide array of needs that youth may have, such as proper nutrition, peer support, attention, connection, stimulation and psychosocial support. What is critical is that the holistic approach is not a philosophical approach only, but its practical value needs to be experienced to be understood. A curriculum for personal transformation anchored in a holistic approach is multi-faceted and seeks to integrate all aspects of a learner's being in the learning process.

6.4 NEET youth experiences of a holistic approach

This component of the study is explored by looking at the nature of the personal transformation or change process described by the respondents. It not only considers what changes the youth experienced, but what they regarded as the most significant contributors to their change process.

6.4.1 Change on different levels and support in a variety of ways

The table below delineates the description of the changes provided by the youth respondents and their parents. The findings are presented in tabular format to illustrate the specifics of the changes in a holistic way and not to present the changes as fragmented and occurring in isolation from one another.

Table 6.2: Summary of changes experienced by the youth

Jacob

Dimensions	Nature of change	Jacob's mom comments
Physical	Weight loss	He was more fixated on his neatness and cleanliness; he got thin at the CA as he did not get enough food
Mental	Biggest change was mental; his mind and perception changed; he now works with what he has and does not complain	
Emotional	He was able to connect with his emotions and educated to speak about his emotions; he is now much more aware of what is happening around him	

Spiritual	He did not allude to any spiritual changes	She has seen spiritual changes as he is now very strong in God
Other	He felt that one does not only get information, but the Chrysalis experience is experiential; one has to experience it for oneself	He enjoyed talking to others about his changes; he is always ready to help others; he now stands out and others look up to him

Gary

Dimension	Nature of change	Gary's father's comments
Physical	Became fitter; put on weight	His fitness improved
Mental	His view of nature changed as he realised that nature and he had something in common	He has a different mind set; he is active and has a vision; able to make the right choices and stick to them
Emotional	Learned to manage his emotions through a number of tools that he was provided with; became more self-confident; able to speak with people	His communication is better
Spiritual	Grew stronger spiritually; his spirituality was affected not only by how things were done, but because he experienced things that he had never experienced before. There were things that he experienced in the outdoors, which he cannot explain, but knows them to be spiritual; grew spiritually because of time he spent alone in solo. He now prays regularly and spends time alone	Spiritual changes are very strong
Other	Influenced by how the instructors modelled the expected behaviour particularly around how to deal with conflict; he now gives more of his time to nature; the extent of one's change depends on how much people pay attention at Chrysalis. He paid a 'lot' of attention	There was a tremendous turnaround; he and his son share together; gave up substances; he also gave up the friends he had before; very active in the community

Vatiswa

Dimension	Changes	Vatiswa's mother's comments
Physical	Her body became lighter as she ate proper food; She became healthier due to the food provided	
Mental	Her changes were more mental; she realised that she wasted many chances before; she developed a greater sense of purpose; she now thinks more before reacting	She is stable

Emotional	She is calmer which she learned through a number of tools at the academy; she released emotions and issues that she had 'parked'. There was forgiveness of family members and herself; her relationships with family members improved; she shows more appreciation to her mother	They all sit down and talk; their interpersonal relationships have improved
Spiritual	Faith started growing	
Other	Changes came about as she wanted to improve; She was healed, cleansed and refined; She gave up substances	She helps with everything; the biggest change she noticed is that she does not smoke dagga any longer; she loves cleaning, particularly the yard, as well as the cooking

Timothy

Dimensions	Nature of changes	Timothy's mother's comments
Physical	A little bit of physical change in the image building; the change was more about how the physical felt inside	
Mental	He could think more deeply about his identity as someone who has value; his most significant change was his cognitive development; his mental frame of mind changed, although his physical circumstances did not; his way of thinking changed; he knew he had to tap into the hope and faith he had inside of him	
Emotional	He became more self-accepting of himself; he knew that he had to go and address an emotional wound when leaving the academy so that he could be at ease on a personal level; he learnt to speak positive things into a difficult physical environment; the course made him open up more on an interpersonal level; he became more aware of his identity and most of his changes were around issues of self-identity; opening up to other men was useful as he was not able to do that before	He became more talkative when he came from the CA; he shares much more with her than he did before; he intervened in a fight that she and her husband were involved in which he did not do previously
Spiritual	Control over his spirituality; he gained something in terms of spiritual connection; he became more aware of who he is on a spiritual level; there was an inner change that he could relate to	
Other	The three months was a booster; transformation is still happening four years later.	He acquired many technical skills at CA; CA opened up experiences for him; he even went to Gauteng

Libo

Dimensions	Nature of change	Libo's guardian comments
Physical	He became stronger physically as he was very unfit	
Mental	Developed the belief that things would get better; his mind set changed; he realised that he is a leader; the CA taught him patience and to develop a positive mind set	His mind was definitely opened
Emotional	His biggest change was with respect to his self-confidence and self-trust; learned more about himself and his uniqueness; the CA boosted him as there were always opportunities to express himself	She felt that Libo still had anger when he came from the CA; however soon after he came out of the CA, he reconciled with his father
Spiritual	He deepened his spirituality	His spirituality has grown
Other	He learned to go the extra mile; changes can only be maintained if one experiences them	He realised the value of education as this was emphasised at the CA

The findings indicate that the respondents experienced a range of different changes due to their participation in the programme. The most significant were perceived to be in the mental, emotional or energetic and spiritual domains. This is an interesting finding, as one could easily have made an assumption that they may have placed greater focus on the physical changes, because of the CA's strong focus on the 'physical' and the 'regimentation', with a daily fitness routine, drilling, hiking and sports activities. Although the CA incorporates a range of activities in its curriculum, the amplification of the emotional, mental and spiritual changes in comparison with the physical, potentially points to a perspective that many theorists have alluded to regarding the holistic approach, that is, that the physical dimension is the 'container' of or the 'gateway' to the mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions and that these dimensions are accessed through the physical body. When the body is worked with, this does lead to questions of what is beyond the self (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014:38). This means that stretching and exercising the physical body causes the mind, emotions and spirit to 'stretch'. "The mind enfolds matter in general, and the body in particular" (Bohm, 1980:265). The physical body as the tangible and physical expression of what we are therefore becomes the gateway to access the other dimensions.

This seems to suggest the critical importance of work on or through the physical body as an integral feature of a personal transformation process, which is not as easy as it sounds, as the physical body is often an instrument of repulsion, anxiety and ambivalence to many young people. They are bombarded by the media in respect of what they should look like,

how they should dress, and how they should speak. The body then becomes a source of great anxiety, if, for example, an individual is obese, suffers from acne or if the person feels inappropriately dressed according to the latest clothing crazes in relation to his/her peers. This may result in dissociation from the body, which can hamper the process of personal transformation as it may take time and patience to befriend the body. The CA's strong focus on the physical body can potentially be viewed as the process of "tilling the soil" or 'befriending' the most tangible and physical part of ourselves. The more there is relative comfort with the body, the better it is able to serve as the gateway to the other dimensions.

Working with the physical body is particularly important for youth who have experienced some form of trauma. A substantial body of research shows that a person who has experienced trauma such as sexual abuse, may not have a friendly disposition towards his/her body, and may therefore need help to get in touch with the body as people can only tell their stories after they have reconnected with the body, "after no body becomes some body" (Van der Kolk, 2014:247). As the holistic approach engages strongly with the physical body, it can be seen as a useful approach for young people who have experienced trauma, as through engaging the physical body in action, the 'experiences' or sensations associated with the trauma can be dislodged from within the body while simultaneously, the mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions are accessed and influenced. Work on the physical body allows the tensions and stress to be released as the body can 'turn off' the flight-fright response, which generally enables the individual to begin the process of talking about the trauma (Levine, 2010:10; Van der Kolk, 2014:85).

A further exploration of the data suggests that each respondent's experiences were unique. Although all five respondents were exposed to the same curriculum and environment, which resulted in many similar experiences, the impact of the holistic approach was nevertheless uniquely experienced by each one, with the nuances evident in their descriptions of the changes. This finding seems to concur with the perspective that two individuals may be exposed to the same 'stimulus' but may not respond to it in the same way (Beard & Wilson, 2006:23). Alternatively, even if they experience the 'stimulus' in the same way, they may still describe it differently.

An example can be found in the physical changes described by Jacob, Gary and Vatiswa. Jacob was generally fairly fit when he entered the academy. He noticed that he lost weight on the programme. Gary, on the other hand, who admitted to marijuana and Tik (methamphetamine) use, gained weight on the programme, which is generally regarded as positive for someone wishing to recover from substance addiction, as it is commonly accepted that repeated drug use often leads to weight loss. Vatiswa, on the other hand, described her physical changes as 'becoming lighter as she was eating properly.

One explanation for this individuation of experiences can possibly be found in the perspective espoused by Mansoor (2009:161) who maintains that every human being has imprints or *samskaras* in the body and mind as a consequence of their lived experiences. Anecdotally, imprints can be thought of as footprints, or the effects of an experience on a human being. These imprints influence how they respond to any subsequent experience (Mansoor, 2009:161). This notion of imprints has important implications for any personal transformation intervention, as it suggests that personal transformation programmes may yield different outcomes or changes in participants owing to the presence of *samskaras* on an individual's behaviour. Personal transformation interventions therefore have to be sufficiently robust to take cognisance of both collective and individual needs. Put differently, there is "no one size fits all" in personal transformation.

Jacob, Gary and Vatiswa were exposed to the same curriculum, but were impacted upon in different ways, possibly as a consequence of their own lived experiences, readiness for change, how they paid attention (as Gary describes) and their *samskaras*. An individual's *samskaras* not only influence the nature and depth of changes that he/she could experience, but possibly the extent to which these changes can be sustained over a period of time, notwithstanding the similarity in the macro socioeconomic and cultural contexts within which respondents find themselves. There is some support for this perspective in the literature, as argued by Beard and Wilson (2006:21) who indicate that individuals have their "own genetic make-up, experiences and dispositions" which play a role in making an experience unique to that individual, and therefore "all learning experiences are personal and unique to us". Similarly, as argued by Garbarino (1999:182), there are individual differences in behaviour in any situation.

What is significant is that individuals may not be aware of their imprints, particularly in relation to emotional abuse. Although a large number of young people in disadvantaged contexts grow up in dysfunctional families, they may not have an appreciation that their experiences are traumatic and that these experiences are changing their brain and behaviour (Scaer, 2005:132). This may be what happened in the case of Jacob, who was subjected to many years of emotional and physical abuse as a result of his father's alcoholism. When a person has experienced trauma, the body is often frozen into a state of "fight or flight" (Gobodo-Madikizela, 2003:57; Scaer, 2005:213; Van der Kolk, 2014:85), which becomes the state from which the individual engages with others and the world.

The individuation of the personal transformation process can be seen in Jacob, as he transitioned from a space of fear and domestic violence while growing up, to one of self-empowerment and confidence during and after the course, eventually leading to his studying for a university degree approximately two years later. Similarly, Timothy's personal

transformation can be seen in his transition from a state of depression before the programme, to one of confidence and self-esteem. Gary transformed in his long journey from using substances, being in a gang, and resentful of his father's family, to a space of being integrated into his father's family after the course. Libo's personal transformation can be seen in how he transitioned from a state of low self-esteem before the programme, to the realisation that he was a leader, despite being unemployed. Finally, Vatiswa's personal transformation shifted from using marijuana, to greater calm, stability and purpose, and recognising that there was still an unresolved issue in her not knowing who her father was.

The findings do seem to indicate very strongly, that although the impact of a holistic approach was significant regarding the respondents' personal transformation, and despite many commonalities, the personal transformation process is individualised, and one should not expect that a personal transformation intervention would meet the needs of all participants in the same way. The extent and depth of the changes described by the participants however do seem to suggest that the broad multi-dimensional nature of a holistic approach experience with its strong relational foundation and continuum of experiences has largely met the needs of the five youth respondents. These experiences included physical activities, strategies to connect emotionally, skills to build reflective capability, and a broad range of psychosocial therapeutic interventions, including one-to-one counselling and peer support.

6.4.2 Mental changes

A fairly significant change was in the realm of the mental, which the respondents framed as a change in "mind set, paradigm, perception, views or thinking". All of the respondents described changes in their mental perspectives.

Their experiences resonate with the research of Wade (1998), Tolle (2005), and Beckwith (2008). Wade describes personal transformation as a form of 'rebirth', culminating in fundamental changes to how one perceives one's reality (1998:715); while Beckwith (2008:29-30) describes it as "burning old patterns of thinking and acting" and thinking and acting from a "space of wholeness and completeness". Tolle (2005:21) describes the transformation process as destroying old 'mind-patterns' and the development of a "new dimension of consciousness".

Bourdieu's concept of *habitus* as described in his interview with Lamaison (1986:113), provides a valuable conceptual lens in deepening our understanding of the mental changes. However, despite the lifestyles, lived experiences, beliefs, values and backgrounds of the youth, *habitus*, when it encounters a 'field' with which it is not familiar, the subsequent disjuncture can result in change and transformation (Reay, 2004:436). Some of the youth

respondents found the experiences very challenging, with one of them wanting to leave the programme. They pointed out that many activities, particularly the use of silence, were not comfortable. However, despite many of the experiences being 'new', and not what they were familiar with, they experienced change, which disrupted their "old way of thinking". Two described that after being at the CA for three months following a particular routine, they had to adapt again to their physical environment in their communities when they returned home. The residential part of the CA five-year programme consisting of three months or approximately 90 days of programmatic activities, illustrates that *habitus* and *samskaras* require deliberate interventions, exposure to a 'different field' and practice to be disrupted, which is not easy for many in a society where there is much emphasis on the notion of instant gratification. More importantly, the findings suggest that the desire for change among all the respondents was fairly important in accelerating the process of change.

The mental changes could also have been influenced by the emphasis throughout the programme on building personal mastery and emotional intelligence, with a focus on cultivating mindfulness and present moment awareness, and the role modelling of expected behaviours by the youth instructors. Although the specifics of the curriculum were not explored in detail during the interviews, and perhaps should be the subject of future research, reference was made to how the youth instructors who work directly with the students, modelled expected behaviours. Gary noted that he was influenced by how instructors managed conflict, which speaks to the notion of observational learning. It implies that people can change their attitudes, feelings, mind sets and behaviour in observing, either 'deliberately' or "inadvertently through the influence of example" (Bandura, 1971:5). Learning therefore occurs as a result of paying attention to the behaviour of others, remembering it and subsequently implementing it.

The strides in neuroscience that enable us to understand the adolescent brain is also a useful lens in making sense of the mental changes as there is evidence that young people need to be supported by adults who care and by institutions that can facilitate the acquisition of skills of decision making (Weinberger et al., 2005:3). The reason is that capacity to weigh up often complicated options is impacted upon, as the pre-frontal cortex, which is responsible for 'executive functioning' is not yet fully developed in youth under 24 years (Weinberger et al., 2005:ii). The programme's emphasis on building personal mastery skills, use of youth instructors and staff steeped in an adult learning approach, experiential learning, and a myriad of opportunities for reflection, may possibly have helped to develop decision-making skills or what Weinberger et al. (2005:ii) refer to as 'executive functioning'.

6.4.3 Emotional changes

Significant changes were noted in the emotional domain. The respondents described their emotional changes as:

becoming more mature emotionally

more emotionally connected

more able to speak about my emotions

better able to manage emotions

more self-confidence

calmer

more able to release emotions that were parked

able to forgive family members

show greater appreciation to others

more self-accepting

developing a realisation that an emotional wound had to be addressed when going home

more open on an interpersonal level

able to speak positive things into the environment

more aware of his/her identity

more open to other men

more self-trust

The emotional changes listed above, can broadly be characterised as emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a term popularised by Daniel Goleman (1996). Emotional intelligence refers to self-awareness, a better understanding of self, greater awareness of others, better ability to manage emotions and better interactions with others (Goleman, 1996:46). It is evident that the youth respondents felt that they developed, among others, greater awareness of themselves, and an appreciation of their real identity, and found that their interpersonal relationships improved greatly, especially with their family members. Subhash (2015:26), who researched the contribution of holistic development to nation-building, found that emotional maturity increases social intelligence and develops personal spirituality, thus making a better contribution to nation-building. He maintains that as youth

are the future of a nation, they require skills in social intelligence and emotional maturity to be able to withstand life's challenges.

The emotional changes described by the five youth respondents are very important considering their life stories, and can be seen as "psychological assets that may insulate them from, or buffer the effects of adverse life circumstance" and should be seen in the context of their overall psychosocial health (LeBlanc et al., 2005:165-166). Superior psychosocial health facilitates "optimum development" in the face of challenging circumstances and is an individual's inner state and his or her relationships with others (LeBlanc et al., 2005:165-166). These 'psychological assets' can be seen in how Timothy dealt with his 'wound' when he went home, despite his physical circumstances not having changed and how Vatiswa coped after the programme, despite not knowing who her father was.

There does not appear to be any differences in how the male and female respondents were affected by a holistic approach. It appears that the holistic approach is 'gender' friendly in that it allowed for a similar expression of feelings that had been 'parked' for a long time and for these emotions to be transformed among male and female youth respondents (Kiselica, 2003:1225). All the respondents, regardless of gender, were able to identify and describe many emotions during the course of the programme. This finding appears contrary to research conducted by Levant et al. (2009:190), who explored whether there were gender differences in alexithymia ('without words for emotions'). Although they found small differences, their research showed that men exhibited higher levels of restrictive emotionality. The findings of this research study, despite the small number of respondents, showed that although the youth had suppressed many of their emotions experienced during their early childhood and adolescent years, through their personal transformation journey during the programme, they found it possible to 'open up', 'identify' and 'describe' the emotions that they had suppressed. Their 'opening up' seems to suggest that although they had 'parked' many emotions, the CA experience made it possible for them to recognise, describe and own very deep emotions, possibly illustrating the importance of how particular 'social spaces' and experiences may enable youth to 'open up' about issues that they had suppressed for a long time.

This ability to recognise and describe emotions can be seen in Jacob's remarks when he stated that he realised in his solo that he had suppressed a lot of his emotions growing up. He pointed out "that during my solo, I realised how I had suppressed all those emotions that I experienced during the violence in my home". He further described that "the emotions were based on years of experience of trauma, of fear, of pain and hate". Similar sentiments were expressed by Vatiswa, Timothy and Gary.

The 'bottling up' or 'parking' of emotions is evident in most of their stories. This could be attributed to many factors, including their traditional socialisation, not being accustomed to speaking about their feelings or not having anyone pay attention to them. However, their descriptions of the changes illustrate that they had found opportunities, particularly during the solo, to 'release' pent-up emotions, resulting in greater confidence, self-esteem, awareness and improved relationships with others. In other words, they enhanced their psychological capital (Korthagen, 2013a:14).

What is very significant is that some of the respondents spoke about their trauma for the very first time in their lives during their sojourn at the CA. It begs the question what would have happened to them if they had not disclosed some of the trauma that they had experienced in their childhood or early adolescence? What happens to the trauma and violence later on in life? Having the opportunity to be afforded psychosocial support as offered at the CA through its one-on-one counselling services and therapeutic care, and exposure to activities that facilitate the "opening up of emotions", is therefore very significant, in a context where many youth from working-class backgrounds have no or limited access to professional help. The act of "breaking their silence" which can be seen as a process of releasing 'emotional blockages' definitely seemed to enhance their personal transformation process.

Another interesting observation is that the youth respondents chose to 'name' some very sensitive issues such as domestic violence, gender identity issues, and particularly cross-dressing, as alluded to by Timothy. In society in general, there is often a "systemic fear of naming" certain issues (Fine, 1989:157). The stories narrated by the respondents suggest that a holistic approach enabled youth to 'open up' and 'name' issues through its multi-faceted scope, particularly through the use of the solo and the psychosocial support that was made available to them.

6.4.4 Spiritual changes

The spiritual changes can broadly be characterised as those changes that enabled respondents to develop a better understanding of who they were and to deepen their faith. Ungar et al. (2005:333) argue that spirituality is a critical component of the health of youth who are at risk. They maintain that there are elements associated with spirituality that can predict resilience: a belief system, a sense of purpose and connection to others, and places that assist in fostering feelings of being whole and a sense that one's life has purpose.

In considering the emotional as well as the spiritual changes described by the young people, it is critical to reflect whether the five youth respondents, before they participated in the programme, suffered from what is described in the literature as a "spiritual emptiness, spiritual void or hunger", concepts used to characterise the 'inner state' of many young people across the world (Garbarino, 1999:154; Kessler, 2000:xi).

Although I would hasten not to generalise, these concepts may resonate with many youth in South Africa, as there is a large percentage of black youth that are unemployed, have no training for work, and with limited schooling, which may result in 'spiritual emptiness' as can be seen when Timothy spoke about his "depression, feeling not valued or his spirit being crushed"; or Jacob, who created an 'imaginary friend' and just knowing that there were "more aspects to his being"; or Libo's feelings that he had "lost himself along the way". The stories of the youth seem to suggest a need to satisfy their longing for recognition, belonging and acceptance. This is succinctly captured by Subhash (2015:21) when he avers that adolescents are "particularly inclined toward a search for ultimate meaning and transcendence".

The youth described their spiritual changes as:

growing stronger spiritually

not being able to describe the changes but knowing they're spiritual

praying regularly

faith starting to grow

an inner change that he could relate to; and

becoming more aware of who he is spiritually.

Both Vatiswa and Gary used substances over a number of years, which could be viewed in the broader socioeconomic and psychological context of children as well as in the notion of young people "numbing their inner lives" affected by neglect and abuse, through the use of drugs (Kessler, 2000:ix). I definitely had a sense from the findings that spirituality and their spiritual changes seemed to play a role in assisting to "instil and sustain hope" and to make sense of a 'disadvantaged existence' (Dass-Brailsford, 2005:586). In as much as adolescence is a period of risk-taking and experimentation, there is an emerging body of research that has examined the protective qualities of personal spirituality and found that spirituality provides a buffer against the onset of common 'pathologies' such as substance abuse and depression (Subhash, 2015:21). Furthermore, studies are showing that both physical and psychological personal wellbeing are critical features of modern spirituality (Subhash, 2015:22).

6.4.5 What contributed to the changes?

The research conducted by Drapeau et al. (2007:985-987) is a useful lens when exploring what contributed to the change processes described by the respondents. Drapeau et al. (2007:985) described the notion of turning points as catalysts of change and identified actions (an achievement that gives one a sense of accomplishment), *relation* (meeting a new

person or forming a positive relationship that generates trust), and *reflection* (an individual making their own reflections) as examples of such catalysts for change. All these turning points are evident in the stories of the youth respondents when asked what contributed to their personal transformation. However, most of them described that the change was not one thing, but a combination of things, alluding to the multi-faceted nature of a holistic approach.

They mentioned peer support (relation), the tools and skills (tools that aid reflection), the residential nature of the programme, the focus on the student, the counselling and therapeutic care, and the challenging nature of the programme (actions). In reviewing the narratives, some of the respondents referred to particular people, events or stories that were catalysts for change, also highlighting the important role of storytelling in personal transformation processes. Gary's father's comments seem to sum up the youth experiences that the changes came about as the CA works with the 'whole package'. Vatiswa echoed his comments, when she noted that "it's the CA approach that makes the difference; it's the teaching of gratitude, the use of ritual like making a pledge to guide one in the three months; it helps people find purpose; it brings about mental changes". She pointed out that it was not "only one thing contributing to change, but a combination of things, from the food to the peer support and father figures and that you came out of the programme with a purpose in life".

The views of the youth resonate with the insights shared by Pinnock (2016:266), who describes the personal transformation process as including many different facets, from "having mentors for empathy, support and guidance; wilderness experiences; being in a less harmful environment; safe spaces; opportunities to tell stories and time for reflection where young people can think without distractions".

Of singular importance in their personal transformation journey, however, was the contribution of nature and the 24-hour solo in particular. The data seem to suggest that it was when youth experienced the 'power' of silence, that they were able to "break their silence" on a number of psychosocial challenges issues such as domestic violence and their yearning for connection.

6.4.5.1 Nature and silence

During the programme, young people participate in a two-week outdoor or wilderness experience, of which they spend 24 hours in solo, preceded by a process, called the 'circle of life' where they share their experiences of growing up. They are also introduced to various meditative practices and in particular the power of the breath in connecting with one's 'inner environment'.

A very significant, if not the most significant factor influencing the personal transformation process of the youth, was the time spent in nature and in particular the time spent in solitude.

In fact, for at least three respondents, the solo proved to be the turning point that served to accelerate their personal transformation process. The turning point was not so much in completing the solo, but rather the emotions and changes that silence evoked within them that led to the deep changes. Their experiences in nature, and particularly in solo, ranged from dealing with their psychosocial issues; thinking and reflecting on their lives; connecting with nature and themselves; connecting with soul or spirit; realising their oneness with nature; asking for forgiveness; becoming aware of their identity and their value; and becoming overwhelmed by emotions. Their experiences confirmed that the solo was the vehicle to other 'gateways' such as "deep connection to the self, transcendence, creative expression, or the search for meaning and purpose" as well as a way of "nourishing the human spirit" (Kessler, 2000:36). Through their solo, they were able to connect with themselves and "contact the deeper truth of their nature", making it possible to see others with greater "objectivity and openness" (Kessler, 2000: 20).

Their experiences in nature in general and of the solo experience in particular seem to confirm a body of research over the last sixty years about the impact of wilderness work among youth (Ungar et al., 2007; Russell & Walsh, 2011; Norton et al., 2014; Pinnock, 2016). The environment has been regarded over a long period of time as an important place for "healing, repair and personal development" (Beard & Wilson, 2006:100). The environment "acts as the therapist" (Beard & Wilson, 2006:103). Similarly, "nature can be one of the most important resources for nurturing resilience, even in 'at-risk youth" (Besthorn, 2005:121).

The research of Ungar et al. (2007:321) that outdoor programmes can make us aware not only of our relationships with nature, but with our relationships with one another, can be seen in the stories of the young people. Similarly, their experiences reinforce the insights of a community worker, Ashley Potts, who in an interview with Pinnock (2016:269), points out that he is able to do in one session in nature what may take him six months to achieve in a particular community. Although he could not fully describe the reason for this, he does feel that it is as if something just 'drops away' when people are in nature.

However, silence does not always bring peace, as is evident in the experiences of Jacob and Vatiswa, confirming the views of Kessler (2000) that it allows for a young person to engage with the 'turmoil' within and start sorting it out. Short periods of silent reflection allow us to "sift and sort out feelings, thoughts and sensations" (Kessler, 2000:39).

Jacob's experience during his solo, where he became so overwhelmed by the trauma and emotion that he wanted to leave the course, possibly captures what Mansoor refers to as the experience of *tapas*, a process of "walking through the fire". Mansoor (2009:165) regards silence as the biggest *tapas*. This process of *tapas* involves dealing with *samskaras* or imprints that have accumulated as a result of daily living. For Jacob, his *tapas* are

confronting the pain, trauma and emotions that he has suppressed as a result of the violence at home. Vatiswa confronted the issue of not knowing who her father was and ultimately forgiving her mother.

Although there are people who do not believe in the power of outdoor work, there is evidence that suggests that it is the spiritual and emotional nature of the wilderness experience that is the source of the power as is evident in the experiences of the youth respondents (Beard & Wilson, 2006:101). However, immersion in nature should be of sufficient duration to allow participants to experience the difference between the “old and new selves” (Ungar et al., 2007:332).

6.5 Why do NEET youth experience a holistic approach in the way they do?

The answer to this question may be found in an exploration of a number of themes that relate to the context within which NEET youth live, their yearning for connection and relationships, their search for identity, their personal resilience and readiness for change, as well as the adult learning approach employed at the CA.

6.5.1 Socioeconomic context and family ecology

One of the answers to why NEET youth experienced the holistic approach in the way they do can possibly be located in the ‘political story’ of their lives (Fine, 1991:8). The five youth that participated in this study framed their socioeconomic context and family ecology as particularly challenging. It is evident that their context is one of “partial-parenting, partial-schooling, pervasive poverty and inequality” (Swartz, 2009:xi). Their stories narrated in 2016 and the early part of 2017 seem to amplify the perspective that the ‘individual psyche’ of youth continues to be influenced by social structures like the family, education, race and class (Soudien, 2007:4). One of the consequences of this challenging macro context is that many youth find themselves not in employment, education or training and it is this NEET status that often exacerbates their disengagement from themselves, their families and social institutions.

Their stories show that they continue to live in communities where unemployment is high and growing, poverty is pervasive, crime is rampant, and substance abuse is a problem. Two out of five youth described living in families where domestic violence was a reality while growing up. All five described the impact of the absence of positive fathering, making the need for connection a high priority. They described issues of physical safety, fear, lack of opportunity, the ‘passive’ nature of their education, and lack of purpose. Their family backgrounds illustrate the deficits in economic, social and cultural capital confronting many black youth from working-class families.

Their descriptions of their educational or employment status illustrate the nature of the challenges faced by NEET youth. Despite three of them having matriculated, they were unemployed at the start of the programme. The findings illustrate that youth from black working-class communities, who attended schools where the quality of education was often a problem, remain caught up in an intricate web of unemployment, internships, short-term and contract employment, which recycles them in the same context of poverty and social exclusion. To escape from this intricate web is no mean feat in a society where the odds are heavily stacked against many. The table below shows the precariousness of their employment situation.

Table: 6.3: Employment status of the youth respondents

Respondent	Educational levels	Employment status
Jacob	Matriculant	Casual worker, then unemployed before starting the programme
Timothy	Matriculant	Learnership in the wholesale and retail sector; unemployed before starting the programme
Vatiswa	Matriculant	Four-year National Diploma; unemployed before starting the programme
Gary	Exited school in Grade 11	Starting a course at a TVET college, did not complete; plumbing learnership; unemployed before starting the programme
Libo	Exited school in Grade 11 Wrote matric part-time, but did not pass	Casual worker in the construction industry; left his work to start the CA programme.

A way of appreciating their experiences is through a critical lens, as outlined by Bourdieu (1986), using social, cultural and economic capital and the notion of *habitus*. It is evident that the youth are in a very similar position regarding social, cultural and economic capital as their parents (Bourdieu, 1986:245). Their stories show that there is no difference between their lives and that of their parents. Many of their parents did not complete high school, and two of the youth lived in the same community all their lives.

Their stories indicate that *habitus* predisposes an individual to particular ways of behaving (Reay, 2004:434), but that it is not fatalistic or deterministic, but an “open system that changes with experience” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:133). The *habitus* developed in the family generally becomes the basis of all subsequent experiences (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:134). It is significant that when they were exposed to a holistic intervention during the programme, *habitus* was disrupted (Reay, 2004:436). They were in a safe space during the programme, lived away from risks (Drapeau et al., 2007:988) and were in a ‘cocoon’. This

caused some kind of ‘rupture’ resulting in changes on a physical mental, emotional, and spiritual level. It is not possible to predict the long-term sustainability of these changes, although there is some indication of sustainability as the interviews took place approximately six months to five years after the youth graduated from the programme, with all of them still remaining on a positive developmental trajectory, despite one of them being unemployed.

6.5.2 Relationships and the need for connection

A significant finding with regard to the lives of the five respondents is the absence of connection or relationship with a father figure. This may explain why after their three-month experience, they emphasised the relational value of the programme, such as being provided with a ‘father figure’ or ‘peer support’, or “getting attention even if one is not sick”. Much of the research on the relational aspects of youth development emphasise the critical importance of connection with and attachment to at least one adult in their lives, the yearning of young people to connect meaningfully and to be “seen and heard” (Kessler, 2000:22; Pinnock, 2016:155). McLaughlin (1993:53) maintains that where there is little parental involvement in the lives of young people, it deepens the feelings of ‘invisibility’ that they feel.

All five youth respondents in this study raised concerns around the active participation of their biological fathers in their lives. In fact most of the respondents alluded to having no positive male role model during childhood and early adolescence, perhaps showing starkly the ‘aloneness’ referred to by Soudien (2007:31). We are also reminded of the views of Bernard and Este (2005:449) that “black men want role models who they can emulate”.

Their stories ranged from having no meaningful relationship with their fathers for the better part of their childhood and adolescent years, as in the case of Timothy, Libo and Gary, to Vatiswa, who at 28 years old still does not know who her father is. Jacob lived with both parents, but did not have much connection with his father as a result of his father’s drinking and the violence he meted out when drunk. Libo’s circumstances were extremely challenging and after his mother died, he had almost no parental involvement in his life. He lived under a bridge, even after completing the programme, and at the time of the interview, lived with a guardian, despite his father being alive and living in the same province, as he felt deep antagonism towards his father. The notion of a young person living under a bridge was incredibly jarring, considering the media’s portrayal of Cape Town as one of the most beautiful cities in the world and the reality of the increasing number of street children. All the youth respondents shared how the lack of connection or attachment to a male figure contributed to fear, lack of confidence, and low self-esteem and self-worth. From their stories, the sense of longing and yearning was palpable.

It is evident that this lack of connection may have contributed to some of the youth gravitating towards substance use and abuse, as there is a tendency for people to connect with

chemicals when they cannot connect to another human being (Hari, 2015:293). It is interesting to note however, that Gary pointed out that he was not 'blaming' his father for his use of illegal substances. However, as Van der Kolk (2014:296) maintains, it becomes difficult to "fill the holes" if one is not wanted or not being "seen and heard".

Over a number of decades, a considerable body of research has developed on the "acceptance-rejection syndrome" leading to the development of an evidence-based parental acceptance-rejection theory (Rohner et al., 2012:1). These studies have shown that despite differences in culture, ethnicity or geographic location across the world, young people are impacted upon when they perceive that they are rejected. Parental acceptance and rejection can be viewed on a continuum, with parental rejection referring to the "absence or significant withdrawal" of the warmth dimension, including affection, care support and love (Rohner et al., 2012:1). As a result of rejection or lack of acceptance, young people may become depressed, and display behavioural problems like conduct disorders, delinquency, or substance abuse (Khaleque, 2002:111). Rejection experienced during childhood places them at greater risk of experiencing social and emotional problems than those "loved continuously" (Khaleque, 2002:115). "Parental rejection is not a specific set of actions by parents but a belief held by the child" (Kagan, 1978:61). As a consequence of ongoing empirical research, this theory has been broadened to include intimate adult relationships and other significant interpersonal relationships over a lifespan and is now named the Interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory (IPARTheory). However, despite the change in name, the core focus of the theory remains children's perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and their remembrances of parental acceptance in childhood and the subsequent impact on their behaviour (Rohner, 2016:3).

The findings seem to indicate that the personal transformation of the youth may have been significantly impacted upon by what the programme offered by way of mentors, peer support, close proximity to other learners, a 'father figure' and that some found a way to take action when they arrived home to address issues within the relational realm, such as in the case of Timothy who confronted his mother's husband about his abusiveness, Gary who reconciled with his father, Libo who asked for forgiveness from his father, and Vatiswa who forgave her mother for keeping the truth from her.

6.5.3 The shaping of identity

The issue of youth identity is central to the development of young people (Soudien, 2007; Rios, 2011). Youth are prone to peer influences (Soudien, 2007:xl) and they construct their identities "within embedded, diverse and complex environments" which include families, peer groups, schools, churches and youth organisations (McLaughlin, 1993:36). It is in this context that the views of the youth should be considered. The influence of peers on their

lives was evident prior to coming to the CA, but the majority described that they developed a more positive perception of themselves and their identity. They also developed greater awareness of who they truly were.

The stories show that although statutory apartheid has been abolished, ethnic identity is still commonplace. All the youth described themselves in terms of an ethnic identity. Furthermore, they live in areas congruent with how they described their ethnic identity. These range from traditional coloured to African townships. Vatiswa's mother also invoked race and ethnicity to create social distance between African and coloured people when she pointed out that Vatiswa was influenced by coloured youth to drink and smoke marijuana. Her perspective shows the 'othering' that happens even among members of the black community (coloured, Indian and African) connected to one another by poverty and crime which is a significant social issue that needs to be addressed.

Gary, Timothy and Vatiswa described how they were influenced by their peers to drink alcohol and use drugs. Gary found a sense of belonging in a gang, probably as he lacked a connection with men in his life. Timothy referred to his grappling with issues around his gender identity and not having a male figure to converse with around "male issues". He felt that his identity was very much shaped by different women in his life over a period of time, but that through the gender work at the CA, he became much more comfortable with his gender identity, and even his cross-dressing.

All respondents seem to have arrived at a point of greater self-acceptance of their life circumstances and of themselves. However this acceptance was not fatalistic, as they all displayed a keenness to continue to improve their lives and not to allow their current context to determine what happened to them in the future.

6.5.4 Personal resilience and readiness for change

Resilience is generally defined as the ability to bounce back from adversity. Although there were no questions posed on resilience during the interviews, the findings show that all the respondents displayed a fair measure of resilience. Before coming onto the programme, they faced challenges such as domestic violence, personal fear, gang involvement, substance abuse, and disconnection, yet still displayed a readiness for change. Perhaps, as Pinnock (2016:184) explains, "young people simply get on with their life", amidst their challenging contexts.

This resilience, including their readiness for change, is seen in their personal stories to the point that one of them, on being accepted onto the programme, borrowed money to get to the CA venue during the start of the programme. Libo resigned from his work, as he felt that the CA programme would yield greater educational benefits. This resilience is often not

adequately captured in the scholarship on youth development, with most youth development programmes being billed as building youth resilience, without sufficiently recognising the resilience that youth already display in surviving in challenging socioeconomic and violent contexts, where gangs and crime are rampant.

Their resilience is evident in their on-going journey after graduating from the CA, as can be seen by what they were doing at the time of the interviews: Vatiswa was employed full-time; Gary was on an internship and so was Timothy; Jacob was a third-year student at a local university; and Libo was unemployed. It is often not acknowledged that youth from working-class communities beset with violence and crime have much to teach society on the nature of their resilience.

6.5.5 Approaches to adult learning

The CA's adult learning approach could potentially be one factor why youth experienced the holistic approach the way they did. The CA adopts an adult education approach that values the experiences and cultural contexts from where learners come. Their teaching approach is participatory, and use is made of various methodologies that seem to resonate with youth, such as the use of rituals (as described by Vatiswa when she refers to the value of the pledge-making process to keep her focused on her purpose), use of the 'council methodology' where young people sit in a circle, with CA staff and instructors emphasising and modelling equality and the importance of everyone having a voice. The importance of "youth working with youth", as seen in the positive relationships that develop between the students and youth instructors is also significant. However, the exact contribution of the adult learning approach to the personal transformation will require further research and exploration.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter interpreted the findings of the study and commenced by describing the process followed in analysing the data. The analysis followed no rigid pre-designed analytical framework, but used the broad approach proposed by Miles et al. (2014:10). The categories and subsequent themes were presented in tabular format and discussed within the context of the three research questions.

The socioeconomic context and family ecologies, within which the young respondents found themselves, were complex and challenging, and greatly influenced their socialisation and potentially their 'psyche'. Their lives tell a 'political story' not only of communities beset by violence, crime, poverty, lack of connection and the absence of a father figure, but of readiness for change and resilience.

The way in which the youth experienced a holistic approach converged with the literature, which defines it as an approach focusing on all dimensions of a human being. Some of the youth understood a holistic approach as multi-faceted and experienced changes on a physical, mental, emotional and spiritual level. The chapter illustrated that the impact of a holistic nature can perhaps be found in how it works with all aspects of what a young person brings to the experience and that it meets a variety of needs, of which the yearning for connection and relationship is significant.

Significant changes were in the realm of the mental, emotional and spiritual. The changes helped them transform their mind set and perspectives and assisted in them being better able to manage their emotions and deal with some of their inner issues that had been 'parked'. It helped to build their confidence and self-esteem, which enabled them to foster better interpersonal relationships when they left the academy. Their faith and spirituality had also grown. There were significant changes in their connection with an adult figure in their lives.

The holistic approach has no gender bias and is both "male and female friendly" as its impact was experienced equally by the respondents. There was not only one aspect of a holistic approach that contributed to their changes, but a combination of factors. The majority of the youth felt that it was the holistic approach as a whole that contributed to their change. This ranged from being provided with healthy food, peer support, mentors, psychosocial support, opportunities for being aspirational, use of ritual, and instilling a sense of purpose.

A very significant contributor to their change came from their time in nature, and particularly their solo experience, confirming a huge body of research on the power of nature and silence in effecting personal transformation. They were able to "break their silence" on a number of psychosocial challenges while spending time in silence. This "breaking of silence" was itself a turning point that significantly accelerated their personal transformation process. The respondents believed however, that in order for the change to be sustainable, they had to practise the tools learnt during the programme in order to deepen their competencies.

The findings illustrate the critical importance of giving effect to youth voice, as their perspectives and insights are vital in understanding their lived realities. It seems almost paradoxical that the process of 'silence' contributed so significantly to an expression of youth voice.

The next and final chapter summarises the key findings, presents the conclusions of the study and proposes recommendations to improve the programme. It also includes my personal reflections of the study.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Learning to reflect on your behaviour and thoughts, as well as on the phenomenon under study, creates a means for continuously becoming a better researcher. Becoming a better researcher captures the dynamic nature of the process. Conducting research, like teaching and other complex acts, can be improved; it cannot be mastered (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992:xiii).

7.1 Introduction

As the conclusion of this study was being written, it was interesting to note that the latest South African statistics indicate that the number of youth who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) is increasing. The situation is of serious concern to the country as a larger number of unemployed youth exacerbate the current social crisis in poor communities. This also implies that the potential exists for increased numbers of youth to become disconnected from self, family and society, if their NEET status persists for a long time. In addition, some schools are echoing a particular narrative about youth who are becoming 'disruptive' at schools, prompting the Western Cape provincial government to pass a bill in July 2017 to set up intervention facilities for youth who face disciplinary sanction at schools. Perhaps the answer lies in institutions and society as a whole adopting an approach that seeks to work with young people in a way that keeps them connected to their peers, families and other socialising institutions, and not in the creation of separate 'intervention facilities' for youth who display 'behavioural' problems. Within the current context of increased youth unemployment, I would argue that the rationale for the study has grown in importance and relevance since the project was first conceptualised towards the end of 2015. There remains a necessity for evidence-based data on developmental pathways for youth to enable us to discern their value and impact in facilitating connection with self and others and to stimulate growth and development. We must begin to engage on how we can undertake 'disruptive pedagogies' which positively influence the consciousness of young people (Weis & Fine, 2001:497). Such research has the potential to influence both the theory and practice of youth development.

This chapter summarises the key findings and explores the recommendations made by the respondents on how the CA programme might be enhanced. Based on the findings and their recommendations, I make a number of suggestions for consideration by the CA with possible broader implications for the theory and practice of youth development. I include in this discussion some of the limitations of the study and then engage in a process of reflection on the research process, including the identification of areas requiring further research. The chapter concludes with an overview of the chapters and some final remarks on the study.

7.2 Summary of findings

The findings indicated that a holistic approach could be defined as an approach to personal transformation that recognises and does not exclude any aspect of one's being. These dimensions are often characterised by varying names, but generally can be regarded as the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual, or the body, mind and spirit.

The stories of the five youth tell a political story of their lives: of deepening inequality, poor-quality education, unemployment, domestic violence, neglect and the absence of a father figure.

The significance of a holistic approach for NEET youth is that it has the potential to meet a wide array of needs that NEET youth have, such as proper nutrition, peer support, attention, connection, stimulation, positive role models, challenge and psychosocial support as a consequence of their socioeconomic and psychosocial realities.

The practical value and experiential nature of a holistic approach needs to be experienced to be understood, as it is more than a philosophical approach.

A curriculum for personal transformation anchored in a holistic approach is therefore multifaceted and seeks to integrate all aspects of a learner's being in the learning process, which helps to facilitate learning.

The youth respondents experienced many changes owing to their participation in the programme; the most significant were those perceived to be in the mental, emotional and spiritual domains.

The amplification of the emotional, mental and spiritual changes in comparison with the physical changes, potentially points to an important insight with regard to the nature of a holistic approach: the physical dimension is the 'container' for the mental, emotional and spiritual dimensions and these 'inner' dimensions are accessed through the 'outer' physical dimension.

This suggests that the process of personal transformation should of necessity include work on or through the physical body itself, which is not as easy as it sounds, as the physical body is often an instrument of repulsion, anxiety and ambivalence for many young people.

Despite many similarities in how the youth experienced the changes, each respondent's experiences were unique. One explanation for the individualised nature of personal transformation is possibly as a consequence of imprints or *samskaras* that warrant both a universal and individual approach when working with youth.

It was not only one aspect of the programme that led to their changes, but a combination of elements within the holistic approach.

The biggest contributor to their change was their time spent in nature and more specifically in silence. It was the silence that caused them to break their silence on a number of issues.

Their experiences in silence seem to suggest that the personal transformation process for some may include a process of “walking through the fire”, that is, an inner wrestling with a challenge such as the absence of a father or domestic violence. This has the potential to facilitate the personal transformation process, if the individual is supported so that the process is not too overwhelming.

The personal transformation process is therefore both an inner and an outer process.

The findings illustrated that for many of the youth, their sojourn on the programme made it possible for them to speak about their psychosocial challenges for the very first time in their lives, begging the question: What happens to youth who have no platform to speak about their psychosocial challenges?

The study highlighted the importance of listening to youth voices on their lived experiences of their context and how the CA programme has impacted them. In addition, it showed the value of not learning only *about* youth but *from* youth.

More importantly, in youth not wanting to hide their true identities in the study, they conveyed the message of wanting to be seen and heard.

It also showed that within an environment of safety, as provided by the programme, where they were ‘insulated’ from risks such as crime, poverty and peer pressure, they were able to ‘name’ issues like absent fathers, domestic violence and questions around gender identity.

Despite the stereotypes that exist and research findings on the gender differences in emotional expressions (Brody & Hall, 2008; Levant et al., 2009), the findings suggest that the holistic approach had no gender bias, in that both male and female respondents described similar change experiences. There was no ‘emotional restrictiveness’ on the part of the male respondents during the programme, and they were able to speak about issues that they had ‘parked’ for a long time (Levant et al., 2009:190).

There is evidence of the sustainability of the personal transformation experienced by the youth as they are either in meaningful occupations or studying at higher education institutions; this was further illustrated by their positive psychosocial disposition at the time of the interviews. All were on a positive developmental trajectory, despite one of the respondents being unemployed.

7.3 Recommendations made by respondents

Before commencing with my own observations and suggestions emanating from the findings, I wish to describe the recommendations that the youth and their parents made on how the CA programme might be improved.

7.3.1 Training and education of instructors

- Ensure that the Instructors are able to work with all youth who attend the programme, as youth have varying needs.
- Instructors should have an appropriate level of education and training.
- Instructors should receive feedback on their performance.
- Appoint 'stable' instructors (the respondent chose to not give more information on the use of the word 'stable'), but felt that ongoing feedback would enable instructors to realise how valuable their work is.

7.3.2 Orientation programme

- Ensure that there is ample opportunity for the skills taught in the orientation phase to be practised and improved throughout the three months.

7.3.3 Publicity to create awareness of the Chrysalis Academy

- Owing to the quality of the CA programme and the need that exists in communities, more needs to be done to create awareness of the CA programme in communities, as many families and communities in general are not aware of its existence.

7.3.4 Family integration workshops

- Continue to run family workshops as families are positively impacted upon by these initiatives.

7.3.5 Education and bursaries

- Explore the possibility of making bursaries available to graduates who wish to study as this will contribute to the sustainability of the change.

7.3.6 CA's skills phase over four weeks

- Ensure that its courses are accredited to assist young people to find employment or further their education.
- Consider extending its skills phase from four weeks to a longer period to ensure maximum skills development.

7.3.7 Accommodating more women

- Consider having more courses for women, as currently there is only one per year.

7.3.8 Aftercare support

- Continue to visit placement organisations where the graduates are placed to provide support and assess how things are going “on the ground”.
- Revisit the establishment of Chrysalis clubs, forums for graduates in a particular geographical area. Each club should have a WhatsApp group and a team leader to coordinate their activities.
- Convene a reunion for graduates every five years in the form of a one-day workshop to enable graduates to assess how far they have come over the years.

Two respondents (one youth and one parent) indicated that they would change nothing about the programme.

7.4 Implications of the recommendations and the research findings for the theory and practice of youth development in general and at the CA in particular

I believe that the research study and the recommendations have implications both for the Chrysalis Academy and the policy and practice of youth development, particularly with NEET youth. I therefore discuss these implications at the level of the CA and then at a broader practice level.

7.4.1 Implications for the CA

7.4.1.1 The CA needs to consider the recommendations formulated by the respondents as they emerge directly from young people with first-hand experience of the programme. In particular, the recommendations on the instructor corps made by at least three

youth, are worthy of consideration as the instructors play a pivotal role in working with students as peer support, mentors and/or 'father figures'. It is very likely that the quality of instructors will enhance the quality of the support they provide to students.

7.4.1.2 The CA should note the significant role that nature and the solo played in assisting youth to deal with various psychosocial issues. The findings confirmed the literature that there is power in silence to 'surface' psychosocial issues that might have been 'parked'. This necessitates the ongoing innovation of this aspect of the programme to maximise its already powerful influence on youth, in addition to exploring counselling support for students on site that may find the solo experience overwhelming, particularly if it is their first experience of silence.

7.4.1.3 The CA may wish to explore more avenues for using silence in nature during the two-week outdoor period so that the 24-hour solo is the culmination of excursions into silence. A sudden immersion into silence, without adequate preparation or experience of immersion into silence, may prove overwhelming for some. In a context where youth face a bombardment of news through various forms of technology such as the cellular telephone and television, the value of silence cannot be underestimated.

7.4.1.4 Explore ways to facilitate among students deeper reflection on the value and impact of the holistic approach at the end of the course and during refreshers, particularly on the linkages between the different levels of change and catalysts of change. This process can enhance best practice and serve to institutionalise a holistic approach, as the more the 'voices' of respondents are heard, the more the programme can be improved and refined.

7.4.2 Broader implications of the research study and recommendations

7.4.2.1 The application of a holistic approach should be explored by youth development practitioners, particularly those that work with NEET youth, as the study shows the potential of the holistic approach, not only to cultivate the psychological capital of youth by building self-confidence and self-esteem, and fostering connection and stimulating change at different levels, but to meet a wide array of other critical needs that youth may have as a result of their NEET status.

7.4.2.2 Although I am not generalising the findings to other contexts as I interviewed five youth only, the application of a holistic approach should be explored in other contexts where youth and young adolescents find themselves, including schools, where youth are currently already labelled for their behavioural conduct, as a possible medium to 'disrupt' what can be seen as a negative developmental trajectory.

7.4.2.3 The study has illustrated the power of nature and silence in helping youth to break their silence, and this modality is worthy of exploration by youth development programmes that do not incorporate this experience in their programmes. Both the findings and literature illustrate the value of working in nature, particularly with young people who have experienced trauma.

7.4.2.4 The study has highlighted the power of an approach with youth that includes work on and through the body, other than narrowly focusing on skill acquisition or work readiness or behavioural modification. This could be explored by organisations engaging with youth in all contexts, including at school level.

7.4.2.5 The CA may need to engage more broadly within the larger youth sector in society around the holistic approach to ensure that the approach gains currency owing to its potential value for youth.

7.4.2.6 Despite this study not being an evaluative study, I have taken the liberty of extrapolating as many of the principles characterising positive youth development from the literature reviewed, in an endeavour to assist the Chrysalis Academy and other youth development practitioners to formulate a best-practice guide aimed at deepening both the theory and practice of youth development at the Chrysalis Academy and beyond.

- Programmes should be age appropriate to prepare adolescents for adulthood.
- Programmes should acknowledge that youth do need to confront who they are in the context of society.
- Programmes should have a philosophical stance, goals, processes and outcomes.
- Programmes should provide youth with a positive sense of self and hope in the future.
- Youth development is a process, not an event.
- Youth development should include bodywork to release trauma through various modalities.
- Programmes should take place in any setting.
- Programmes should include processes to move youth from 'paralysis to transformation'.
- There should be a belief in the self-worth of youth, regardless of their competencies.
- There should be well-prepared committed staff.
- Cultural heritage and personal identities should be celebrated.
- Programmes need to be intentional.
- The central tenet should be building personal mastery.
- Disrupt trajectories of inequality, poverty and despair.

- Belief that youth have innate ability.
- Youth need training and resources to enhance their employability and assist them to make right choices.
- Community of support.
- Sustainability of access to support.
- Long-term commitment to support youth.
- Appropriate supervision and structure.
- Empower not only youth, but also their families.
- Respond directly to youth needs.
- Programmes should recognise how the absence of adult figures impacts on youth development.
- Embrace the whole person, and not simply a single issue or component such as substance abuse.
- Have rules that apply to everyone and these rules must be seen as fair and clear.
- Set high expectations.
- Assist youth in recasting their identity.
- Have a vibrant and active peer culture.
- Effective interventions and programmes to include voice and choice and there must be a reciprocal interaction between youth and adults.
- Need strong partnerships with families, schools and communities.
- Form, structure and guidance for learning to take place.
- Programmes should recognise that youth are not homogeneous.
- Programmes should be comprehensive with a range of interventions.
- Use of mentors.
- Use a variety of teaching methods as hands-on training.
- Programmes should provide sufficient exposure and high dosage.
- Programmes should be underpinned by a theoretical framework.
- Programmes enable youth to develop strong, positive relationships.
- Interventions are timed to ensure maximum impact.
- Programmes must be evaluated to determine their effectiveness.
- Assist youth to achieve their full potential.
- Youth require sets of support and opportunities to be successful.
- Youth require communities to build and support the positive development of youth.
- Programmes should assist youth to become legitimate and productive citizens.
- Programmes should have a vibrant and active peer culture.

- Use of wilderness can provide space for connection, silence and inner healing.
- Youth to be provided with an opportunity to tell their stories as these help to make them heard.
- Youth need time for reflection to think freely without distractions that they may not encounter in their homes.
- Youth require all dimensions of their being to be acknowledged.
- Learning needs to be joyful and meaningful.
- Learning must integrate mind, body and spirit.
- Learning needs to meet the spiritual emptiness felt by youth.
- Programmes should assist youth to build their emotional intelligence as these help to grow their psychological assets.
- Youth programmes need to recognise that youth are whole right now.
- Readiness for change is an element that contributes to successful participation in programmes.

7.5 Limitations of the study

A limitation of the study is that the sample comprised four men and only one woman. A more gender representative sample may have been useful, as the sample was skewed towards male respondents.

I limited the participant input by my being conversant only in English and Afrikaans. This placed Libo at a slight disadvantage as his mother tongue is isiXhosa. Although he engaged with all the questions, in a narrative inquiry every effort should be made to maximise the voice of the youth in its most expressive and authentic form.

7.6 My personal reflections on this research journey

In this section, I wish to pay attention to how this research study provided me with an opportunity for my own personal transformation and learning. I am of the view that this discussion is critical as research outcomes are generally geared towards providing society with information on a particular topic, but what is often not foregrounded is how the research journey provides the researcher with opportunities for transformation.

A research project can result in profound personal transformation of a researcher, bringing about greater self-awareness and growth that can result in changes in how a researcher views him/herself, the world and others (Anderson & Braud, 2011:xvi). This transformation means that a researcher develops a “final interpretive lens” which has been changed through engaging with the data collected (Anderson & Braud, 2011:28).

The journey proved to be a most illuminating one. First, the research study enhanced my knowledge of youth development and provided critical insights into how the youth who

participated in the study perceived a number of issues, from the influence of socioeconomic context on youth development to describing their personal transformation process. Not only did I become more intimately acquainted with the literature on youth development and personal transformation, but I also became more aware of the value of hearing the voices of those largely on the periphery. Hence, the research provided me not only with learning *about* youth, but the opportunity to learn *from* youth. I became much more aware of young people's yearning to be seen and heard. This yearning was reflected in their not wanting their identity kept hidden in the research report and how they became animated when sharing many parts of their journey, particularly when discussing how they were recruited onto the programme, their personal change, and their readiness for change. They also found the reflections on their journey extremely rich. This too was the experience of the graduate who agreed to participate in the pilot study for this project. The study challenged some of my assumptions, particularly my thinking around their vulnerability and anxiety; for example, their stories were painful, and I assumed that they would not want their stories to be seen or heard by others. However, I was proved wrong. They used the platform of the interview to express very clearly and reflectively their experiences of domestic violence and emotional neglect. I had a sense that they were reflecting that the domestic violence or neglect ultimately did not 'scar' their true selves. I must confess to being astounded by their courage in not wanting to hide their true identity, despite their stories being about social issues like domestic violence that often remain hidden in families.

I found no ambiguity in the views of the youth in how they experienced the influence of a holistic approach. This reawakened in me what I already knew – that youth can be agents of positive social change and their voices ought to find their way into youth policies and programmes which are often drafted by those removed from the day-to-day reality faced by youth. Their experiences ought to find their way into our boardrooms and academic institutions, as much of what is written about youth is from an academic and 'adult' perspective, and therefore through particular conceptual lenses, whereas they spoke about actual, lived experiences.

Second, I also appreciated much more directly the importance of experiential learning as critical to personal transformation. In addition, experience seemed to enable the learners to access the words to describe their experiences.

Third, the process of listening to stories in the interviews was both inspiring and painful. I must confess to a range of visceral or bodily sensations that I experienced, particularly during the interviews with Jacob and Timothy when they were recalling incidents of violence. Jacob changed his body language, moved in his chair, and his pain was visible in his facial expression. I was very aware then that I made a conscious choice not to pursue the questions on domestic violence in the home for fear of the secondary anguish they might

cause, and simply expressed appreciation for his sharing such intimate details of his life. His response reminded me of the anguish, pain and trauma that youth go through daily. Fortunately, it was for a moment and I reminded myself that I was the “researcher collecting the data”, although the incident demonstrated the dynamic and complex nature of social research.

Four, the heartfelt pain, the boldness with which they told their stories and their reflective capability on a holistic approach stirred in me deep admiration, notwithstanding my position as a researcher. Yes, I was the researcher, but also the older adult in a society we have engineered in a particular way, where all the country’s children are not all equal. It was a reminder of how the deepening inequality in education and society at large has resulted in an “accumulation of risks” for many in our society. It was a reminder that research needs to enable the voices of those on the periphery to be heard and to be responsive to issues of social justice.

Five, I felt that my ‘insider’ status as someone working on a holistic approach enabled the respondents to answer the questions as honestly as they could. I did not experience censorship or a need to please. In fact, I thought that the measure of trust that existed among all the respondents and the Chrysalis Academy contributed to a much more open and frank engagement on their experiences of a holistic approach. The respondents were also comfortable about why the research was being conducted and did not have to speculate about the motives of the researcher.

Six, often as practitioners in any field, we do not find the space or time to reflect on the work we are engaged in. This study provided a powerful platform for me to reflect on my own practice in the field.

Seven, I remain convinced that a phenomenological approach, and more specifically the methodological framework of narrative inquiry, was the most appropriate approach for this type of study and the questions I wanted to explore. In addition, the use of mindfulness during the interview process played a pivotal role in ensuring that I remained grounded and present, despite the difficult issues the respondents shared.

Eight, the use of a reflective journal proved invaluable in the research, as I could record my observations directly after the interview. My entries were haphazard but seemed to concur with what was captured in the transcripts of the interviews.

Nine, the process of data analysis was not easy owing to the number of categories and themes that emerged from the data corpus. I spent time reflecting on the categorisation of the themes, as many of them overlapped and were interconnected. I remained fairly uncertain whether my categorisation and themes adequately captured the subtleties inherent

in the issues raised by the respondents. A good example was whether a theme of *Connection* best captured the relational aspects between the youth and their fathers. I chose to proceed with the data analysis and interpretation with some measure of discomfort in the knowledge that perhaps all categorisations and descriptions might only capture a 'partial story'.

Lastly, this research study has broadened my sense of identity and awakened in me a desire to become a competent researcher, who is astute in methodological rigour, but imbued with a sense of how research can contribute meaningfully to an understanding of social justice issues and thereby possibly influence policy and practice in the future, as sound policy and practice is best derived from evidence-based data.

7.7 Contribution of the study

This research study provided insights in the lived experiences of five youth, of whom at least four were not in employment, education or training at the time of entering the programme. Their narratives illustrated the impact of their socioeconomic reality on their 'psyche', which limited their ability to unleash their potential, but equally propelled them to seek changes in their lives.

It allowed youth to speak for themselves, not only on their lived experiences, but on how they experienced a holistic approach, reinforcing the view that it is equally important not only to learn *about* youth, but *from* youth. This in-depth look at lived experiences remains a living testimony to the need for youth development to help youth transition into adulthood and to deal with the psychosocial challenges that they experience.

Both the scholarship and the findings provided rich data on the nature of the personal transformation process as both an 'inner' and 'outer' process and how one's lived experiences and development of *samskaras* influence the personal transformation process.

The research deepens the theory and practice of youth development by its exploration of a range of methodologies that could be considered when working with NEET youth, such as the power of nature and solo, the use of youth as mentors and father figures, and the importance of residential care for youth removed from risk. In addition, it illustrates how a number of methodologies are capable of facilitating 'opening up' of issues that may have been 'parked' for a long time. These include, but are not limited to, the power of nature and solo, therapeutic care, and counselling.

The study provided a rich source of data on the transformative potential of the holistic approach for NEET youth. In addition, it illustrated some aspects of the programme that could be improved to enhance the overall outcomes. These relate to instructor quality,

accredited training, lengthening the skills course, increased publicity, re-establishing the Chrysalis Academy clubs and other tactics to enhance connection within families.

I have found very little literature on how researchers can remain present and mindful during the research process, particularly when dealing with complex challenges. This study therefore makes a humble methodological contribution by illustrating how mindfulness can be applied during the interview process to enable openness and deep listening on the part of the researcher.

7.8 Options for future research

A longitudinal study on the impact of a holistic approach should be considered as this could generate rich data on the long-term impact of a holistic approach with youth who are not in employment, education or training.

It would be very valuable to have further research studies on whether and how graduates apply the skills and tools that they have learned at the CA, when faced with new challenges and transitions in their lives.

Owing to the significance of the solo experience in the personal transformation of the respondents, future research on the power of silence in dealing with psychosocial issues and trauma in particular should be explored.

The structure and content of the three-month curriculum may also be enriched by future research.

7.9 Conclusion

The research study sought to explore the following questions:

- What is a holistic approach to personal transformation?
- How do NEET youth experience the holistic approach to personal transformation used at the Chrysalis Academy?
- Why do NEET youth experience the holistic approach to personal transformation in the way they do?

The introductory chapter highlighted the complex socio-political and economic context within which the majority of working-class youth live that serves to exacerbate identity questions as they transition into adulthood. This challenging context, which includes an education system with severe service delivery challenges, has seen a growth in the number of youth who are not in employment, education or training, leading to a greater propensity for them to become disengaged, disconnected and excluded from social, economic, political and cultural

activities. Despite an increase in the flurry of youth development initiatives over a number of years, a gap was identified in the research on developmental pathways capable of facilitating personal transformation in youth who are neither in employment, education nor training.

The study is embedded in an ecological perspective that illuminates how children and youth develop in a context of a “system of relationships”. In understanding the influence of the socioeconomic context and family ecology on the development of youth, notions of social and cultural capital and *habitus*, as well as various theories of personal transformation, were explored. A holistic approach as one such theory was disaggregated as an approach to personal transformation that recognises that a human being consists of different dimensions and that the process of personal transformation of necessity must involve all these dimensions as one whole.

The Chrysalis Academy programme rests on anchors of structure, discipline and regimentation, self-awareness and personal mastery, and a whole-person approach. I discussed the evolution of the programme over the past 17 years and engaged with some of the challenges faced by the institution in implementing a residential programme.

The youth narratives in this thesis were written in the first person to amplify the ‘youth voice’. Their stories detailed a broad range of socioeconomic and psychosocial challenges encountered in their homes and within the broader community. Among other factors, they described the impact of an ‘absent’ father figure on their perceptions of themselves and their lives in general. The study outlined the changes that the youth experienced by participating in the CA programme, many of which were confirmed by their parents or guardians. These changes included an increase in self-confidence, improved communication and interpersonal skills, a deepening of their spirituality, a change in mind set, a sense of purpose, and the harnessing of courage to deal with some of their challenges. A number of them alluded to the power of nature and silence, which enabled a ‘surfacing’ of some of the psychosocial issues they were dealing with.

The socioeconomic and family ecologies within which the youth found themselves, frame a ‘political story’ not only of communities beset by violence, crime, poverty, lack of connection and the absence of a father figure, but of readiness for change and resilience. The way in which the youth experienced a holistic approach converged with the literature, which defines it as an approach focusing on all dimensions of a human being. The holistic approach is both “male and female friendly” as its impact was experienced equally by both male and female respondents. The majority of the youth felt that it was the holistic approach as a whole that contributed to their change. A very significant contributor to their change came from their time in nature, and particularly their solo experience, confirming a huge body of research on the power of nature and silence in effecting personal transformation.

The title of this research study 'Youth Experiences of a Holistic Approach to Personal Transformation: A Narrative Inquiry' implies that there are other approaches to personal transformation. Many youth programmes offering skills training tend to focus on the acquisition of skills, while others are aimed at empowerment of youth by modifying behaviour. A holistic approach to personal transformation is one that recognises "that we cannot do things to youth to change their behaviour". Rather, a holistic approach is one that recognises all dimensions of a human being and seeks to integrate all aspects of a learner's being in the learning and teaching process, which results in deep personal transformation as evidenced by the experiences of the five young people who participated in this study.

This study illustrated that personal transformation is both an outer and inner process. Some aspects of personal transformation can be observed and described in detail, while some aspects are indescribable. In other words, those that experience it may not have the language to describe the change, or perhaps some experiences are 'beyond' words.

The holistic approach within a structured and regimented environment offered youth the safety, peer support and tools that enabled them to make the transition from disconnection, lack of confidence and self-esteem to active participants in their own transformation process.

EPILOGUE

One area requires the last word: The context to which graduates return after their three-month experience. Pseudonyms are used to protect the identities of graduates.

Yusuf, who recently completed his three-month programme, returned home to his community in Manenberg, where gang violence is endemic. Since his return, two people have been killed near his house and a third stumbled into his house after being shot, seeking help.

Khaya from Capricorn was stabbed in 2016 by an unknown person while walking home during the day. Unfortunately he died.

Arnold from Villiersdorp was stabbed in 2016, while walking home after work. Unfortunately, he died.

Sipho from Delft, who graduated in 2015, was shot in the abdomen a few times for refusing to join a local gang. Fortunately, he is still alive and was relocated to another area by his family.

Despite the deep transformation that youth undergo at the Chrysalis Academy, many return to communities steeped in poverty, violence, gang activity and general criminality. Graduates have enhanced their confidence and self-esteem, discovered their potential and worked hard to increase their resilience. However, resilience is not enough for youth in difficult socioeconomic contexts. It has its limits.

The key questions that the Academy, communities, law makers and the government must confront is how we collectively address the immediate challenge of keeping graduates safe from harm, and secondly, how we systematically, courageously and on a much larger scale, address the accumulation of risks faced by black youth in general and African youth in particular, thereby affording them their rights as espoused in the country's new Constitution.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: An outline of the three-month programme

DAILY PROGRAMME

04h30	Wake up
05h00	Physical training
06h00	Ablutions and prep for inspection
07h00	Breakfast
08h00	Inspection
08h30	Parade
09h00	Class session 1
10h30	Tea break
11h00	Class session 2
12h30	Lunch
13h30	Class session 3
15h00	Tea break
15h30	Sport/Drilling
18h00	Dinner (in silence)
19h00	Evening programme
20h00	Debrief
20h30	Ablutions
21h00	Therapeutic practice/Silence
21h30	Lights out

Outline of 12-week programme

Week	Activities
Week One	Personal Mastery Leadership Emotional Intelligence I Diversity
Week Two	Healthy Living Emotional Intelligence II Environmental Literacy Anger Management and Conflict Resolution
Week Three	First Aid Level One Placement Administration Preparation for outdoor: Camp craft, Map reading, Emergency procedures
Week Four	Outdoor: Hiking, solo and various outdoor activities
Week Five	Outdoor: Hiking, solo and various outdoor activities
Week Six	Skills Phase Placement Administration
Week Seven	Skills Phase
Week Eight	Skills Phase
Week Nine	Skills Phase
Week Ten	Community Phase: Community Service; Work readiness; Career days; Goal setting and planning; Social entrepreneurship
Week Eleven	Community Phase: Gender Equity and Reconciliation work; Sustaining the change and Three-day route march
Week Twelve	Exit week: Honouring ceremonies; Prize giving; Preparation for graduation; Graduation.

Appendix B: The latest Chrysalis Academy application form

PART A - PERSONAL DETAILS

Surname:												
First names:												
Id number:												
Date of birth:	D	D	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Age			
Gender:	Male						Female					
Race:	African		Coloured		White		Other					

PART B - CONTACT DETAILS

Cell phone													
Email address													
Street address													
Suburb/village							City/town						
Province							Postal code						
How long have you been staying at your current address?													
In which area did you stay previously?													
Is your postal address the same as your street address?	YES ☐ NO ☐												
Postal address: (if not)													

PART C: DETAILS OF YOUR CURRENT/MOST RECENT STUDIES

Please provide a copy of your latest/most recent report

What are you doing this year?	In school		Employed		Unemployed		Studying and not employed	
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What is your highest grade passed?

	Name of school	
--	----------------	--

How did you hear about the Chrysalis Academy?

Chrysalis Graduate		Community Worker		Municipality		Website		Other	
--------------------	--	------------------	--	--------------	--	---------	--	-------	--

What is your reason for applying to the Chrysalis Academy?

Do you have any family members who have been on course before? YES ☐ NO ☐

If Yes:	Name & Surname of family member		
In which year?		How is the family member related to you?	

PART D: DETAILS OF YOUR FAMILY

Is either of your parents deceased?

Mother	Yes ☐ No ☐	Father	Yes ☐ No ☐
--------	--	--------	--

How many people including you are living in your home?

	Do you live in a female-headed household?	Yes ☐ No ☐
--	---	--

Name of Mother/ Stepmother/Legal guardian

What does your mother do?

Occupation, if employed

Source of income:

Contact Number:

Employed ☐	Not employed ☐	Self-employed ☐ Studying ☐ Other ☐
Salary ☐	Pension ☐	Child Support ☐ Business Profit ☐ Maintenance payments ☐
	Email:	

Name of Father/ Stepfather/Legal guardian

What does your father do?

Occupation, if employed

Source of income:

Contact Number:

Employed ☐	Not employed ☐	Self-employed ☐ Studying ☐ Other ☐
Salary ☐	Pension ☐	Child Support ☐ Business Profit ☐ Maintenance payments ☐
	Email:	

PART E: SAPS CLEARANCE

Name of Police Station in your area

--

I hereby endorse this application form on behalf of the SAPS (Please tick box)

Yes

No

I hereby confirm that the applicant has been screened for criminal record (Please tick box)

Yes

No

Comment:

Station/Area/Provincial
Commissioner

Signature

Official SAPS date stamp

PART F: HEALTH HISTORY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR WELLNESS/FITNESS PROGRAMME (to be completed by a Medical Practitioner)

Medical practitioner's judgement on whether the applicant's condition in respect of the following medical conditions will affect his/her ability to participate in and complete the Chrysalis Academy's intensive 3-month residential training and development programme.

1. Has the applicant ever been diagnosed with any of the following? (Please tick ☒ and circle condition)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| ☐ Heart disease, cardiac surgery | ☐ Asthma, lung disease, tuberculosis | ☐ Diabetes |
| ☐ Epilepsy, muscular, vascular or neuromuscular disease | ☐ Mental, psychological disorder, phobia, nervous of functional condition | ☐ Kidney or liver disease |
| ☐ Cancer, blood diseases | ☐ High / Low blood pressure | ☐ Hearing or visual impairments |
| ☐ Allergies | | |

2. Injuries: Document all injuries and indicate whether Current, Past Acute or Chronic

	Current	Past Acute	Chronic
Concussion			
Fractures / broken bones			
Ligament damage (knee or ankle)			
Foot injuries / issues			
Joint dislocation			
Knee injuries			
Spinal injuries			
Stab wounds or gunshot wounds in the past two years	☐ Yes ☐ No		

Are there any factors that may prevent the applicant from completing a hiking, rock climbing, and/or 2.4km running session? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Does the applicant have any concerns about the safety of exercise? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Has a doctor ever told the applicant that he/she should not exercise? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Females only: Is the applicant currently pregnant? Due date if "Yes" ☐ Yes ☐ No

Are there any medicines that a medical practitioner has prescribed to the applicant in the past 12 months which he/she is currently not taking? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Is the applicant currently on any prescription and/or over the counter medication?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Medication	Reason for taking	Dosage	Frequency	Any side effects

3. Kindly give full details if the answer to any of the above was "Yes".

I, the medical practitioner, declare the applicant **medically fit / medically unfit** to participate in and complete the Chrysalis Academy's intense 3 month residential training and development programme.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Doctor

Date stamp of office of

TO BE COMPLETED BY APPLICANT

- Are you prepared to make yourself available for a consultation and fitness assessment at the Chrysalis Academy should you be contacted for an interview?

☐ Yes ☐ No

- I am aware that should it be found after being accepted onto the Chrysalis Academy programme that I submitted any false or inaccurate information in connection with this application, I could be dismissed immediately.

☐ Yes ☐ No

In which capacity are you filling in this application form?

Self ☐ Mother ☐ Father ☐ Guardian ☐ Other ☐

Signature of Applicant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Date: _____

Please do not forget to attach a copy of your ID, most recent school report, your proof of address, application for Criminal Record Check or your Police Clearance Certificate.

Fax or email the completed application form to:

Email: applications@chrysalisacademy.org.za

Website: www.chrysalisacademy.org.za

Appendix C: Interview schedule for youth respondents

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR YOUTH

Setting the scene

Welcome and thank respondent for agreeing to the interview

Introduce the research and outline process

Outline ethical considerations: In particular, confidentiality and right to withdraw from the research

Ask respondent to identify a pseudonym that could be used to identify him/her in the research report

Ascertain whether respondent is comfortable to conduct the interview in English

Request permission to record the interview

Ask respondent to sign consent form

Check that cell phones are switched off

Ensure that audio recording is on.

Reconnecting with YOU

The first part of our discussion is about reconnecting with you, your background, your community and why you decided to come to the Chrysalis Academy.

1. Please state your name and surname, age, where you live and with whom.
2. Do you have any children? How many?
3. Please provide some background of where you were born, early childhood memories and your schooling.
4. Please share some thoughts on people who have played a big role in your life. Why did you select them?
5. Please tell me a bit about the day-to-day life in the community in which you live.
6. What were you doing before coming to the Chrysalis Academy? Please refer to work, study, community involvement, etc.
7. What is your highest qualification?
8. If you did not complete matric, what was the reason for exiting school and in what grade were you at the time of exiting?
9. How did you feel about exiting school before completion?
10. If you were unemployed before coming to the Chrysalis Academy, for how long were you unemployed?
11. Were you using any substances before attending the programme? Please explain the nature of the substances, when you started using them and how frequently you used?
12. Can you explain why you started using substances?
13. Please describe your relationship with your immediate family members who live with you.

14. When did you do the 3-month programme?
15. What did you want to achieve by attending the programme?

The 3-month programme

This section is to understand your experiences during the 3 months at the Chrysalis Academy.

16. Can you describe your physical, mental, energetic (emotional) and spiritual state before the programme?
17. If you used substances before coming onto the programme, how did you manage the programme without substances, particularly during the first week?
18. Was there a point in the programme where you felt “this programme is for me” or “this programme is not for me”. Please explain.
19. What was the most difficult part of the 3 months?
20. What changes, if any, did you undergo during the programme? Please explain in detail.
21. Can you describe these changes in more detail and how they took place?
22. What was the biggest change you experienced?
23. Were there things that remained the same and did not change? Please explain.
24. What did you enjoy the most about the programme?
25. What did you enjoy the least about the programme?
26. What about the 3-month experience influenced you the most and why?
27. Was there any person, event or aspect of the 3 months that you will never forget? Why?
28. Was there anything that you experienced that you do not wish to remember?
29. The Chrysalis Academy maintains that it runs a holistic programme? What do you think a holistic programme means and how did you experience the impact of this holistic approach during the 3 months?

Back at home

This section is about understanding your present circumstances and allows you to reflect on the Chrysalis Academy approach

30. How did you feel when you returned home after the 3 months?
31. How did your family and community receive you?
32. How is your life now since returning home after the three months and what have you achieved since completing the course?
33. Do you believe that the transformation you went through at the Chrysalis Academy has brought about real and lasting changes in your life? Please explain in detail.
34. Is there anything that you learnt at the Chrysalis Academy that you are still

- implementing now? Please explain.
35. What would you change about the programme to improve it?
 36. What are you doing at the moment with regard to work, study or community involvement?
 37. Can you describe your physical, mental, energetic and spiritual state at this point in time?
 38. Would you recommend or not recommend the programme to other young people? Why?

Wrap up

This section is our last section and allows for final reflections

39. Would you like to draw your life before and after Chrysalis Academy or capture the 3-month experience through a drawing? Perhaps there may be aspects that could not be described in words that a picture may best describe.

The respondent is asked whether there is anything he/she would like to add.
The respondent is thanked.

Appendix D: Interview schedule for parents or guardians

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE WITH PARENT/GUARDIAN

Setting the scene

Welcome and thank respondent for agreeing to the interview

Introduce the research and outline process

Outline ethical considerations: In particular, confidentiality and right to withdraw from the research

Ascertain whether respondent is comfortable to conduct the interview in English

Request permission to record the interview

Ask respondent to sign consent form

Check that cell phones are switched off

Ensure that audio recording is on.

Reconnecting with the family

The first part of our discussion is about reconnecting with the family and their association with the Chrysalis Academy

1. Please state your name and surname and whose parent or guardian you are.
2. Are you currently working? Where? What do you do?
3. How many children do you have?
4. How many people live in your household?
5. Please describe the relationship with your son/daughter before he/she went on the programme?
6. How did you come to know about the Chrysalis Academy?
7. Whose decision was it to send your son/daughter to the Chrysalis Academy?
8. If it was yours, why did you wish for him/her to attend the programme?
9. How did you support your son/daughter during his/her stay at the Chrysalis Academy?
10. Did you attend any parent workshops? If so, did you benefit from these? Please explain.
11. Did you visit your son/daughter during their stay at the Chrysalis Academy? Please explain your experience of the visitations.

The change process

12. Do you feel the 3 months at the Chrysalis Academy benefited your son/daughter? Please explain.
13. What was the biggest change you witnessed on his/her return?
14. Are there areas that you feel are the same as before? What are these?
15. Please describe whether you noticed any changes in the way your son/daughter communicated on an interpersonal level on his/her return from

Chrysalis Academy.

16. Are there things that your son/daughter are still doing which you think he/she learned at the Chrysalis Academy? Please explain.
17. If you could give a description of your son/daughter with regard to his/her physical mental, energetic and spiritual states, what would you say?
18. Has the Chrysalis Academy experience impacted on the family? Please explain.
19. The Chrysalis Academy states that its approach is a holistic approach. What do you think this means?

Wrap up

This section is our final section and it allows you provide some last-minute reflections

20. Would you recommend or not recommend the programme to other young people and their parents? Why?
21. What do you feel is the strength of the programme?
22. If you could recommend changes to the programme, what would they be?

The respondent is asked whether there is anything he/she would like to add?

The respondent is thanked.

Appendix E: Posting on the Chrysalis Academy Facebook page

TO ALL CHRYSALIS GRADUATES WHO COMPLETED THEIR THREE-MONTH COURSE SIX MONTHS AGO, BUT IN THE PERIOD FROM 2011 – 2016

Dear Graduates

I trust that you are well! I am writing this in my personal capacity as a student at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and not as the CEO of the Chrysalis Academy. My student number is 216296587. I am currently registered for DEd studies and I would like to hear **your** experiences of a holistic approach when you were a student at the Chrysalis Academy. This information is important for policy makers, people involved in youth development and for the Chrysalis Academy so that we can serve youth in a better way by hearing about their experiences. I know we have graduates from the year 2000, but because of the many changes to the three-month programme over the years, I am focusing on the last five years.

I am therefore requesting **volunteers** to offer their time for a face-to-face interview with me lasting between 1 and 2 hours. I am happy to meet you at a venue convenient for you. Participation is **voluntary** and you can withdraw from the research at any time. From the list of volunteers, I will choose **5** youth to be interviewed. I would also like to interview one parent or guardian from each of the 5 volunteers. All interviews will be confidential and your real name and surname will not be used in the interview.

I trust that you will consider volunteering. If you wish to participate in the research, please do not respond through *comments*, but please email me at meyerl@chrysalisacademy.org.za or SMS or WhatsApp at **0763800411** before **24 August 2016**. I will personally email or call so that we can fix the date and time for our interview.

I thank you for taking the time to read this message and I so look forward to interacting with some of you.

Kind regards

Lucille Meyer

8 August 2016

Appendix F: Letter to the Chairperson of the Chrysalis Academy Trust

Lucille Meyer, 3 Hyacinth Avenue, Pinelands 7405 Telephone number: 0763800411

1 August 2016

The Chairperson of the Chrysalis Academy Trust
Ms M. le Roux

Dear Ms Le Roux

Permission to conduct research in my personal capacity involving Chrysalis Academy graduates and their parents or caregivers

I hereby seek permission of the Chrysalis Academy Trust to conduct research as part of my DEd studies at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) under the supervision of Prof. R. Chetty. My student number is 216296587. The title of my research is *Youth experiences of a holistic approach to personal transformation: A narrative Inquiry*.

The research is a phenomenological study to explore how youth have experienced the application of a holistic approach during their three-month stay at the Chrysalis Academy. The sample will be **5** youth respondents and **5** parents or caregivers. The selection criterion for the youth respondents is the completion of the three-month programme at least six months ago, but within the last five years. Due consideration will be given to ensure that the respondents represent the Western Cape demographics in terms of race, gender and geographical spread.

Should permission be granted, an email in my personal capacity will be placed on the Chrysalis Academy Facebook page, requesting volunteers for the research. Based on the response, 5 respondents will be chosen. They will then be contacted telephonically or via email to arrange a face-to-face interview at a date and time convenient for both of us. They will be asked to recommend one parent or caregiver to be interviewed. Interviews could last between 1 and 2 hours and all respondents will sign a consent form that details the purpose of the research and their rights as respondents.

The purpose of the research as well as my adherence to stringent research ethics will be fully outlined, including the aspect of confidentiality and the right of participants to withdraw

from the research at any stage. No risk of harm is envisaged to the respondents, their parents or to the reputation of the Chrysalis Academy.

The research will be conducted in my own time, using my own resources and will in no way infringe on my responsibilities at the Chrysalis Academy.

The research will be beneficial, as it will allow youth voices to be heard and enable all of us to gain insights into the application of a holistic approach to personal transformation. The research report will be made available to the organisation once completed.

.

It is envisaged that the data will be collected during the period **September/October 2016 to February/March 2017.**

I trust that you will consider my request favourably. Please do not hesitate to request any further information that could facilitate your decision making.

My supervisor, Prof. Chetty, can be contacted at ChettyR@cput.ac.za.

Kind regards

Lucille Meyer

Permission granted/Not granted:

Date: _____

Comments/Conditions:

Marlene Le Roux: Chrysalis Academy Trust Chairperson

Appendix G: Ethical Clearance Consent Form



***For office use only	
Date submitted	25 June 2016
Meeting date	19 July 2016
Approval	P/Y✓/N
Ethical Clearance number	EFEC 2-7/2016

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

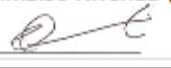
RESEARCH ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

This certificate is issued by the Education Faculty Ethics Committee (EFEC) at Cape Peninsula University of Technology to the applicant/s whose details appear below.

1. Applicant and project details (Applicant to complete this section of the certificate and submit with application as a Word document)

Name(s) of applicant(s):	Lucille Yvonne Meyer
Project/study Title:	Youth experiences of a holistic approach to personal transformation: A narrative inquiry
Is this a staff research project, i.e. not for degree purposes?	No
If for degree purposes:	Degree: D.Ed Supervisor(s): Dr. R. Chetty
Funding sources:	CPUT, NRF

2. Remarks by Education Faculty Ethics Committee:

2. Remarks by Education Faculty Ethics Committee:		
This doctoral research project is granted unconditional ethics clearance by the Education Faculty Ethics Committee at Cape Peninsula University of Technology. This Clearance Certificate is valid till 22 July 2020 .		
Approved: ✓	Referred back:	Approved subject to adaptations:
Chairperson Name: Chiwimbiso Kwenda (PhD)		Date: 23 July 2016
Chairperson Signature: 		
Approval Certificate/Reference: EFEC 2-7/2016		

EFEC Form V5_updated 2016

Appendix H: Consent Form



24 October 2016

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed as a respondent in my DEd studies at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) under the supervision of Prof. R. Chetty. The title of my research is *Youth experiences of a holistic approach to personal transformation: A narrative Inquiry*

You have been selected as you are a Chrysalis Academy graduate who has completed the programme at least six months ago, but within the last five years.

There are no potential risks or discomforts envisaged during the interview. Should any discomfort arise as a result of any of the questions, you will be free to request a termination of the interview or indicate if you do not wish to answer a question.

The study requires each interview to be audio-recorded. Each interview will be transcribed, and you will have the right to review the transcription, if you so desire, and make any changes. Unfortunately, as it is a research project, there is no remuneration for your participation.

Kindly note that any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the initial data, and no personal information will be revealed about any of the participants in this research study. You are welcome to propose a pseudonym to protect your identity.

You may not experience any direct benefits from participating in this research study, but I believe that the research will be beneficial, as it will allow youth voices to be heard and enable all of us to gain insights into the application of a holistic approach to personal transformation.

Upon completion of the research, the study will be accessible to the wider public through the CPUT library, but with no reference to any of the respondents.

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study.

Kindly note, I will adhere to the strictest ethical standards throughout the research process and am highly appreciative of your participation.

Should you decide to do any artwork during the interview, these will be subject to the same ethical care as the text generated during the interview.

Should you be comfortable with the guidelines stated above, kindly sign the consent form hereunder.

I, _____ agree to the guidelines noted above, and hereby consent voluntarily to participate in the interview. I acknowledge that the interview is confidential and that I have the right to withdraw from the interview process, at any stage, should I not be comfortable. The research study and process have been fully explained to me, and I had the opportunity to clarify any aspect of the interview process. I acknowledge that this is a research study, and that no remuneration will be afforded to me for my participation. I also consent that should I do any artwork as part of the interview, the researcher is free to use it in her final research report.

SIGNATURE OF RESPONDENT

Date:

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCHER

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to _____
[*name of the subject/participant*]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions.

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

Researcher:

Lucille Meyer

Student Number:

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Appendix I: Declaration of editing

E S van Aswegen
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ACADEMIC WRITING

Language and technical editing

Research proposals
Conference and journal papers
Theses, dissertation, technical reports
Bibliographies
Bibliographic citation
Literature searches

The DEd thesis by Lucille Yvonne Meyer titled 'Youth Experiences of a Holistic Approach to Personal Transformation: A Narrative Inquiry' has been edited, the in-text citations and references have been checked for correctness and conformance with the CPUT Harvard bibliographic style guide, and the candidate has been advised to make the recommended changes.



Dr ES van Aswegen
7 October 2017