ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to tell the story of lay trauma counsellors - how the work they do affects them, what helps them to cope and what hinders their coping.

The epistemological framework of this study is constructivism. This study involved in-depth interviews with three lay trauma counsellors from different cultural backgrounds who counselled for a minimum of one year. Hermeneutics was the method used to analyse the data.

The stories of participants were recounted through the researcher’s lens in the form of specific themes that emerged for individual participants. Recurring themes evident in the stories of all three participants were discussed and compared with the literature.

The information gleaned could be valuable to organisations considering setting up lay trauma programmes, to those with established programmes, as well as to prospective and experienced lay counsellors.

Key words: Lay trauma counsellors, constructivism, secondary traumatic stress