

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH TOOLS

You fancy this world is permanent of itself
And endures because of its own nature
But really it is a ray of light from the Truth
And within it the Truth is concealed

SA'D AL-DIN MAHMUD
SHABISTARI (c1250-1320)
(tr.1987:13)

This chapter will firstly explore the theoretical framework of the researcher and the relevance of this framework to the research methodology. Secondly, the research methodology of this dissertation will be explored within the broad spectrum of possible methodological orientation. This will be described as a personal process of discovery. The importance of qualitative and quantitative research will be briefly investigated in terms of its relevance to this particular research topic. Thirdly, this chapter will look at the research tools employed to investigate the research problem.

4.1 Theoretical Framework

It is important to examine the theoretical framework of the researcher as it grounds and orients the reader as to the purpose and meaning of the research. The theoretical framework also directs the researcher towards the type of research methodology and subsequently the tools to be employed in the research. I have mainly used the guidance of De Vos (1998), Drisko (1997), Henning (2004), Merriam (1998), and Willig (2001), in tracing this path of self-

discovery of theoretical framework and research methodology, in a developmental fashion.

I will follow the following broad areas that require attention in the planning of a qualitative study as described by Drisko (1997:185):-

- Specifying the philosophical framework.
- Specifying the goals and the audience.
- Specifying the methodology.
- Identifying biases and ethical concerns.

I will also include, although not systematically, the process models of qualitative research as outlined by De Vos (1998:49). These are to: consider the underlying assumptions of the researcher; select a specific qualitative design; plan qualitative sampling in keeping with the design; look at the researcher's role and establish a protocol for recording information.

4.1.1 The Philosophical Framework: A Personal Philosophy of the Researcher

To look at personal philosophy as a researcher is to broaden the understanding of the journey of the researcher herself, and to place the research within the broader context of metatheory. Metatheory, as explained by Babbie and Mouton (2001:20) is about the nature and structure of scientific theories; the nature of scientific growth and progress and the meaning of truth, explanation and objectivity.

In deciding about my personal orientation as the researcher, I look to already existing philosophical theories about the nature of life and existence for guidance. These “theories are statements about how things are connected. They help us sort out our world, make sense of it, guide us on how to behave in it and predict what might happen next” (Henning, 2004:14). Different theories view the world in different ways, each with their own concepts and sets of assumptions about the world. These provide differing perspectives about a particular observable aspect of the world. Henning (2004:16) describes three perspectives or paradigms in research: positivist/post-positivist, interpretative/constructivist and critical approaches. Greene (1994:530-544) identifies another: the pragmatist approach; while Denzin and Lincoln (in Drisko, 2000:83) identify the feminist/post-structural approach. Each of these perspectives in turn theoretically translates into a particular methodological orientation. So in terms of the philosophical framework for knowledge, or epistemology, I need to be firmly rooted in a particular theoretical perspective of viewing the world.

In arriving at a theoretical perspective of the world, there needs to be a marriage of who I am as a researcher and how that influences what I want to examine within a given context. To illustrate, in looking at my purposes for the study, my objective is to “understand” the phenomenon of traumatic grief. I would like to explore through the research whether grief for a child can be experienced as

traumatic, and if a child may present with PTSD in his/her grief experience. In looking towards a rethinking of grief in children, the objective is not in any way to discount the DSM-IV-TR categories of Adjustment Disorder (2000:679), Bereavement (2000:740) or PTSD (2000:463). It is an endeavour to understand the complexity of the phenomenon of grief in children in the light of recent research. This wish to understand and construct meaning allows me as the researcher to discover my orientation in an interpretive/constructivist theoretical framework.

As an interpretative researcher, I realize that what is observable is fallible and that it is possible to revise theory. I also realize that the goal of science is to help us approximate the truth, but that the complexity of reality is such that “multiple realities” (Henning, 2004:20) are held simultaneously. With this in mind, I can hold that while grief is an adjustment to change, it may also be traumatic in the life of a child and that I need to be open to this as a possibility. As the interpretative researcher, I look to a variety of data and different sources in an endeavour to increase the validity of the research. However, I realise that as a researcher and a human being I am fallible, and that my research can merely construct one part of truth through my observation. Other contributions, before and after this research, add and subtract from the whole until the closest approximation of the truth may be clearly seen (Henning, 2004:20).

To conclude, I have traced a personal philosophy to orient myself in terms of the research. The position of an interpretative researcher presupposes a certain research methodology which I will now describe and explore.

4.1.2 The Goals and the Audience of the Research

The goal of this study is to allow the reader to understand the complexity of the phenomenon of grief in children in the light of recent research and the portrayal of the two children's experiences as undertaken in this study.

The audience would be those interested in social, educational and psychological phenomena that are related to children. More specifically, the study would interest those concerned specifically with educational psychology.

4.2 Research Methodology

In terms of approaching the empirical work of this dissertation it is important to place the research within the broad qualitative/quantitative research paradigm. Reasons for the particular methodological orientation of choice will become evident in the discussion.

4.2.1 A Personal Approach to the Process of Research Methodology

4.2.1.1 Quantitative or Qualitative Research Design

As discussed, the theoretical framework of the researcher and the purpose of the inquiry about a particular phenomenon largely dictate the methodology of the

research. This is because certain paradigms are more or less useful in answering a research question. Thus the type of inquiry would also be directly linked to the purpose of that inquiry.

a) *Quantitative Inquiry*

If I as the researcher wanted to investigate the percentage of children who experience PTSD or traumatic grief with a view to testing the hypothesis that the death of a significant caregiver is traumatic to children, my research question would lead me to a quantitative inquiry. According to Hyde (2000:82) the type of methodology may include:

- drawing a large and representative sample from the population of interest;
- methods of inquiry that control as many variables as possible;
- controlled instruments of measurement that measure the behaviour and characteristics of the sample;
- instruments of measurement that can be converted to mathematical understanding;
- findings that describe, predict and/or control the phenomenon; and
- constructing generalizations regarding the population as a whole.

By its very nature, quantitative research looks to control all the components or variables of a study. This is done through careful planning including a control group and execution of specific measurement instruments. While this remains the strength of quantitative research, as reliability and validity are largely ensured, it is also its limitation. By this I mean that what is revealed by the research is controlled by the researcher and what the researcher asks of the researched. There is little freedom to explore what may be revealed subjectively and freely by the researched. Therefore what is revealed about the phenomenon

is limited to the researcher's hypothesis, with limited openness to the range of possible responses the researched may give to an open-ended approach.

Another difficulty argued by Hyde (2000:83) is that of "pattern matching". This refers to the generalizations made regarding a population and his observation that a number of individual elements may not match the aggregated profile. The particular may be overlooked in favour of the general.

While quantitative inquiry is essential to research practice, there are areas of inquiry where such research is not indicated. By this statement I mean that although deductive reasoning, inherent in quantitative research, is necessary in those instances where theory is to be tested, it may not be indicated in research instances where theory is to be generated. In the latter situation, the inductive processes of qualitative research are valuable. In essence, "inductive reasoning is a theory building process, starting with observations of specific instances, and seeking to establish generalizations about the phenomenon under investigation. Deductive reasoning is a theory testing process which commences with an established theory or generalization and seeks to see if the theory applies in specific instances" (Hyde, 2000:83).

b) Qualitative Inquiry

If I see my purpose as the researcher to explore the phenomenon of traumatic grief with a view to understanding it more fully, this would orient me in a different way to my inquiry. Qualitative research would be indicated for the purposes of this type of inquiry. Qualitative research looks into *what* certain phenomena are about, *how* they happen and *why* they occur (Henning, 2004:3). A phenomenon is explored clearly and with rich detail so that it is better understood by the end of a study.

This understanding of a particular phenomenon leads to a better understanding of a facet of the human world around us (Henning, 2004:1). The researcher is undoubtedly the main instrument of qualitative research; interpreting and deriving meaning from the research; which is presented as findings (Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2000; Henning, 1995; Henning, 2002; Holliday, 2001; Holstein & Gubrium, 2002; Phillips, 1987). The researcher and the subject can never be separated.

The strength of this type of research is that it is in-depth, information-rich and textured. However, this strength of qualitative research may also be its frailty, for the researcher, as the interpretative instrument, needs to be vigilant about bias and adhering to empirical theory. An aspect that is characteristic of qualitative research is the emergent and unpredictable nature of the research process and research results.

While qualitative research matches the research questions of *what*, *how* and *why*, there are concerns for the research's validity and reliability.

In terms of the research for this dissertation, a qualitative research design was indicated through an understanding of the researcher's interpretative/constructivist framework. This forms the basis of the methodological orientation of this research, as the intention of the research was to explore the phenomenon of traumatic grief in an in-depth, personal manner.

In terms of the research already collected in the field of traumatic grief, another reason for the choice of qualitative research in this area of interest is that researchers appear to look toward qualitative research for further elucidation. "Most of the research on bereavement has been done using quantitative methods" (Muller & Thompson, 2003:183). Muller and Thompson (2003:183)

suggest that a qualitative approach would “more clearly articulate the voices of bereaved respondents without a framework imposed by the researchers”.

In looking within the qualitative research paradigm, there are a variety of orientations (Tesch, 1990), theoretical traditions (Patton, 1990), strategies of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), genres (Wolcott, 1992) or major traditions (Jacob, 1987, 1988; Lancy, 1993). According to Merriam (1998:11) there are five types of qualitative research commonly found in education – the basic or generic qualitative study, ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory and case study. While they each have their own characteristics, all share the following:

- The goal of eliciting understanding and meaning.
- The researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis.
- The use of fieldwork.
- An inductive orientation to analysis.
- Findings that are richly descriptive.

c) *An exploration of the complexity of social sciences and the quantitative/qualitative question*

In exploring the qualitative/quantitative question with regard to the social sciences, I will briefly view the possibility of using both perspectives within a given study before arriving at a conclusion.

Although a qualitative design is the fundamental position of this research, the use of certain quantitative techniques could serve to enhance the research, especially case study research. Mouton and Marais (1990:169-170) point out that phenomena that are investigated by social sciences are so complex that a single

approach would not succeed in encompassing human beings in their full complexity.

Hyde (2000:2) points out that, in practice, researchers in qualitative studies often use inductive processes and, conversely, researchers in quantitative studies often use deductive processes. Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) argue that “both qualitative and quantitative methods may be used appropriately with any research paradigm”. Drisko (1997:185) talks of moving away from a hierarchy of research methods toward an appreciation of the distinct and complementary strengths of different epistemologies and methodologies (Bernstein & Epstein, 1994; Harrison, 1994). Mouton and Marais (1990:169-170) state that the phenomena investigated in the social sciences are so enmeshed that a single approach should not be canonized and another excommunicated. By taking a position of convergence and complementarity, we may be able to understand more fully human nature and social reality.

However, De Vos (1998:359) warns researchers of the pitfalls of such an endeavour. Pragmatically, to use both paradigms adequately is time and space consuming and “extends postgraduate studies beyond normal limits of size and scope”. It is also an undertaking for the experienced researcher.

To conclude, I am thus inclined to agree with de Vos in choosing a single paradigm for this particular research, although I agree in principle with the aforementioned argument. However the use of “triangulation”, which is the researcher’s use of different methods of data analysis, will be employed. Triangulation refers to the variety of sources in information collection which is integrated holistically in order to gain an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon. This enables the researcher to gain an enriched understanding of the case in terms of the phenomenon being studied. It will also improve the

reliability and validity of the research. It is important that the methods of analysis chosen by a researcher are compatible within a particular research paradigm. Thus all methods will be evaluated qualitatively within the qualitative research paradigm (Willig, 2001 :81).

d) *Conclusions with regard to research design for this dissertation*

In terms of the qualitative research choice for this dissertation, two single-case studies were chosen to illustrate the research phenomenon. In both cases, face-to-face assessment and therapeutic sessions were conducted within a school setting. Naturally-occurring interaction was recorded manually in field notes during art therapy sessions as the children found the use of tape or video recording too intrusive. The observational protocol for the recording of information was a single page divided down the centre, with descriptions and verbatim dialogue on the left and the researcher's reflections on the right. The researcher's reflections and analysis of sessions were recorded during and after sessions with the aid of a supervisor. Art work was recorded through digital camera.

The first case is regarded as the "main case" as it is presented in the depth and richness appropriate to qualitative research. Due to the limited scope of this dissertation, it became necessary to present the second case as a "supportive case", with brief results and lesser in-depth descriptions.

The research of the main case illustrates the emotional effects of traumatic grief in a child and how this affects inter-psychic behaviour within a school context. The research in the main case traces the intervention of art therapy over the period of a year and the changes observed intra-psychically and inter-psychically within the school context. The research of the second case traces the

intervention of art therapy over the course of three months. Intra-psychic changes were evaluated through comparing pre- and post-intervention projective emotional assessments, cognitive assessment and a trauma-scale questionnaire. Inter-psychic changes were tracked through a pre- and post-intervention behaviour questionnaire completed by the class teacher. All data were analysed qualitatively.

4.3 The Case for Qualitative Case Study

Research philosophy leads to different sampling decisions in keeping with the qualitative research paradigm. In this section, I aim to give an introduction to case study to address questions about sample. This will be followed by epistemological questions as to the choice of case study. I will outline the advantages and limitations of doing a case study.

4.3.1 Introduction

Case studies have had a long and varied history and have been used extensively in the many different fields of sociology, history, anthropology, political theory, education and psychology. The value of the case study is that it not only allows us to explore a specific issue in-depth, but also serves to generate questions to guide larger research projects. It is an “important methodological tool that can be used to evaluate a number of research questions with individuals or groups” (Kazdin, 1982:3-4).

A case study involves the detailed description of a single individual, a group of people, an organization, a city, a community, a school or a nation. Depending on the focus of the case study, the description may focus on the behaviour,

personality characteristics, personal history or some other aspect of the case. Case study is not a research method of itself but constitutes an approach to the study of singular entities, using diverse methods of data collection and analysis (Willig, 2001:70).

The case study is a fairly common form of research in clinical, educational and social psychology, where the emphasis may be on a single client's personal and family backgrounds, the symptoms which trouble them and their responses to treatment. To the psychologist the case study "means the study of an individual person, usually in a problematic situation, over a relatively short period of time" (Bromley, 1986:ix).

4.3.2. Epistemological Basis for Case Study

However, it is important to examine the epistemological basis of a case study as does Willig (2001:83). The following questions may be important to ask and answer:

- a) What kind of knowledge do case studies aim to produce?
- b) What kinds of assumptions does case study research make about the world?
- c) How does the case study research conceptualize the role of the researcher in the research process?

a) What kind of knowledge do case studies aim to produce?

Case studies are concerned with "establishing the how and why of a complex situation" (Yin, 1994:16). Yin (1994:9) suggests that case studies have a distinct advantage if one's research questions are of a *how* and *why* nature. Case study is also indicated when the focus of the research cannot be separated from the

unit of research. Yin (1994:13) expresses this well when saying “a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 1994:13). From this I understand that the study of traumatic grief cannot be separated from the study of the child per se. The child becomes the vehicle to study the phenomenon.

Case study is also a particularly suitable design if one is interested in process (Merriam, 1998:33). Merriam (1998:21) describes the qualitative case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon or social unit”. Bromley (1986:8) describes cases as “natural occurrences with definable boundaries”. By this it is meant that the phenomenon should be limited to the object of study.

The case study researcher is required to produce an accurate and comprehensive description of the characteristics of the case in order to offer insight into the phenomenon being studied. Willig (2001:70) terms case studies as naturalistic in orientation as they aim to help us understand a particular phenomenon more clearly. There is focus on the thoughts and feelings of the individual being studied because there is the belief that there is a relationship between what people say and the nature of what is being experienced. In terms of this study, the focus is on the assessment of the feelings and experiences of a child experiencing traumatic grief. This is done in order to understand the phenomenon of traumatic grief more fully. Instrumental case studies “are selected to provide the researcher with an opportunity to study the phenomenon of interest” (Willig, 2001:74). The research question identifies the phenomenon and the cases are selected in order to explore how the phenomenon exists within a particular case” (Stake, 1994:242).

In conclusion, the knowledge I would hope to produce is a broader understanding of the phenomenon of traumatic grief in a child. This will be illustrated in the experience of two children.

b) What kinds of assumptions does case study research make about the world?

Case study focuses on the “particular” rather than the “general” thus taking the idiographic approach to research. Careful detailed descriptions of individual cases within certain contexts are gathered and analysed with care before there is any movement towards theory development or generalization. This reveals the “assumption that the world is a complex place where even general laws or common patterns of experience or behaviour are never expressed in predictable or uniform ways” (Willig, 2001:84).

In terms of this research the cases presented reveal the unique and particular experiences of two individuals whose experiences do not match with the general principles of adjustment disorder but more closely approximate the criteria for PTSD. A holistic perspective encompasses both the cognitive, emotional and behavioural effects of traumatic grief on the child.

In conclusion, the choice of case study reveals that there is a belief in the world as an integrated system which does not see the significance of studying parts in isolation.

c) How does the case study research conceptualize the role of the researcher in the research process?

The researcher is required to make an accurate and detailed account of the case. The researcher endeavours to capture the characteristics of the case

within the confines of the study. The role of the researcher in this study is to be one of an objective, neutral observer, who is intimately involved with the case. Interpretation of events should not influence the recording of events.

4.3.3 Identifying Biases and Ethics: The Limitations of Case Study Research

Although the case study is a versatile approach and can be used to address a wide range of questions about specific experiences within particular contexts, there are many limitations to its usage. The question to ask is: why choose a case study over other forms of research? A case study, according to Kazdin (1982:3-4) is not the primary methodology taught to students or utilized by investigators in the social and biological sciences. There are intrinsic problems that challenge the researcher.

Firstly, the role of the researcher is crucial to the findings of the study. Raymond Gold (1958) developed four role types in qualitative research: that of participant, participant-observer, observer-participant and observer. In this research the role of observer-participant approximates most closely the researcher's role. By this I mean that the therapeutic space is presented for the child's active participation, with the researcher/therapist observing the child's own process while participating only when necessary. Secondly, the biases, values and judgements of the researcher become explicitly part of the research. The researcher is required to be aware of and take responsibility for this position.

Thirdly, there are epistemological challenges regarding triangulation and generalizability. With regard to triangulation, which is used to address difficulties

with validity, the researcher has to be constantly aware of context-specific data and that methods employed are consistent with the fundamental research design.

Generalizability of findings is usually a difficulty for case study, as many in the research field do not see the case as representing anything beyond itself. In terms of addressing the concerns of generalizability, an instrumental case study design was chosen as it does appear to aspire to a wider applicability of findings (Willig, 2001:82). The use of multiple case studies provides insight into the understanding that the phenomenon under study is manifest across cases. In this way theory can be refined or redefined to a limited extent. The case study may also provide the impetus for further research into the phenomenon of traumatic grief in children.

Fourthly, ethical concerns present a challenge to the case study researcher. With regard to addressing these ethical issues, gaining entry into the school was a pre-arrangement of the internship situation. The school was welcoming of the interventions proposed. The parents gave permission for the assessment and therapy intervention and the use of this information for research purposes.

4.4 Research tools

It is important to explore in detail the research tools utilized in the research.

According to Rudenberg et al. (1998:107) possible assessment measures for children include interviews, behaviour checklists, self-report inventories and projective techniques. Cook-Cottone (2004:129) advocates that the educational or school psychologist should supplement the usual psycho-educational battery

(ie. cognitive, academic and behavioural measures) with a PTSD-specific protocol. Information gathered into a report should include the following:

- a) Academic functioning (ie. the review of records, cognitive and academic assessments and information from parents and teachers).
- b) Behavioural functioning (ie. behavioural assessments, observations, PTSD measures).
- c) Emotional functioning – this was not included in Cook-Cottone’s list but is useful as part of the usual psycho-educational battery. Techniques include drawings: Draw-A-Person (DAP) and Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD) and the Sack’s Sentence Completion Test.
- d) Symptom severity.
- e) Diagnosis.
- f) Developmentally-sensitive recommendations including referral and/or school supports.

The research includes all of the above. A *SSAIS-R* was conducted before and after the intervention to assess cognitive functioning. Behavioural functioning was assessed by the *Connor’s Behaviour Checklist*, completed by the class teacher and measured before and after the therapy intervention. School records were also explored to track cognitive progress and behaviour. Emotional functioning was explored through projective techniques in order to understand the nature of the child’s emotional difficulty. These include drawings (*DAP*, *KFD*) and the *Sack’s Sentence Completion Test*. These projective techniques were conducted before and after the intervention. *The Impact of Event Scale* (a self-report inventory) was used to assess the impact of the death of a loved one on the child. A structured interview was conducted with the parent/s.

4.4.1 Assessment tools

4.4.1.1 The Senior South African Individual Scale - Revised (SSAIS-R)

The *Senior South African Individual Scale – Revised (SSAIS-R)* is a revised version of the original intelligence test *Senior South African Individual Scale (SSAIS)*. It is standardized for Afrikaans-speaking and English-speaking pupils between the ages of 7 years 0 months and 16 years 11 months.

“The *SSAIS-R* is used to obtain a differential picture of certain cognitive abilities. Firstly, a level of general intelligence is determined. Secondly, strengths and weaknesses in certain important facets of intelligence are evaluated to obtain diagnostic and prognostic information” (Van Eeden, 1991:3). The two primary mental abilities measured by the tests of the *SSAIS-R* are a verbal and a non-verbal factor. The verbal tests are: Vocabulary; Comprehension; Number Problems; Story Memory and Memory for Digits. The non-verbal tests are: Pattern Completion; Block Designs; Missing Parts; Form Board and Coding.

The test was administered individually. It was scored and interpreted according to the test protocol. To enhance the examiner’s ability to interpret the *SSAIS-R* profile both quantitatively and qualitatively, reference was made to E.M. Madge’s (1980) *The Senior South African Individual Scale (SSAIS) as a clinical and diagnostic aid*.

4.4.1.2 Projective Techniques

Projection reveals the client’s frame of reference or personality. The individual’s frame of reference is made up of personal and subjective perceptions of the

world. "The projective hypothesis is that an individual will project onto a vague stimulus his or her conflicts, feelings and needs" (Wodrich, 1990:201). Projective techniques, which are inherently inferential, are used in conjunction with objective assessment tools as they could be "controversial, lack psychometric soundness" (Wodrich, 1990:201) and are thus not primary measures for making decisions about a child. Projective techniques are however widely used and offer the skilled therapist/researcher valuable insights into intra-psychic/emotional functioning. The projective techniques used in this research were drawings (*DAP*, *KFD*) and the *Sacks Sentence Completion Test (SSCT)*. Insight from both techniques are compared qualitatively to form a more holistic view of the individual.

a) *Drawings*

The use of children's drawings as a diagnostic instrument has a long history. Previous to this, drawings were mostly used to specify the cognitive development of children (Goodenough, 1926). In 1949, Machover's *Draw-A-Person (DAP)* was the first to extend the focus of drawing techniques into personality interpretation. Koppitz (1968) extended this use further by creating objective scoring systems for developmental and emotional indicators (Waskow & Parloff, 1975:501).

The use of drawings as a projective technique is an assessment method that is assumed to reveal information about the subject's inner world, individual feelings and personality structures, in a manner which may not be possible through direct communication (Kaufman & Wohl, 1992; Koppitz, 1968; Machover, 1980). Although forms of assessment with higher levels of reliability and validity may be preferable, there are clinical situations where it is useful to analyse the *DAP* by specific indicators to obtain a rough index of a child's adjustment (Yama, 1990).

“Drawings are particularly useful for assessing children who have been found to express their ideas about the world around them, through art” (Rudenberg, 1998:107). Also where there is a language incompatibility, and/or the evaluation of sensitive areas of physical/sexual abuse (Blain, Bergner, Lewis & Goldstein, 1981) or trauma. Thus in terms of this research, drawing assessments are appropriate and provide insight into emotional functioning. However, the American Psychological Association suggests a cautious approach to the analysis of drawings and advises that the psychologist avoid relying solely on such methods (Thoma, 1997:3).

(i) *Draw-A-Person (DAP)*

Koppitz (1968) proposed a method of analysing the *Draw-A-Person Test (DAP)* using specific signs termed emotional indicators. A rough index of psychological adjustment may be obtained by analysing the *DAP* using either emotional indicators or global measures, that is, overall impression such as the quality or bizarreness of the drawing (Swensen, 1968:20-44). The *DAP* can be used to generate a large number of hypotheses relating to a person’s self-concept, ego ideal, level of adjustment, impulsiveness, anxiety, contact with reality and conflict areas. “Drawings theoretically provide an index of the nature and quality of inner organisational processes. Drawings can be used to indicate change as a result of psychotherapy” (Waskow & Parloff, 1975:506).

- Administration of the *DAP*

According to Waskow and Parloff (1975:506), instructions should be kept to a minimum. This helps to maintain the ambiguity of the situation increasing the likelihood that aspects of personality will be projected into the drawing.

The manner in which the child is able to contain the ambiguity is also relevant – does the child ask for further guidance or can he/she work with the minimal instruction given?

The child is seated comfortably at a table with enough room to move freely. The child is provided with two sharpened pencils, a single sheet of 8.5x11 inches or A4 paper and an eraser. “Please draw a picture of a person using pencil only” (Rudenberg, 1998:109) is the only instruction given. There is no time limit given. Observations are made by the researcher/therapist as to how the child copes with the task overall - level of confidence or hesitancy, anxiety, avoidance, impulsiveness and repeated erasures - together with comments made by the child during the task.

- Interpretative Orientation

Generally the interpretative procedure involves four steps as outlined by Waskow and Parloff (1975:512). These steps comprise the following:

- *Using objective measures*

A qualitative rating system consistent with research findings is advocated to increase validity.

- *Overall impression*

This is largely an intuitive process. There is evidence that such a global, impressionistic approach is more effective than quantitative systems in differentiating children with mood disorders from normal controls (Tharinger & Stark, 1990).

- *Consideration of specific details.*

In this research, the “adjustive style scale” together with an analysis of defence mechanisms as proposed by Rudenberg (1998:114) will be used for the *DAP* and the *KFD* (Appendix 1). Rudenberg’s scale is based upon the assessment that stressed children appear more likely to experience anxiety, insecurity, aggression and power needs.

- *Integration.*

This implies the integration of hypotheses about the drawing as a whole. It also implies integration of the hypotheses regarding this drawing with other instruments of assessment or test results to gain verification of particular hypotheses through repeated findings on a variety of instruments. Reality testing of hypotheses is also an important part of validity assessment.

(ii) *Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD)*

The *Kinetic Family Drawing* (Burns & Kaufman, 1972) reveals “perceptions and attitudes of the child towards his or her ongoing family dynamics” (Burns, 1972:502). The general principles followed for the *DAP* are followed for the *KFD*.

• Administration of the *KFD*

The child is seated comfortably at a table with enough room to move freely. The child is provided with two sharpened pencils, a single sheet of 8.5x11 inches or A4 paper and a rubber/eraser. “Please draw a picture of everyone in your family, including you, doing something” (Wodrich & Kush, 1990:188). There is no time limit given. When the task is completed, the child can be asked to tell the story of his/her picture in order to clarify the characters and relationships in the family

(Waskow & Parloff, 1975:530). Observations are made by the researcher/therapist as to how the child copes with the task overall - level of confidence or hesitancy, anxiety, avoidance, impulsiveness and repeated erasures - together with comments made by the child during the task.

- Interpretative Orientation

A global impression on the researcher/therapist is documented. Further notes for interpretation may be made as follows (Waskow & Parloff, 1975:530):

- Note the order in which each figure is drawn.
- Note the size of figures to infer prominence and the placement of figures to infer close or distant relationship.
- Note the indicators of adjustment and defence mechanisms (Appendix 1).
- Note the type of activities the family are engaged in relating to energy and communication.

b) The Sacks Sentence Completion Test (SSCT)

The *Sacks Sentence Completion Test (SSCT)* was developed by Dr. Joseph M. Sacks. The *SSCT* was developed from the earlier *Sentence Completion Test* developed by Dr. Sacks and Dr. Levy. The *SSCT* consists of 60 “stems” of sentences to which the respondent adds endings. As this is a projective technique the respondent projects attitudes towards a personal experience of life. The *SSCT* was developed to help the therapist to formulate hypotheses regarding the individual’s attitudes and feelings with regard to specific areas of family, sex, interpersonal relationships and self-concept. These areas include sets of attitudes which are outlined below:

- Family - attitude towards mother, father and the family unit.
- Sex – attitude towards women, heterosexual relationships.
- Interpersonal relationships – attitude towards friends and acquaintances, superiors at school, people supervised, colleagues at school.
- Self-concept – Fears, guilt feelings, attitude towards own abilities, past, future and goals.

All in all, there are 15 categories of attitudes and each have 4 sentence “stems” which are interspersed in the series. These categories are grouped together by the researcher/therapist in order to interpret meaning from responses.

- Administration of the Sacks Sentence Completion Test

The child is seated comfortably. If the child is under 10 years, the researcher/therapist can record verbal responses, otherwise the child writes responses. The child reads or is told the following:

“There are 60 partly completed sentences. Read each one and finish it by writing the first thing that comes into your mind. Work as quickly as you can. If you cannot complete an item, circle the number and return to it later”.

- Interpretative Orientation

The *SSCT* is interpreted qualitatively and as such is interpreted without psychometric standards. However the *SSCT* is “an efficient, inexpensive way to get at personality dynamics. This is especially true when a child is particularly reticent” (Wodrich & Kush, 1990:188). The child often reveals aspects of the self which a more direct instrument would not be able to access due to defences.

In interpreting the SSCT, each of the 60 responses are grouped together in the 15 categories of attitudes. The child's four responses on a specific attitude is evaluated on a 0-2 scale (0=no significant disturbance; 1=mildly disturbed; 2=severely disturbed; X=unknown, insufficient evidence). Each group of responses is also interpreted qualitatively. At the end of this process a general summary is completed. This includes:

- Principal areas of conflict and disturbance.
- Interrelationships among the attitudes.
- Personality structure, which entails the following:
 - a) Extent to which subject responds to inner impulses and to outer stimuli.
 - b) Emotional adjustment.
 - c) Maturity.
 - d) Reality level (contact with reality).
 - e) Manner in which the conflicts are expressed..

4.4.1.3 The Impact of Event Scale - Revised (IES-R)

The *Impact of Event Scale – Revised (IES-R)*, devised by Daniel S. Weiss and Charles Marmar (1997), is a scale to parallel the DSM-IV criteria for PTSD. The instrument taps the four criteria set out for PTSD: intrusion, avoidance, dissociation and hyperarousal. These four criteria are included in the 3 sub-scales of the scale with the one dissociation item included in the intrusion sub-scale.

Although other rating scales for PTSD have been formulated especially for children, such as the *IES-8* and the *Trauma Symptom Checklist for Children (TSCC)*, the *IES-R* is the most comprehensive scale of PTSD symptoms.

In terms of the *IES-8*, the fifteen items do not differ significantly in terms of wording and presentation from the *IES-R*. Also only two of the four criteria for PTSD are included. The *TSCC*, although widely used and respected, consists of 54 items, which makes it lengthy for the child to complete and for the researcher/therapist to score. According to the Child Trauma Institute “there is no currently available measure of child/adolescent exposure to possibly traumatic events which is simple, brief and well validated”. For these reasons the *IES-R* has been selected for use in this research.

- Administration of the *Impact of Event Scale*

The younger child may be asked verbally to respond but the scale is generally completed with a pencil independently by the respondent. The 22 items are rated by the respondent on a scale (0=not at all; 1=a little bit; 2=moderately; 3=quite a bit and 4= extremely) according to how frequently the comments were true in the past 7 days. Once the respondent has completed the scale, the researcher/therapist can evaluate the mean for each of the sub-scales and ascertain the level of PTSD.

- Scoring

The items are grouped according to the four sub-scales of PTSD as follows:

Avoidance sub-scale	Mean of items 5, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 17, 22
Intrusion sub-scale	Mean of items 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 16, 20
Hyperarousal sub-scale	Mean of items 4, 10, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21

IES-R score: Sum of the above 3 clinical scales. (For valid comparisons with scores from the *IES*, use just the sum of the Avoidance and Intrusion subscales).

4.4.1.4 The Connor's Behaviour Checklist

The *Connor's Behaviour Checklist* is a checklist of behaviours used by teachers to assess a child's behaviour within the school context. The use of this scale in this research is to determine the extent to which behavioural and social aspects of the child were being affected by emotional factors. The scale was used prior to and after the intervention to assess possible changes in behaviour. The class teacher was asked to fill in the checklist which is on a 4-point scale (not at all; just a little; quite a bit; very much).

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has given insight into the researcher's theoretical framework and goals with regard to this research. The research methodology was traced as a personal journey of understanding. Quantitative and qualitative research paradigms were explored with an appreciation of the complexity of phenomena in the social sciences.

A qualitative research paradigm was chosen for this research with an emphasis on an interpretative/constructivist orientation. To improve validity and reliability, the method of triangulation will be employed. A case study approach was chosen for its ability to allow the audience to understand in a deep and meaningful way the phenomenon that the researcher wishes to communicate. Two cases, a main case and a secondary case, were selected to reveal the phenomenon of traumatic grief in children. The advantages and limitations of the case study approach were explored.

The research tools of this research were then outlined. Projective techniques - drawings (*DAP*, *KFD*) and The *Sacks Sentence Completion Test* - were explored. Administration and interpretation procedures were included. The *Impact of Event Scale*, the *Connor's Behaviour Checklist* and the *Senior South African Individual Scale – Revised (SSAIS-R)* were described briefly. These techniques, tests and rating scales were used before the art therapy intervention to ascertain and clarify the problem. They were also re-administered after the intervention to record any changes to cognitive, emotional or behavioural functioning.

Appendix 1

Scale two - the adjustive style scale

Analysis includes the evaluator's general impression of the drawing, as well as the written comments. At least one of the listed indicators that research associates with the category should be present.

1. *Anxious* – Indicators include very light pressure, sketchy, broken lines, excessive use of erasures, shading, obsessive detailing, and omission of nose and/or mouth (Kaufman & Wohl, 1992; Koppitz, 1968; Ogdon, 1978). Small figures have been sometimes associated with anxiety, as well as withdrawal and depression.
2. *Depressed* - Indicators include clouds, rain and/or snow, birds, a shaded sun, placement low on the page, tiny head, small drawing, inadequate detailing, and tears (Koppitz, 1968; Ogdon, 1978).
3. *Angry* – Indicators include very heavy pressure, crossed eyes, guns and knives, teeth, clawed nails and clenched fists (Hammer, 1968; Ogdon, 1978; Machover, 1980).
4. *Helpless* – Indicators include floppy or deformed hands, lack of arms and/or hands, short arms, and presentation of arms (Ogdon, 1978).
5. *Fearful/need for safety* – Indicators include no legs, no feet, small feet, unstable feet, too large feet, groundline treatment and slanting figure (Koppitz, 1968; Ogdon, 1978).
6. *Powerless/need for power* – Angular and squared shoulders, phallic extensions and overemphasised muscles (Ogdon, 1978).
7. *Aggressive* – Large size drawing, bulging muscles, long arms, big hands, teeth, guns, knives, clawed nails (Koppitz, 1968; Ogdon, 1978; Machover, 1980).
8. *Well-adjusted* – Central placement, reasonable size (not too big or small), firm rounded strokes, essential but not unessential details (Ogdon, 1978).

Defence Mechanisms

1. *Denial* can be defined as a mechanism in which a person fails to acknowledge some aspect of reality that would be apparent to others (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Denial can be inferred by comparing the child's comments with the global impressions of the drawing (Rudenberg, 1995).
2. *Distancing* is related to denial and withdrawal. An example is referring to events if they are taking place in another community (Gibson, Mogale & Friedlander, 1991). Indications of withdrawal and distancing include indications of inaccessibility on a second drawing, such as the absence of doors on the houses, heavily locked doors, very small windows, or a large street with no houses (Buck, 1948; Ogdon, 1978).

3. *Intellectualization and isolation* are related defences which involve engaging in cognitive processes rather than experiencing the feelings associated with a disturbing circumstance (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). These can be inferred from the comments attached to the drawings. Indicators of emotional constriction, such as a rigid figure with clinging arms and legs pressed together, may be taken as indications of isolation as a general lifestyle (Kaufman & Wohl, 1992).

4. *Fantasy* is the substitution of excessive daydreaming for the pursuit of human relationships, more direct and effective action or problem-solving (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Omission of the eyes, head cut off by the top of the paper and large heads are often associated with excessive use of fantasy (Ogdon, 1978). The use of fantasy is inferred from the size of the head on the DAP (Buck, 1948).