

ASSESSING EMOTIONAL INDICATORS OF THE PRE- ADOLESCENT
CHILD'S LIFE WORLD FUNCTIONING AFTER DIVORCE

BY

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I declare that:

ASSESSING EMOTIONAL INDICATORS OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILD'S
LIFE WORLD FUNCTIONING AFTER DIVORCE IN THE FAMILY UNIT BY
USING CRITERIA OF THE DRAW-A-PERSON PROJECTION TEST

is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated
and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE

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DATE

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PROF ELSABE ROETS, MY PROMOTOR

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LIBRARY STAFF OF UNISA

Thank you for your friendly willingness to help.

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SUMMARY

ASSESSING EMOTIONAL INDICATORS OF THE MIDDLE SCHOOL CHILD'S
LIFE WORLD FUNCTIONING AFTER DIVORCE IN THE FAMILY UNIT BY
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Divorce is part of every society, it is a world-wide phenomena. Divorce touches the lives of many people by breaking up families, causing personal individual trauma and affecting our children – the next generation.

Consequences of this phenomenon are important, as what we do today will affect negatively or positively, the youth of tomorrow. Taken this fact into consideration one would think it logical to minimise the impact of this phenomenon on all those involved.

Firstly, this study will attempt to identify the most prominent emotional indicators of a child's drawing in order to focus therapy in those areas in an attempt to minimise or lessen the negative impact the child experiences.

Secondly, the intervention strategies/guidelines researched, will be made available to parents, professionals and lay helpers alike in order to understand, support and positively facilitate the healing process within the child who is experiencing a family divorce.

KEY TERMS

Divorce

Middle school child

Draw-a-Person Projection Test

Emotional indicators

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTORY ORIENTATION, AIM OF THE STUDY, STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND EXPLORATION OF TERMS.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In 1992, the divorce rate in this country was one and a half times greater than it had been in 1972 and nearly three times greater than it had been in 1962. Consequently, the amount of children affected by divorce has increased dramatically. Nearly half of all marriages now end in divorce, which means that each year about one million children experience the breakup of their families. Divorce sets into motion a series of changes in the entire family's living arrangements, family relationships and personal role functioning. For children, who of course, are not directly involved in the decision to divorce, these changes can be extremely confusing. Children are unable to understand the complexities of divorce and attempt to use their limited resources to make sense of it.

Every child personally interprets the meaning of his/her parents' breakup. Factors such as age, gender, developmental issues, cognitive abilities, ethnic and cultural background, self concept, prior experience with abandonment, temperament, quality of relationship with parents, available support system and the actual divorce itself play a role in the child's perceptions of the family break up (Cangelossi 1994:120) While each of these influences is extremely important, most researches have described the effect of divorce based on age related developmental differences that exist among preschoolers (ages 3 – 5), early (6 – 8), and later (9 – 12) school-age children and adolescents. Longitudinal research suggests that regardless of the age of the child, his/her reaction to parental divorce begins precisely at the point when one parent physically leaves the home (Hetherington et al. 1978, Wallerstein and Blakeslee 1989, Wallerstein and Kelly 1972, 1980).

1.2 AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM

It is hard to imagine a more difficult transition for a child than to be a party to his or her parents' divorce. And even in an amiable divorce, with family counselling and the necessary emotional support, children still suffer and experience difficulty in regaining effective life world functioning. The effect on younger children and the handling of the child during this intense traumatic period of divorce are very important since, as this period will have an effect on the child for the rest of his /her life. Awareness arising from personal experience, and working with children whose parents have gone through a divorce, made it clear that children do suffer from the effect of this negative experience. The impact is very evident during the actual divorce, life after the divorce and even when they are adults, dealing with their own relationships. Though we try to protect children from pain and loss, divorce can happen to anyone and the emotional impact can be devastating.

In South Africa, divorce statistics are high. Statistics South Africa sites the following:

- Official marriages recorded in 2005 was 180 657. This represented an increase of 4 136 marriages compared to 176 521 marriages the previous year.

The current divorce trends since 1999 to 2003 can be tabulated as follows:

Year	Divorces	Children involved
1999	37 098	45 331
2000	34 102	38 833
2001	34 045	37 803
2002	31 370	34 400

Source: Department of Statistics South Africa (2003, 2004, 2005).

1.3 NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

As previously mentioned divorce rates in South Africa are high and this highlights the fact that many individual's both male and female need support in coping with this phenomenon. To further compound this matter before, during and after the divorce many financial, emotional and physical factors play decisive roles in the presenting situation. These factors are not always controllable and the adults (parents) involved are sometimes forced to take action and make decisions, which are not in the best interests of the child. In understanding a little more, about what children go through when their parents' divorce, teachers, parents and therapists can be empowered to make better, more informed choices and to more effectively support the child during this intense period of transition.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Considering the previous discussion (see section 1.2 and 1.3) and the divorce statistics provided, the researcher has chosen to identify a specific area of a child's life span development, the pre-adolescent phase, in an effort to assist parents in supporting their children before, during and after a divorce and to regain optimal functioning of the family unit. The pre-adolescent phase tends to be a phase of great change physically, intellectually and emotionally for a child, therefore to endeavor to minimize the negative impact of the divorce during this developmental phase is imperative. The problem statement is as follows:

To establish the life world functioning of the pre-adolescent child after divorce by assessing the emotional indicators of prescribed projection tests.

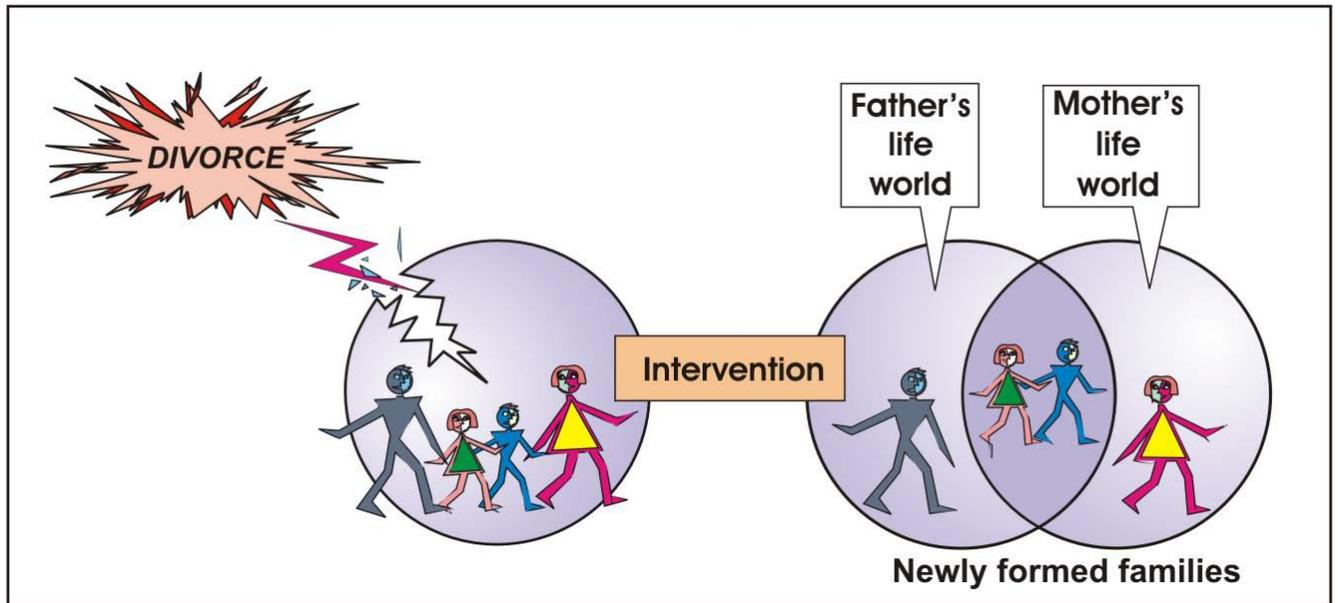


Figure 1.1 Diagrammatical representation of the problem statement

As there is no “one technique for all” remedy that can be applied to divorce intervention it has come to the fore that the needs of both parent and child are diverse and changeable as the situation in which they find themselves. It can be therefore considered that the parent him/herself, as well as the child, is unique elements in the divorce situation. Therefore emotional assessment of the child’s functioning within his/her life world, can be used as a starting point in the externally constantly changing divorce situation. Following initial awareness and exploration of the problem, the researcher was presented with many issues regarding divorce. The effect of divorce on children presents with its own set of challenges and problems. The researcher wanted to use the essence of the projection technique, Draw-a-Person, to establish a base line evaluation to indicate emotional problems the child may be experiencing, in order to give a parent guidelines in how to treat the child going through the pains of a divorce.

1.4.1 Questions that will guide the research

- What presenting emotional indicators can be identified in the child's Draw-a-Person's projective test used during the assessment of the child to create a profile of the child's life world functioning?
- How are these emotional indicators assessed in order to make informed decisions?
- How can parenting skills be strengthened in order to regain a stable family situation for optimal family functioning?

1.5 AIMS OF THE STUDY

- Embark on a literature study to investigate and research the following concepts:
 - Divorce
 - Demarcation of pre-adolescence
 - Emotional evaluation of the child
- Execute an empirical study to establish the life world functioning of the pre-adolescent child after divorce by assessing the emotional indicators of the prescribed projection tests.

1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.6.1 Divorce

Divorce can be defined as a legal dissolution of a marriage: judicial separation of a married pair; decree of nullity of marriage (Concise Oxford Dictionary, 6th edition, 2001)

1.6.2 Projection technique: Draw-a- Person

Machover's draw-a-person test has been considered a useful way of assessing personality. It is a basic assumption that the human figure drawn by an individual who is directed to draw-a-person relates intimately to the impulses, anxieties, conflicts and compensation characteristics of that individual as cited in Machover (1949:35). Machover was used as the primary source reflecting this technique.

1.6.3 Pre-adolescence

The pre-adolescent phase is considered the period just prior to adolescence. It can be compared to the "School Age Child" (6 years to 12 years) (Kail & Cavanaugh 2007: 3) or as noted by Rathus (2006) "Middle Childhood" (6 years to 12 years). Pre-adolescence can be seen as a transitional period where the child moves from pre-school to school going age to before teenage phase.

1.6.4 Child

Children are not rubber bands that can be stretched out of shape and then be expected to snap back into position. They are living beings with their own feelings (Marta 2004:10).

It is with great apprehension that the child in this study is defined. The concept "*child*" is a timeless, irreversible one. Once an adult has given birth, adopted or fostered to a child, very strong and clear bonds are formed and the relationship created is exactly the relationship those two individuals will always have – parent, child. Age does not eradicate the concept "*child*", not even death can do so! Therefore, for the purpose of the study parameters will be defined in which the concept "child" will be delineated. Age will be the most important criteria considered in the study. The child who is focused on in this study will be between the ages of 9 years and 12 years. This age group can be referred to as middle school child.

1.7 LITERATURE STUDY

The literature study served to delineate and explore the basic concepts pertaining to the child of the divorced family and his/her life world functioning as well as the concept of divorce. The literature study considered various aspects of the child's developmental phases, the systemic nature of the family and the personal life world functioning of all individual family members involved in the presenting situation.

1.8 EMPIRICAL STUDY

The empirical study revolves around explorative, descriptive and contextual strategies, which explore intervention approaches used in supporting parents after a divorce, in order to facilitate optimal functioning of the child and minimize the negative impact divorce has on the child.

1.9 THE STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME

The study consists of six chapters of which the brief outlay is as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introductory orientation, aim of the study, statement of the problem and exploration of terms.
- Chapter 2: The Phenomena of Divorce.
- Chapter 3: The concept of the pre-adolescent child.
- Chapter 4: The emotional evaluation of the child: Draw -a-Person projective technique.
- Chapter 5: The research design.
- Chapter 6: Data collection and findings.
- Chapter 7: Analysis of data and interpretation of results.
- Chapter 8: Recommendations, limitations and contributions of the study.

1.10 CONCLUSION

If one considers the very high divorce statistics presently evident in South Africa, one can conclude that any assistance given to parents in order to support their children in assimilating this tragedy into their life world functioning is of absolute value. To prepare these children for positive future directed functioning is a preventative measure in ensuring positive social functioning. The adjustment to being divorced person is called “*re-singling*” (Dickerson & Leming 1995: 404). With the return to this single status, a process of adjustment is essential and must take place with adults and children alike. With children involved, this process is obviously more intense and more complicated. In this transition and adjustment process, old roles are lost and must change and new ones must develop. Ferreira (1994: 29) states that following divorce, individuals often lose the ability to see themselves as individuals and still see themselves as part of a couple. This affects and inhibits the individual’s ability to develop new roles, which will be required of them in the new situation in which they find themselves.

In Chapter 2, the discussion will explore the phenomena of divorce. The literature review will highlight the theoretical background and explore various perspectives concerning divorce.

Do you take this woman
to be your lawfully wedded
wife ... Till divorce you do
part



CHAPTER TWO

THE PHENOMENA OF DIVORCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter general aspects of the study were introduced, these being awareness of the problem, problem statement and the aim of the study. Within these parameters, detail that is more specific was highlighted, such as the definition of the concepts concerning the study and the structure of the research programmed. In Chapter 2, the global concept of divorce will be expounded and the specific related aspects discussed.

For a long time in the field of psychotherapy, the prevailing Western Culture propagated the idea that divorce was fostered by personal neuroticism and immaturity, especially with regard to the spouse more responsible for the divorce. Often the cause of the divorce has been fixed on one having neurotically selected an inappropriate mate. In any case, divorce was largely treated as a shame that exposed weakness of the divorcing persons, so that many people that needed to divorce were caught up in painful concerns about their honor over and above their regret and grief over the end of their marriage (Chaney 2006:21). With the Cultural Revolution, and many willing therapists willingly giving support and approval to the concept of divorce, the superficial rigidity of this thinking pattern became unacceptable and redundant.

Presently it is a difficult time for traditional institutions, especially the family. It is suggested that over 40 % of children in America will experience parental disruption by their fifteenth birthday in South Africa (Kurdck, 1986, Knell 1993) with the high divorce statistics suggested in Chapter 1, this figure will be much higher. Divorce and separation, in most cases creates major life changes for all the members of the family, financial constraints, new environments (school and home), personal challenges with regard to relationships, to mention but a few. Adjustment to a post-divorce lifestyle

change is challenging for both parent and child (Warren 2005: 294). Divorce is so devastating as it robs us of our innocence, our aspirations for our marriage or significant relationship to continue “*until death do us part*” resulting in a “*hard knock*” to our self esteem, sense of control and feelings of competence in close relationships (Harvey 2002:85).

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF DIVORCED MIRRORED IN MARRIAGE

There would be no divorces if there were no marriages. It is only after the marriage has deteriorated into an irreparable relationship that divorce becomes a reality. To understand the phenomenon of divorce one must first consider marriage (Bannister 2007: 20). Chaney (2006:25) states:

An existential-dialectical view of divorce looks at the decision to divorce from two poles of meanings. On the one hand, a divorce that ends a bad marriage in which people cannot grow any more is an honest step. On the other hand, every divorce is a failure of a marriage and its dream, and there are many cases in which divorce initiates periods, if not lifetimes of subsequent misery for one or both mates.

Research has indicated that divorce is a complex personal psychological and social phenomena, that does not occur in an instant, but is drawn out over time in short, it is a process which on reflection one can see the path it proceeded along. Ball & Hiebert (2006:72) cite Waller as far back as 1976, as stating:

It rarely happens that people wake up one morning, find that they want to get divorced, and proceed to consult a lawyer the same day. Such a decision is usually reached after long deliberation if not debate in which one or the other of the mates takes the aggressive role.

It can therefore be seen that divorce is a process that takes time and that the individuals involved progress from a state of intimacy to social separation and ultimately to physical separation or living apart. It cannot be emphasized enough that divorce is not a singular event or decision. Guttman

(1993:51) states that the process of divorce begins before physical separation and continues long after it; however, the actual start and conclusion are difficult to pin point. Wallerstein et al (1988: 197) also reflect this view:

There is significant consensus among studies that divorce is not a single event, but rather a multidimensional process that takes place over various stages.

When considering marriage, most western societies see the concept as a relationship between two adults. Schwartz and Scott (1994: 209) see marriage as a formal manner in which a couple express their love, devotion and commitment to each other and share their lives with the person of their choice. Dickerson and Leming (1995:234) also reflect the previous view by stating that a good marriage is a relationship in which two people respect, like each other, are good friends, and have the same values and goals. Therefore, it is important that individual's contemplating divorce include the negative consequences of the divorce in their decision- making processes. Chaney (2006:26) comments that such information still does not change the fact that ending a genuinely bad marriage has an inherent validity. He continues to expound on this idea of consequences of divorce by stating that ideally the decision to divorce comes after long and serious process of how to improve one's marriage and taking responsibility for one's own part in the unhappy story of the marriage (Chaney 2006:27).

QUESTION		OUTCOME	
1	Do you see in your own self similar weaknesses/personality qualities that have bothered you in your spouse?	YES	NO
2	Are you fair and take responsibility for correcting you weaknesses as far as possible?		
3	Do you communicate with your spouse? Have you told him/her about the problems, complaints, your needs?		
4	Do you communicate with your spouse? Have you tried to encourage, understand and support him/her?		
5	Have you tried to put the marriage back on a positive direction?		
6	Have your considered the welfare of the children?		
7	Have you communicated your thoughts on divorce to your spouse?		
8	Have you gone for couple/marriage and /or individual therapy?		
9	Have you come to the conclusion that your mate is not able to grow and develop further?		
10	Have you prepared for separation and facing the changes and status as a single person?		
11	Have you “mourned” the “death” of your marriage for a period of time with appropriate intensity?		
12	Have you “mourned” the “death” of your mate as you once dreamed he/she was going to be, for a period of time with appropriate intensity?		

Table 1. Don't Divorce until...The ideal divorce checklist. (Adapted from Chaney 2006:28)

Chaney (2006:28) sites an “*ideal*” divorce checklist for a person taking the steps to divorce. The checklist is highlighted in Table 1.1. It explores some of the main aspects of the divorce situation and realistically presents the individual with ways and means to evaluate themselves and the situation in an effort to enhance the individual’s decision-making skills. Chaney (2006:28-30) expresses his own feeling on this matter and suggests that the components on the checklist are the most neglected when divorce is contemplated. Empirical studies have been done with respect to the relationship between the degree to which people complete the emotional tasks of the divorce process and their subsequent ability to form healthy new marital relationships. The success which the individual achieves in completing the emotional tasks involved within the presenting divorce situation, will have a positive influence on future relationships which individuals may enter into. It is however, a reality that many times, one spouse often plays a more definite role in creating and maintaining serious problematic and

failing qualities of the marriage, and therefore individual responsibilities and roles must also be considered.

2.3 ASPECTS OF DIVORCE

The process of ending a marriage and separating from it are complex. The various psychological, legal, economic, family roles, parenting are all traumatic.

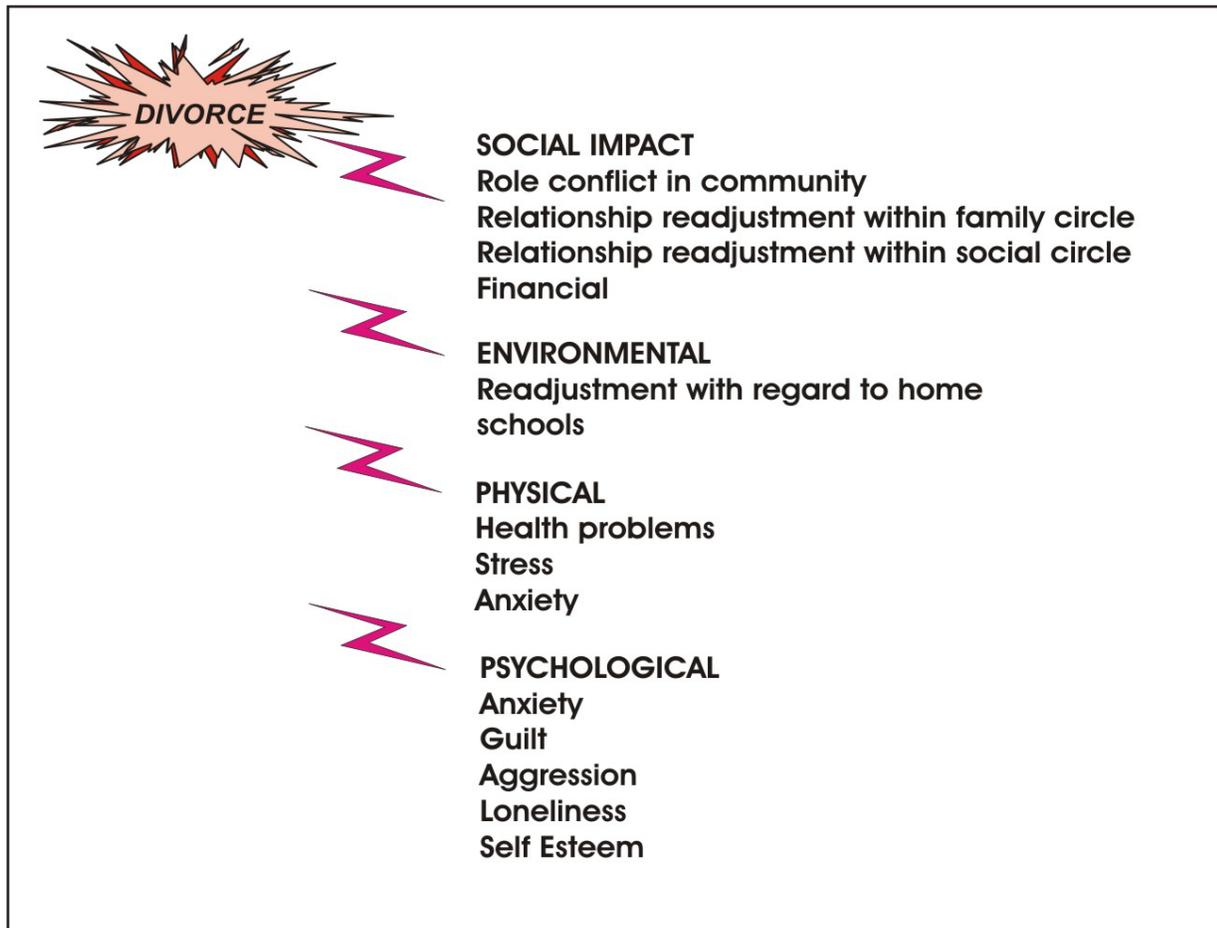


Figure 2.1 Aspects of divorce

2.3.1 Psychological (emotional) divorce

A major loss such as a marital separation and divorce initially diminishes the self (Harvey 2002:62). Such an event may reduce one's dignity, will and resources. The most meaningful step in the dissolving sequence is that of the emotional divorce (Harvey 2002:62). Harvey further expounds on this concept by stating:

This is the time at which one or (rarely) both partners define the relationship as dead in their minds (Harvey 2002:62).

Kaslow and Schwartz (1987) identified fourteen emotional stages or tasks a person must proceed through during the divorce situation, these are:

- Shock
- Disbelief
- Loss
- Detachment
- Feigned indifference or euphoria
- Anger
- Ambivalence
- Depression
- Acceptance of the loss
- Mourning
- Separation
- Reorganization
- Reorientation
- New level of functioning

The ability of the members of the divorced family to complete the emotional stages of the divorce illustrated in Figure 2.2 depends on each member's personal response to the situation, the adaptation skills he/she possesses and also the willingness of the individual to accept the situation and move on. Many divorced individual's never complete this full process, some develop collusions to ensure that the process is never completed, for instance when one party leaves him/herself entwined financially or economically to the other (Chaney 2006:31).

More commonly one or both parties fail to complete the emotional task of separating resulting in many years of powerful “*emotional*” involvement with the ex- partner long after the divorced mates have remarried. This is evident when new spouses say things like, “Whenever she calls you jump!” or “I know that the children are there but you are always there for her.” This theme is reinforced by Chaney’s comment:

Sometimes emotional divorce is more apparent than the real divorce at hand (2006:32)

2.3.2 Legal and economic implications of divorce

Upon deciding on a divorce, a couple moves into a new phase in the divorce process in which they must decide on how to proceed with the legal issues. These practical and serious issues range from dealing with financial matters, the division of personal property, the division of assets and debts, disposition of the family house to custody and access of the children and financial support of the children (Livingston & Bowen 2006:8).

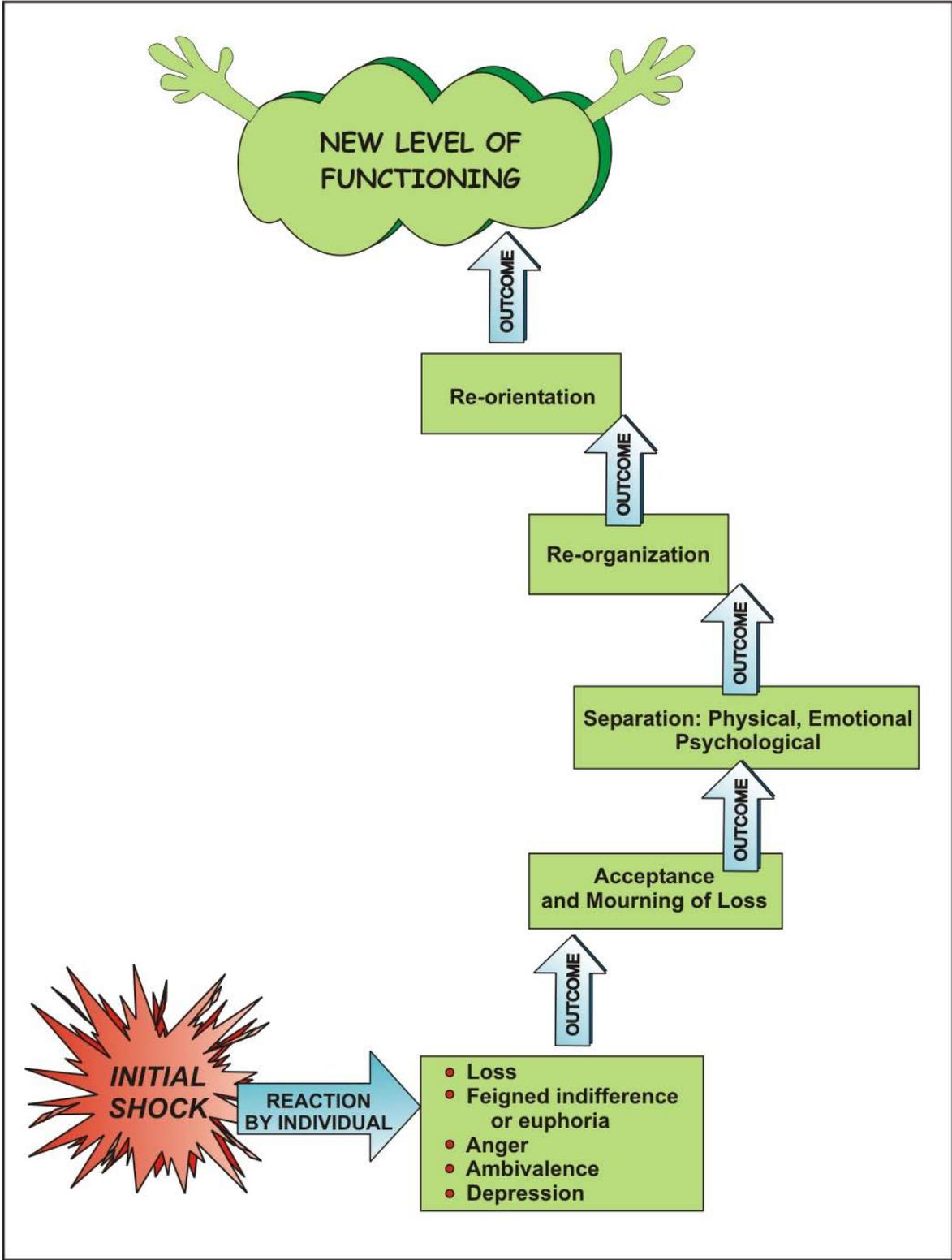


Figure 2.2 Stages of "Emotional divorce" (Adapted from Kaslow and Schwartz 1987)

2.3.3 Parenting and co-parenting within the new situation

To enhance the divorce situation one must consider the one aspect which will always “tie” the adults together and that is the children and the parenting aspect. During the dispute resolution most of the assets, when divided up, will within a period of time, become final and a definite resolution will be achieved as to ownership, permanence and finality will be achieved. The children however remain in the middle and must function in the position of “*instability*”, between two situations (households).

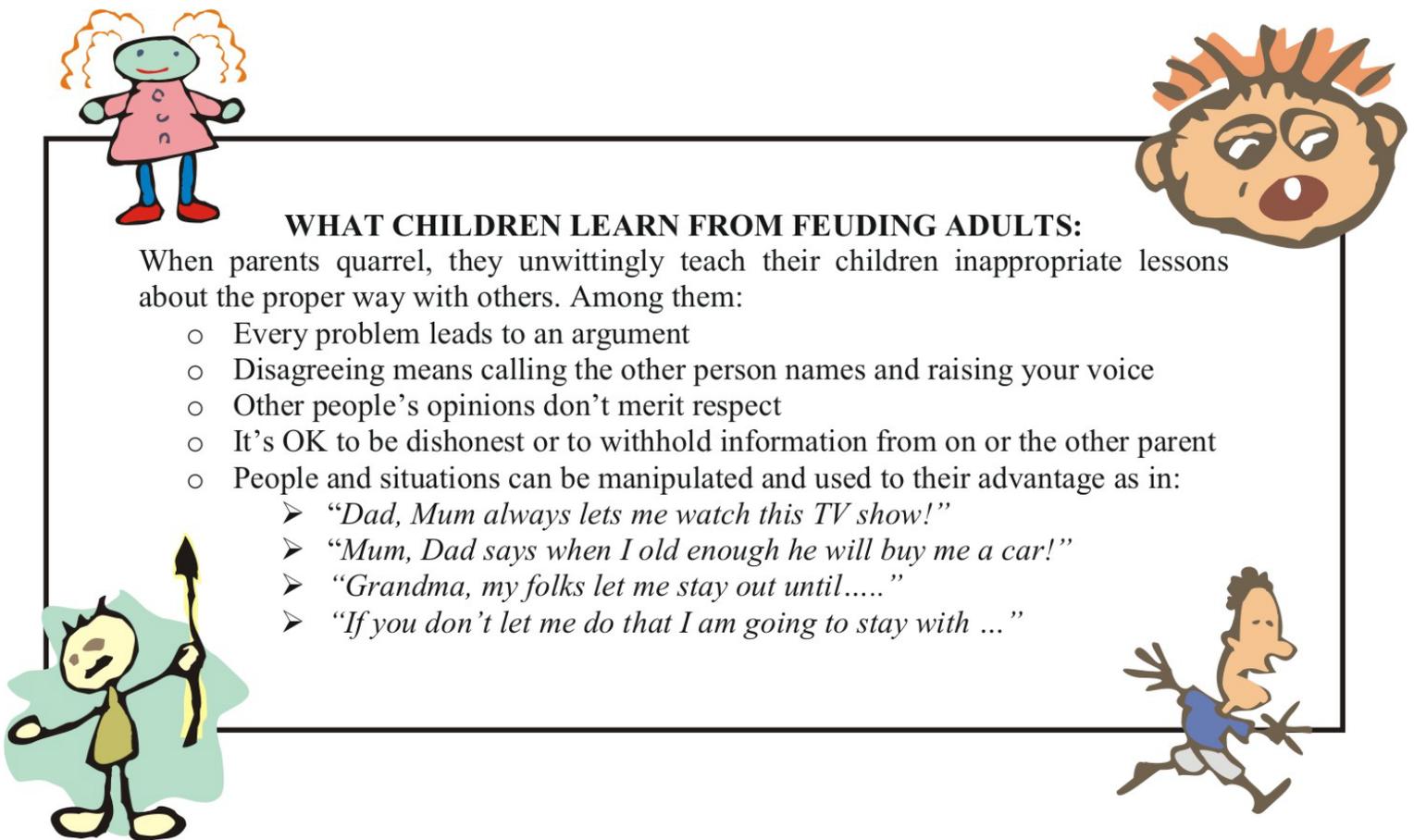


Figure 2.3 What children learn (Marta 2003: 12)

The children however remain in the middle and must function in the position of “*instability*”, between two situations (households). Therefore, parenting, whether it be, sole or joint custody, is a vital aspect for all who are directly involved in the divorce and for all to cope with the consequences of the divorce.

2.4 CHILDREN AND DIVORCE

The issue of how a couple's children figure in decision making about divorce deserves some thought beyond the accepted shibboleths of our time that one does not keep a marriage together for the sake of the children or that it is better for children to have happy divorced parents than to have miserable parents living together. (Isaacs et al in Chaney 2006:29) It is with this in mind that the researcher strongly believes that children should have their parent's consideration when contemplating a divorce and that at times, to stay married is not in the best interests of the children. In this instance, divorce would transform the situation into a more positive functioning structure that is sufficiently supportive of all the family needs. As both parents are involved in the creation and sustaining of the family, both parents must remain involved during the separation and post divorce functioning of the family. It does very little good for one parent alone to work at reassurance, security and discipline; both parents need to make sure the children understand that both mom and dad will:

- Still be their parents
- Discipline them when needed
- Protect them from harm
- Follow consistent rules
- Not lean on the child for support but will provide support for the child, and
- Both love the child and remain in the child's life.

Children are often the innocent bystanders in a divorce situation. No matter how justified the reason for divorce, parents need to understand their responsibility to minimize the impact on them and make this major change in their lives as easy as is humanly possible. Children experience a wide range of emotions in response to their parents' divorce. Working with and consideration of children in the divorce process is critical to their emotional adjustment (Livingston & Bowen 2006:7).

2.4.1 A child's experience

In the child's experience, the most highly esteemed and revered adults in their life world, their parents, have caused disaster and brought about pain and heart sore on the family. Seltzer (2006:116) states that the awareness by the child of the situation may be difficult to "*digest*" both cognitively and emotionally, as it is difficult for a child to integrate her or his emotional love and admiration for parents in the midst of cognitive recognition and experiences of parental conflict and animosity. Seltzer (2006:117-118) reflects some dynamics in situations involving children responses to divorce, these are:

- Confusion develops, as a child is unable to "explain" the situation. Although the child's ideal image of the parent may be held on to, it can no longer be viewed as in accordance with what is happening or has actually happened within the family structure.
- For some children the observed traumatic event may be noxious, for example, violence. This is beyond the child's capabilities to assimilate it occurrences into his/her cognitive experiences. Splitting of cognition and emotion could occur.
- Young children may not be able to recognize the duality of the thoughts/emotions of their parents. That is to say, they do not recognize that these concepts are really two aspects of one parent; this could result in depersonalization or deterioration of the child's memory.
- Cognitive and emotional incompatibility involves splitting of the communication between the emotional and cognitive sides of the personality, resulting in the child needing, at a later stage, help in reintegrating associative activities between these functions.
- Splitting may also lead to partial or total dissociation for the child. Components that are present at the time of the trauma, may be partially erased or totally forgotten from the child's conscious memory.
- Dissociation becomes a protective mechanism that "*prevent*" or "*shakes off*" unacceptable or threatening feelings. Continuation of this manner of functioning might necessitate therapeutic interventions to restore the individual's memory.

Common reactions reported by children experiencing divorce range from anger, fear, sadness, depression, guilt, rejection, regression to school and physical problems. The reasons why these reactions occur are varying and are usually influenced by external or situational influences, such as parental conflict and tension. The child's entire life world functioning is usually negatively affected by these reactions to the divorce, the most common reactions (fear of change, fear of being abandoned and coping with parental tension) create new and stressful situations in which the child must withstand internal and external stresses. The loss or the abandonment of a loved one is an overwhelming experience for us all. Some fathers and mothers see divorce as "their" issue. "We just can't get along anymore." or "She has been unfaithful." In fact, the marital relationship has far-reaching ramifications for children and extended families, friends and others. The following are some perspectives on the view of children in a divorcing family.

- **Fear of change.** Children in a divorcing family know that nothing will ever be the same again. Their previously secure world is in a state of change. Many things change, not just that mom or dad will not be around but their entire environment is affected. It is a state of upheaval.
- **Fear of being abandoned.** When mom and dad are at odds and are either separated or considering separation, children have a realistic fear that if they lose one parent they may lose the other. The concept of being alone in the world is a very frightening thing for a child.
- **Losing attachment.** Children who have a natural attachment with their parents also fear losing other secure relationships – friends, pets, siblings, neighbors and so on. Sometimes children are simply attached to their surroundings and moving into new surroundings can cause understandable negative reaction.

- **Coping with parental tension.** Even though many divorces follow years of tension between husband and wife, the tension level typically increases during and shortly after a divorce. Parents who try to turn children against the other spouse create an absolutely impossible situation for that child.

Many varying emotions and behaviours manifest in the child before, during and after a divorce when the child is trying to assimilate the occurring situation into their life world. Children try and make sense of these changes by personally taking responsibility for the situation and trying to “fix” it. The following are common reactional tendencies:

- **Trying to bring parents back together.** Some children have the mistaken notion that the breakup is somehow their fault. These children typically “act out” in negative ways, or try to be perfect in an effort to be “so good” that the parents will not need or want to divorce.
- **Aggression and defiance.** The key is being aware of uncharacteristic aggression in these children. Are they more angry and uncooperative than usual?
- **Depression and withdrawal.** Many children in a family under stress will withdraw or show signs of depression. These might include hermit like behavior, the early signs of eating disorder and also suicide threats.

As children experience loss, they will experience a certain degree of trauma and grief. The severity of the trauma and grief will depend on the relationship the child has with the departing parent and the impact their departure has on the child’s life. Children cannot always verbalize their emotions; therefore, it is important for children to express their feelings about their loss in any appropriate way, this could include drawings, drama and general play.

2.4.2 The rights of children in divorce

The basic line in a divorce situation is as simple as this, “*parents might divorce each other, but cannot divorce their children*” since they would go on being parents to their children forever (Lee 2006:37).

Internationally the rights of children are stated in the following United Nation Document:

Declaration of the rights of the child

The child shall enjoy special protection and shall be given opportunities and facilities by law and by other means to enable him/her to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In enactment of laws for this purpose, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration (Office of the United Nations High Commission for Human rights 1997-2000:1)

Lee (2006:39) further elaborates on these rights by highlighting specific rights of children articulated in a later documented by the United Nations, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly (November 17, 1989:7-12). The following affirmed for children:

- A right to be cared for by parents
- A right to family ties
- A right to live with parents and maintain contact with both parents (if in the best interests of the child)
- A right to have viewpoints heard and taken into consideration
- A right to ethnic, religious, and linguistic heritage

If these rights were taken into specific consideration and affirmed for children by the United Nations, then we too should recognize these rights for children of divorce.

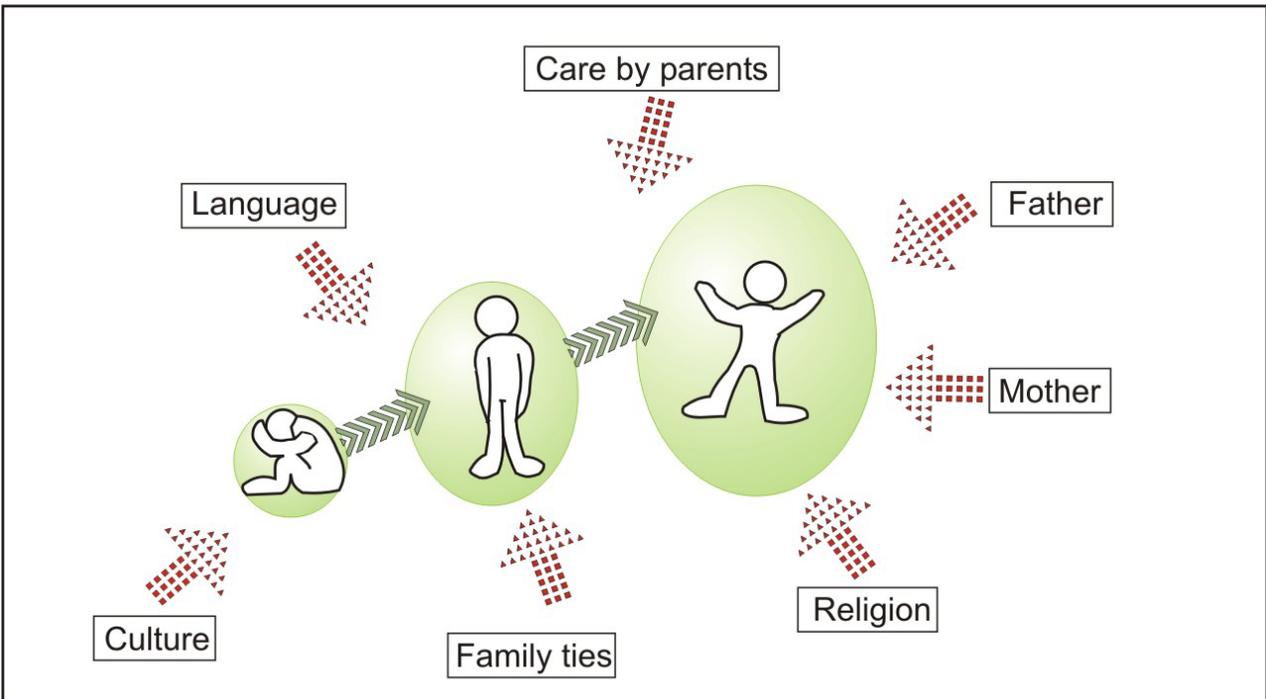


Figure 2.4 The rights of children

2.5 PARENTS AND DIVORCE

A couple's understanding of their relationship as they move towards divorce may affect their motivation to work and in therapy (Ball & Hiebert 2006:71). Those individuals who decide to take the step to divorce require recognition of the level of problems in the marriage as well as the acceptance of the human element within each individual. The manner in which couples define their concerns affect the manner in which they see their relationships and how they are willing to work toward changing and improving the overall situation. Four marital typologies are cited by Ball & Hiebert (2006:73-81) in the uncoupling process of divorce, these are:

- 1) **“Something needs to change”**. These individuals are unclear about what or who needs to change and why they are distressed. Tendencies of passivity towards the marriage are evident and thoughts of *“something happened to them”* are more evident than *“something created by them”*. No crisis or clear issues were overtly apparent and the marriage appeared to deteriorate *“before their eyes”* and the members involved cannot

apparently find ways to articulate the actual reasons. Children in this situation tend to be as confused as their parents. Ball & Hiebert (2006:77) comments that: Typically these parents make decisions to stay together “*for the sake of the kids*”, thus the children’s role in the family can have a tremendous impact on whether or not the parents stay together even though remaining together may not create happiness.

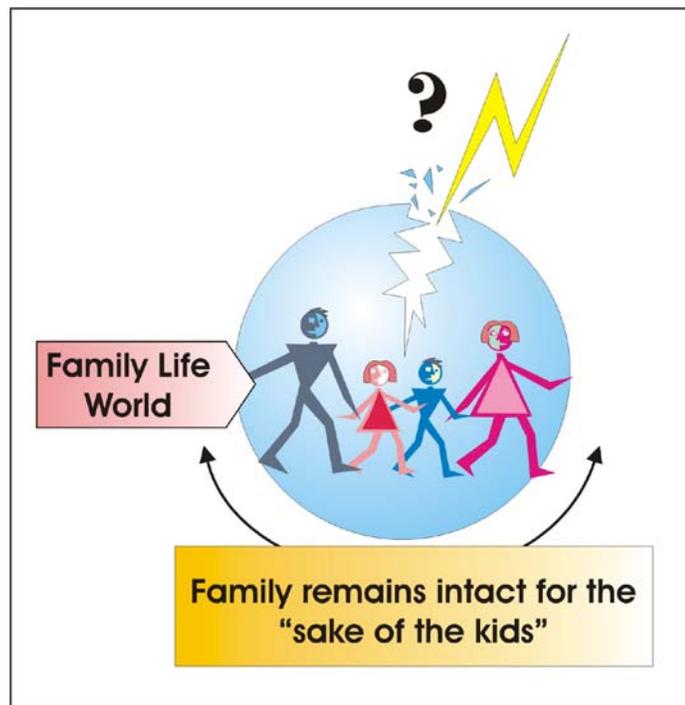


Figure 2.5 “Something needs to change”

- 2) **“She/he needs to Change”**. This scenario incorporates the blaming element where couples place the responsibility for change on their spouses. Ball & Hiebert site this as the most combative type of the four as it is marked with severe conflict and threats.

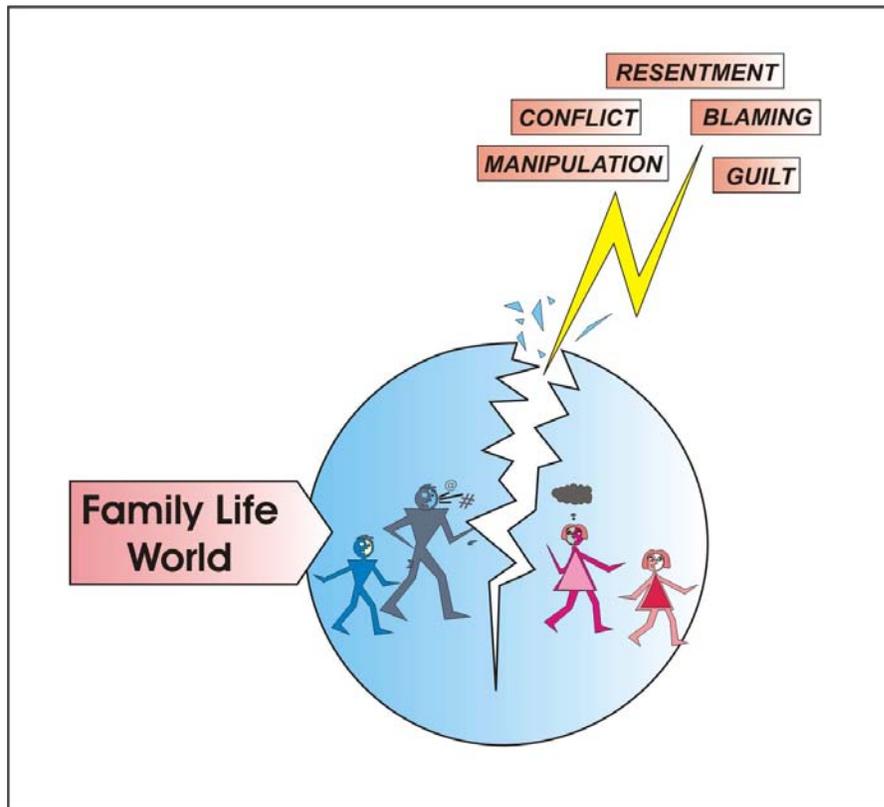


Figure 2.6 “She/he needs to Change”

Dependency especially with regard to self-identity seems evident as the partners seem to depend on each other for approval. The crisis is evident to both partners as well as the possible solution, namely change by the opposing spouse. Here the therapist seems too brought into “*change the spouse*” as the partner assumes that if the spouse changes “*all will be right*”. Such couples practice a relationship style that is fraught with “*guilt trips*” manipulation and resentment. Children of this type is most likely to become enmeshed into the parent conflicts and problems (Ball & Hiebert 2006:78). Depending on the child’s age, children tend to blame themselves or (in older children) blame one of the parents, a tendency evident as the child follows the family rule of enmeshment. This situation may cause children to suffer, as they may have to face the loss of attachment to one parent or “*over exposure*” to the situation by both parents.

- 3) **“It is too late to change”**. The relationship, in this instance has degenerated to such an extent that it is seen by one or both partners as beyond the hope of change. These

marriages may have a long history of abuse (emotional, physical and/or sexual). Prominent issues of addiction, serial affairs, neglect are often evident. As the hurt of one or both partners unfold, a rigid and inflexible relationship become increasingly prominent.

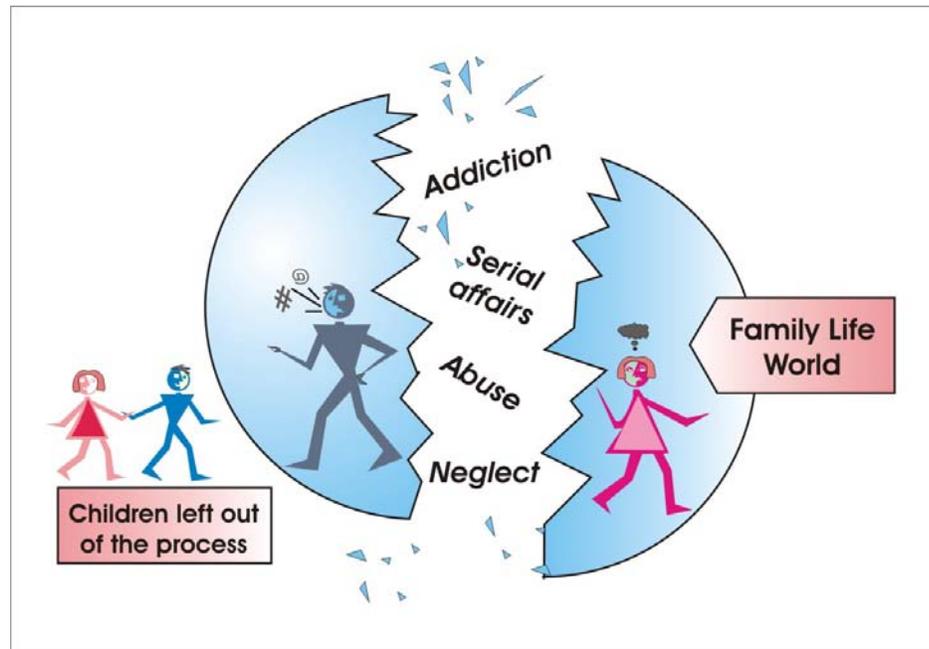


Figure 2.7 “It is too late to change”

For the children of these families life itself feels helpless. Children are usually left out of the process and have very little emotional leverage in any decisions or negotiations. Ball & Hiebert (2006:80) comment on two common responses seen in children experiencing this scenario, namely, children may see the divorce as a healthy step and secondly, children feel powerless.

- 4) **“We need to change”**. This is the optimal scenario of shared responsibility. Here one sees two people who are distressed but willing to acknowledge their part in the situation and take some accountability for their part in the relationship issue and in the general situation. The couple within this situation tends to higher self-esteem and be more actively involved in the marriage (Ball & Hiebert 2006:81).

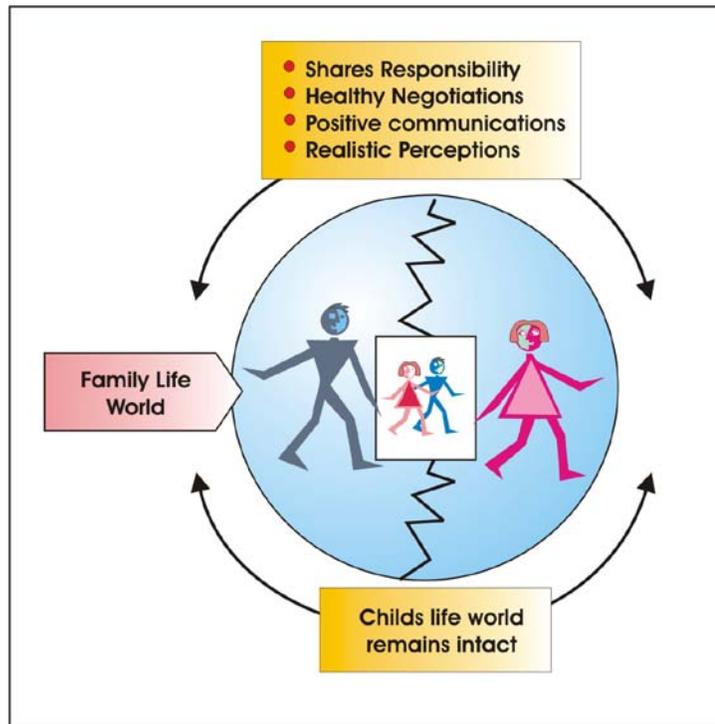


Figure 2.8” We need to change”

Realistic evaluation of the situation seems evident and although the presenting problems are still very real and distressing, divorce is mentioned and discussed as a “*final straw*” option with no threatening or bargaining connotations associated to the option. Children in these types of situation seem to be the healthiest of the four types (Ball & Hiebert 2006:82). Just as with the healthy skills used by the partners during the divorce negotiations, post divorce parenting relationships tend to be just as healthy. Minimization of the effect of conflict regarding the children and the situation enables each parent to continue a unique relationship with the children. The children are also rarely involved in the negotiation process and do not become participants in the process.

Each of the above types has unique characteristics regarding the behaviour of the individuals and their personal definition of the actual divorce and the situation surrounding it. The one main theme evident in all of these types is that of change. It goes without saying, that each to the above-mentioned

responses or “types” will evoke a different therapeutic approach and response with regard to assisting parents during and after the divorce proceedings.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Chapter 2 highlighted various aspects of divorce, but the main theme that emerges is the following: Divorce is traumatic; it creates major life changes for all members of the family, it personally challenges all involved on a physical, psychological and emotional level forcing all family members to adjust, adapt and continue.

Presently my family looks absolutely nothing like the one in which I grew up,

My world shattered

No expected family dreams materialized

No promises of “till death do us part” were kept,

No “growing old together” can be counted on.

I have been a spouse, and ex-spouse,.

I have been a parent, single parent, a co-parent...

I have lived and divorced. (Mande 2007)

In the following chapter, aspects defining the developmental phase of pre-adolescence will be examined in an effort to delineate this age group and highlight the major developmental challenges the child has to face.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONCEPT OF THE PRE-ADOLESCENT CHILD

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous Chapter, aspects of the phenomena of divorce were defined and related aspects explored. In this Chapter, the global concept of the developmental phases of children is discussed and the pre-adolescence phase established. A special effort will be made to examine and to demarcate the age group of the child, which falls into the developmental category termed the pre-adolescent phase and the researcher will also attempt to link the possible problems a child could and/or does experience if he/she is subjected to a divorce situation.

3.2 THE PRE-ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENTAL PHASE

The term development refers to a process by which an organism (human or animal) grows and changes through its life span (Smith, Cowie & Blades 2003: 5). In human beings the most intense and dramatic changes during an individual's lifespan is usually occur during prenatal development, infancy and childhood. Generally, human development can be seen as phases or periods, which have been related to chronological age. The exact "cut off" age between phases are not consistent and only a general "age" indicator is suggested, for example, Kail & Cavanaugh (2007) and Rathus (2006) have very different developmental phase descriptions but the age factor is fairly constant.

- Kail & Cavanaugh (2007: 3)
 - Newborn: Birth to 1 month
 - Infant: 1 month to 1 year
 - Toddler: 1 year to 2 years
 - Preschool: 2 years to 6 years
 - School age child: 6 years to 12 years
 - Adolescent: 12 years to 20 years

- Rathus (2006) divides the developmental stages into broad sections or categories.
 - Prenatal: This consists of the germinal stage and the fetal stage.
 - Birth and newborn: Childbirth and the neonate,
 - Infancy: Birth to 2 years.
 - Early Childhood: 2 to 6 years.
 - Middle childhood: 6 years to 12 years.
 - Adolescence: 12 years to 20 years

As there are no rigid, theoretical delineations with respect to age and developmental phases and the terms or descriptions used to explain or define life span development, no one view can be adopted and considered all encompassing. There are as many different views as there are theorists, each with their own unique angle, idea or viewpoint. Child development is a discipline, which aims to identify, to describe, and to predict patterns in children's growth where growth includes intellectual (or cognitive), linguistic, physical social, behavioral, and emotional development (Smidt 2006: 2). Bearing this in mind, for the purpose of this study, we note some important themes, which emerge during life span development and consider the following premises:

- Development continually takes place during an individual's life span. Development can be thought of as continuous and cumulative and the early years are always described as the most vital (Smidt 2006: 3).
- Life span development can be loosely categorized according to age and skills acquired and/or attained and is seen in a holistic manner as generally all aspects are interrelated, something that affects one aspect of development may affect others (Smidt 2006: 2).
- Due to human uniqueness, the various phases cannot be defined strictly according to age, but must be considered in context with various influencing factors. Development is considered to

have a certain plasticity, which allows for adaptation and adjustment to adverse events and circumstances (Smidt 2006: 3).

Therefore, to endeavor to specify a particular sub-section of the continuum, namely the pre-adolescent phase of global human development, is problematic and therefore only a general age differentiation will be used in this study. The age category will fall between the ages of 6 years to 12 years. To further define the age grouping of the pre-adolescent phase, the beginning of the phase will be considered after early childhood or pre-school. The very well documented and established adolescent phase of human development, which usually starts around the age of twelve years, will be used as the final or end of the demarcated pre-adolescent phase. The pre-adolescent phase is considered the period just prior to adolescence. It can be compared to the “School Age Child” (6 years to 12 years) (Kail & Cavanaugh 2007: 3) or as noted by Rathus (2006) “Middle Childhood” (6 years to 12 years). Pre-adolescence can be seen as a transitional period where the child moves from pre-school to school going age to before teenage phase.

3.3 AN OVERVIEW OF PRE-ADOLESCENT FUNCTIONING

3.3.1. PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

AGE (Years)	ACTIVITY / SKILL (Gross motor skill)	ACTIVITY / SKILL (Fine motor skill)
6	Hops, jumps, skips	Tie shoe laces, throw ball by using wrist and finger release, holds pencil with fingertips, follows simple mazes, hits a ball with a bat.
7	Balances on and can pedal bicycle	
8	Body balance is good	Spaces words when writing and can write and print neatly, Copies the diamond shape correctly, shows good hand/eye co-ordination.
9	Plays team sport enjoys vigorous bodily activities	
10	Balances on one foot for 15 seconds, can catch a ball	
11/12	Displays some awkwardness	

Table 2. Physical developmental milestones of the pre-adolescent

3.3.2 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

In order to delineate the cognitive development of the pre-adolescent phase, Piaget's Concrete Operational Stage will be considered (Piaget: 1976,1972). According to Piaget the child enters this stage by the age of seven years and the stage lasts until about the age of twelve years. Aspects that characterize this stage:

- **Reversibility and flexibility:** Children are able to focus on multiple parts of a problem at once (decentration), for example, mathematical operations are understood and manipulations can be done. Addition as well as the “reverse operation”, subtraction can be successfully completed. These mathematical operations highlight the fact that operations are carried out according to rules and that relationships between numbers are recognized.

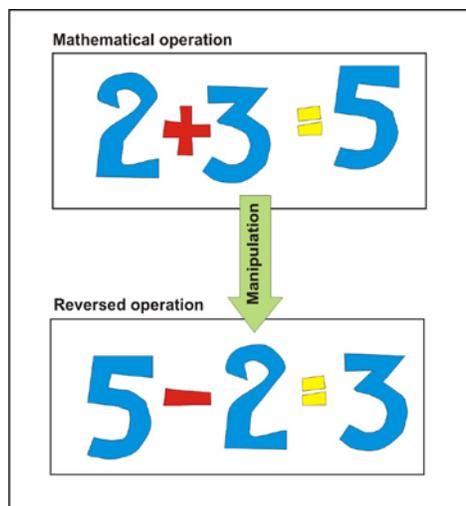


Figure 3.1 Reversability and flexibility

- **Conservation:** The properties or dimensions that objects have are retained, even though the shape changes.

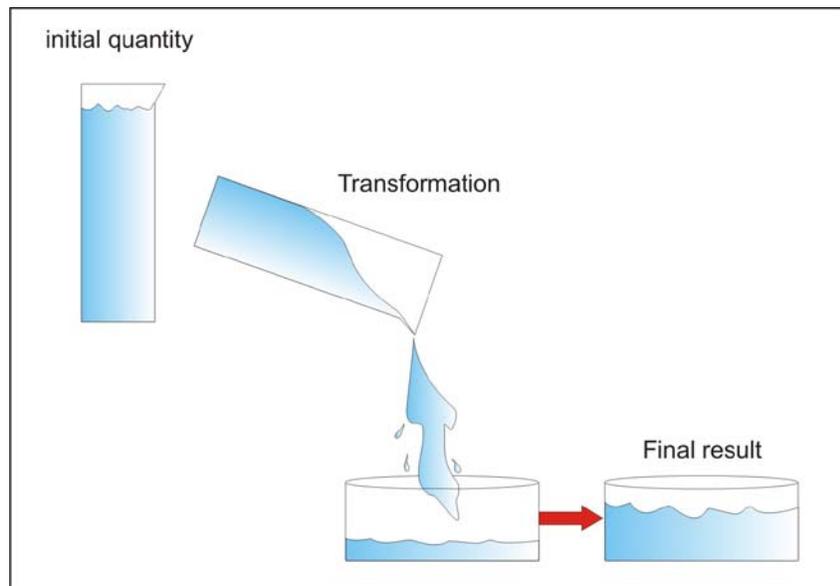


Figure 3.2 Conservation

- **Seriation and classification:** Placing objects in order or series in accordance with a trait or characteristic. For example, from small to big, short to tall or grouping with respect to type or class.

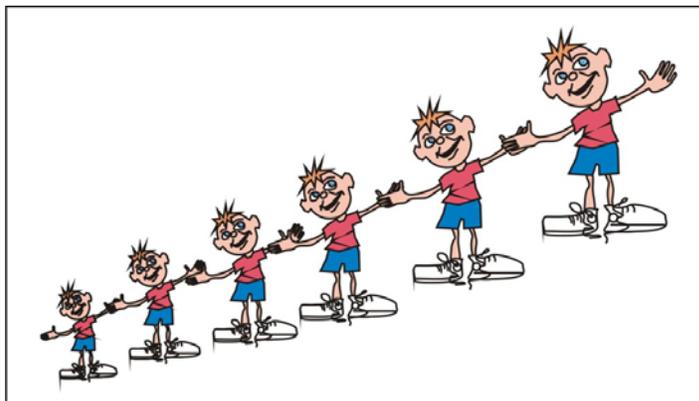


Figure 3.3 Seriation

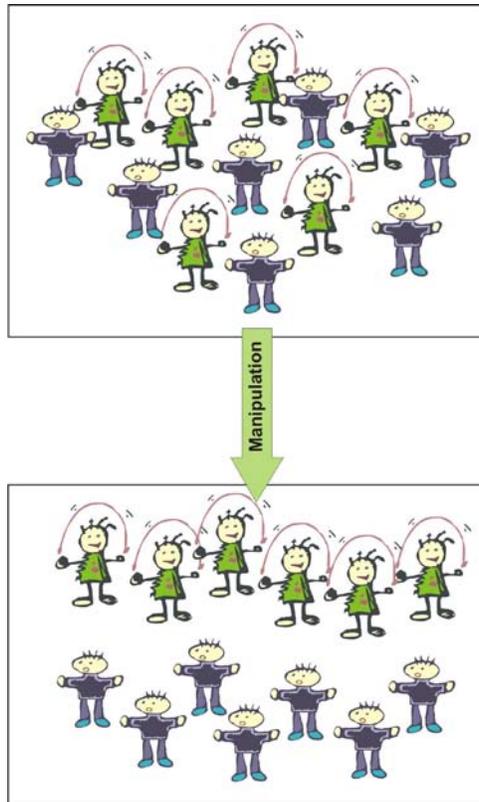


Figure 3.4 Classification

Another aspect that will be considered in an effort to place the cognitive development of the pre-adolescent within the continuum of human development is that of moral development. Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Kohlberg 1981 & 1985) refers to the pre-adolescent phase of moral development in *Level 2: Conventional Development Stage*. The following is significant of this stage (Rathus 2006: 403):

- Right and wrong is judged by conformity to conventional standards (family, religious or societal standards).
- A “good-boy/ good-girl” orientation is good and achieved when the needs and/or expectations of others are met.
- Moral behavior is “normal” and the majority of people are “moral”.
- Judgments focus on the role of sympathy and importance is attached to doing what will make someone feel good or better.

- Moral judgments are based on rules that maintain social order, respect is shown for authority and duty is highly valued.

3.3.3 INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

This term is difficult to pin down and is generally perceived as a child's underlying learning competence and learning ability (Rathus 2006: 411). The child's ability to understand his/her life world and the resourcefulness the child demonstrates to cope and adapt to the challenges he/she experiences.

Intellectual growth seems to occur in at least two major spurts. The first growth spurt occurs about the age of six. This spurt coincides with entry into a school system. The second spurt occurs at about the age of ten or eleven years. Once they reach middle childhood, however children appear to undergo relatively more stable patterns of gains in intellectual functioning, although there are still spurts (Rathus 2006: 421).

3.3.4 LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

A child's ability to use and understand language becomes increasingly more complex and sophisticated in the pre-adolescent phase. By this age, many children are exposed to a variety of linguistic experiences other than their mother tongue, as well as the child learning to read, these aspects all have important consequences in language acquisition and development. At the age of six years a child's vocabulary has expanded to 10 000 words, by seven to nine years, most children realize that words can have different meanings (jokes are understood and appreciated) and by the age of eight/ nine years children form "tag questions" ("you want ice cream, don't you?") (Rathus 2006: 429).

3.3.5 SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

From the age of six to twelve years a child's social world expands, friendships and peer relationships take on great importance. With the entry into a school environment exposes the child to other influences such as teachers and fellow students. Relationships with family members and parents change as the child experiences greater autonomy and independence.

In early childhood, the child's self-concept or self-definition focuses on concrete external traits, such as appearance, activities and living situations. As children undergo the cognitive development in pre-adolescent or middle childhood their more abstract internal traits or personality characteristics begin to play a role in their self definition (Rathus 2006: 422).

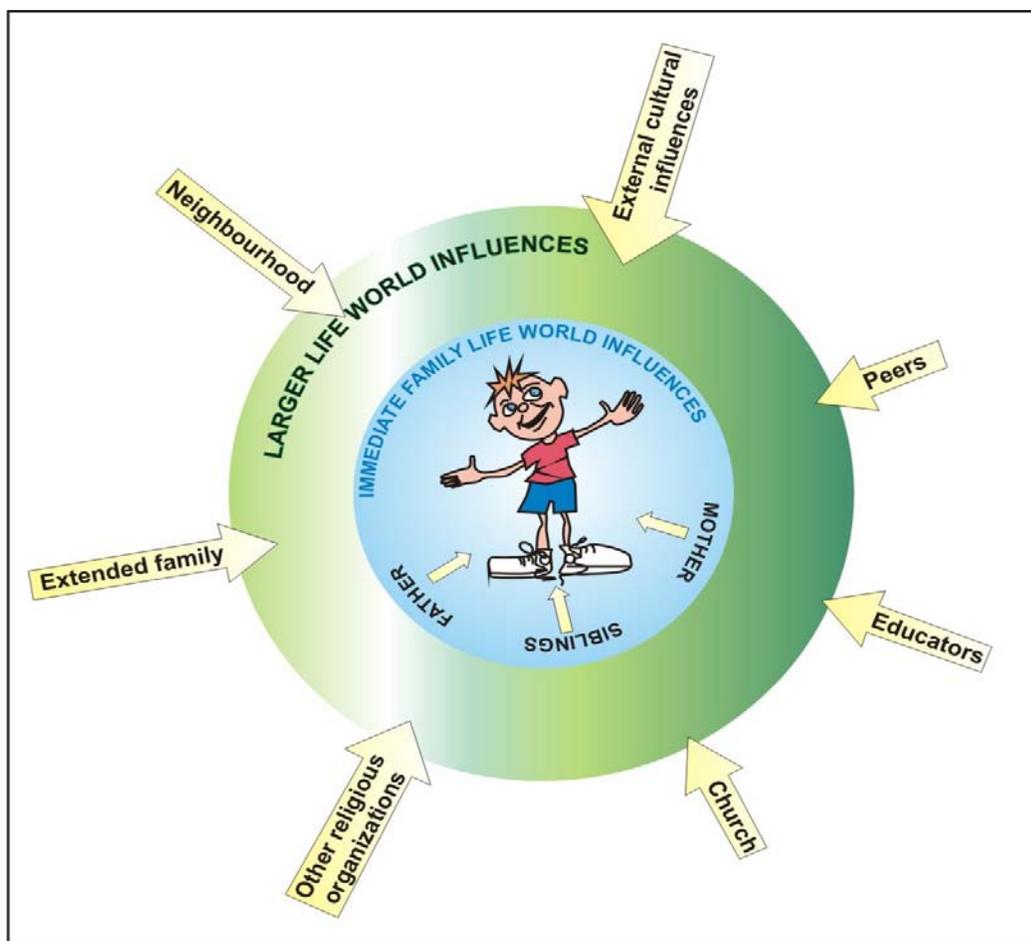


Figure 3.5 Family and larger life world influences affecting the child's social and emotional development

Families are always the most powerful influences on a child during his/her first few years of life but as the child moves into the middle childhood (pre-adolescent) phase of development his/her interests are directed away from the immediate family unit as peers become the main socializing influence.

3.4 CONCLUSION

In reviewing the literature, one must consider the physical, cognitive and intellectual aspects of the pre-adolescent phase, but for the purpose of this study, the social and emotional developmental aspects are considered of paramount importance and will be exclusively noted in the conclusion.

Emotional and social aspects cover the expansion of the social world of the child. During this phase major expansion takes place within the child's life world functioning. He/she ventures into the school environment and is exposed to larger external influences and new situations and experiences. The differentiation of the self and the self-concept of the child will therefore be influenced by any disruption or threats that the child experiences or perceives within his/her immediate life world functioning. Divorce being an intense disruptive factor of the immediate life world of a child, will negatively influence this process of confidently gaining self-esteem and self-differentiation. High self-esteem in children is related to their closeness to parents, especially as found in father/ son and mother daughter relationships. Close relationships between parents are also associated with positive self concept in children (Rathus 2006: 444).

Divorce may be tough on parents; it can be even tougher on children, the automatic aspects of family cease being automatic. No long do children eat with both parents. No longer do they curl up with them on the sofa. No longer do they kiss both at bedtime. Children loose other things besides family life. Sometimes the losses are minor but sometimes it is more extensive, financial, environmental and restriction of parental access. There is no question that divorce has a challenging effect on the children of the pre-adolescent phase (Rathus 2006: 448).

Finally, one must consider and take to heart the words of Ellis (2000).

There is no question that divorce has challenging effects on children. The children of divorce are more likely to have conduct disorders, behavior disorders, lower self-esteem, and poor graders in school. There are individual differences but, by and large, the fall out is worse after the first year after the break up.

Noting the previous conclusions, the researcher is of the opinion that children will “*bounce back*” if given the necessary support and understanding, even though they are in the precarious pre-adolescent phase. In the following Chapter, the emotional evaluation of the child will be explored by using the draw-a-person projective technique of Koppitz and Machover.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EMOTIONAL EVALUATION OF THE CHILD: DRAW-A-PERSON PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It is every action which proceeds from the human body, for we communicate not only with words but with unconscious gestures, ways of sitting, standing and walking, styles of dancing and handwriting, choreography, creative writing, music and art. Whether the subject wills it or not the self is projected into each of these activities and revealed to the careful observer (Klepsch & Logie 1982: 5). Drawings can be considered a source of non-verbal communication or be seen as a reflection or expression of human behaviour. Klepsch & Logie (1982: xii) state that art as a projective technique emphasizes that all our behaviour, including drawings, reflects our personality, attitudes and values. A person's unconscious gestures can betray a person's feelings or state of the mind.

4.2 PROJECTION AS A TECHNIQUE

Projective techniques are methods used to gain insight into an individual's private life world functioning, this includes meanings, significances, behavioral patterns, reactions and emotions. It is an indirect method used to elicit the pattern of organization and of composition without disintegrating or distorting the subject. Unverbalised feeling states are projected into the procedure by which one manipulates and arranges a medium that can be formed and patterned. The pencil and paint brush are devices for giving permanent record to the organization of visual space and lend themselves particularly well to creative organizational activity (Harris 1963:37).

4.3 THE HISTORY OF THE HUMAN FIGURE DRAWING AS AN ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUE

Drawing tests have been used as a means of assessing cognition, personality characteristics and emotions since the first decades of the twentieth century (Kopytin, Svistovskaya & Svetskaya: 2005 143).

The idea that the spontaneous of children may through light upon the psychology of child development is not new. Ebenezer Cook (1885) published an article on children's drawings in which he described the successive stages of development as he observed them, and urged that art instruction in the schools be made to conform more nearly to the mentality and interest of the child .(Harris 1963: 10).

In 1926, Florence L. Goodenough, developed the Draw-a-Man test for “*I Q purposes*”. After careful study, it was discovered that the individual drawings often yielded rich clinical material not directly related to the intelligence quotient initially tested for. These graphic communications proved of such value that they were soon incorporated into general clinical evaluations and procedures and also extended to adults. To this very day draw-a-person, technique is still being used in clinical settings and evaluations.

In order to understand the Draw-a-Man Test one must regress into the past to put into perspective the theory, application and dynamics of this technique. Researchers' names, which can be associate the development of the human figure drawing technique, are Elizabeth M. Koppitz, Karen Machover, Florence Goodenough and Dale B. Harris. In order to form a theoretical grounding to validate this test a review of these pioneers' work will be considered.

The activity elicited in response to “*draw-a-person*” is indeed a creative experience as will be testified by the individual who is drawing (Machover 1978: 4). To reinforce the value of this technique we can

consider Koppitz (1984:1). She states that the human figure drawing is a form of non-verbal communication between the examiner and the child. Therefore, we can consider Koppitz and Machover's draw-a-person test to be a useful way of assessing personality. Both these researchers are of the opinion the human figure drawn by an individual who is directed to draw-a-person, relates intimately to the impulses, anxieties, conflicts and compensation characteristics of that individual (Machover, 1949, Koppitz, 1984). Personality does not develop in a vacuum, but through movement feeling and thinking of the specific body. Projective methods of exploring motivations have repeatedly uncovered deep and perhaps unconscious determinants of self-expression, which could not be made manifest in direct communication (Machover 1978: 4). When the individual is presented with the problem of drawing a person he/she has to "solve" this problem by reaching "internally" and from some inner resource, he/she has to acquire or obtain the necessary direction to complete the task. Machover (1978: 5) states:

Some process of selection involving identification through projection and introjection enters at some point and the individual must consciously and no doubt, unconsciously draw upon his whole system of psychic values. The body or the self is the most intimate point of reference in any activity. Consequently, the drawing of a person, in involving projection of the body image provides a natural vehicle for the expression of one's body needs and conflicts.

In her book *Psychological evaluation of human figure drawings by middle school pupils*, Elizabeth Koppitz states:

Drawing is a language and can be analyzed, just like a spoken language, in several different ways (Koppitz 1984:1).

For convenience, the psychological study of children's drawings may be considered as falling into several periods each following its own principal lines of enquiry (Harris 1963: 10). With the publication of Goodenough Test in 1926 a new method of evaluation children's drawings was

available. Goodenough used a point scale method of evaluation, which demonstrated that children's drawings had more cognitive than esthetic meaning. The two possible applications of the Draw-a-Man Technique, which were explored by Goodenough, were the use of these drawings in the study of children's personalities and how their life, conflicts and interests were influenced (Harris 1963: 20).

4.4 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND, DYNAMICS AND APPLICATION OF THE HUMAN FIGURE DRAWING TEST ACCORDING TO KAREN MACHOVER

4.4.1 Theoretical considerations in Machover's theory of the human figure drawing

Machover recognizes and is of the opinion that individuals reveal important aspects of their personality in drawing. She states that:

Projective methods of exploring motivations have repeatedly uncovered deep and perhaps unconscious determinants of self-expression, which could not be made manifest by direct communication (Machover 1978: 4).

She also reinforces the viewpoint of the response by the individual to the task of drawing a person. By stating that:

It is safe to assume that all creative activity bears a specific stamp of conflict and needs pressing upon the individual who is creating. The activity elicited in response to "draw-a-person" is indeed a creative experience as will be testified by the individual who is drawing. (Machover 1978: 4).

The personal creative response Machover sites, suggests that there is an intimate "tie-up" between the figure drawn and the personality of the individual who is doing the drawing (Machover 1978: 4).

Five aspects of Machover's test, which will be considered, are:

- a) The body as a vehicle of self-expression
- b) Constancy of projection

- c) Mood
- d) Sources of projection
- e) The basis of motivation in drawings

a) **The body as a vehicle of self expression.** As previously generally mentioned (see section 3.3) Machover sees the body as a vehicle for self-expression, one looks more in depth at this concept, we see Machover's fundamental premises. These being:

- As individual's attempt to solve problems, for example, when the task of drawing a person is presented, they have to "reach inside themselves" and draw from their internal resources.
- The process of drawing evokes internal processes of selection, which incorporate projection and introjection.
- The individual's entire system of psychic values is involved in the selection process.
- The body or the self is the most intimated point of reference in any activity
- During the course of development and growth of the individual, the individual has come to associate various sensations, perceptions and emotions with certain body organs. This association can be described as an investment in body organs.
- The investment in body organs or perception of the body image having developed out of personal experience, somehow guides the individual drawing the human figure in the specific structure and content, culminating in the individual's offering of a "*person*".

- The result (the representation of the human figure or drawing) provides a natural vehicle for the expression of the individual's expression of his/her bodily needs and conflicts.

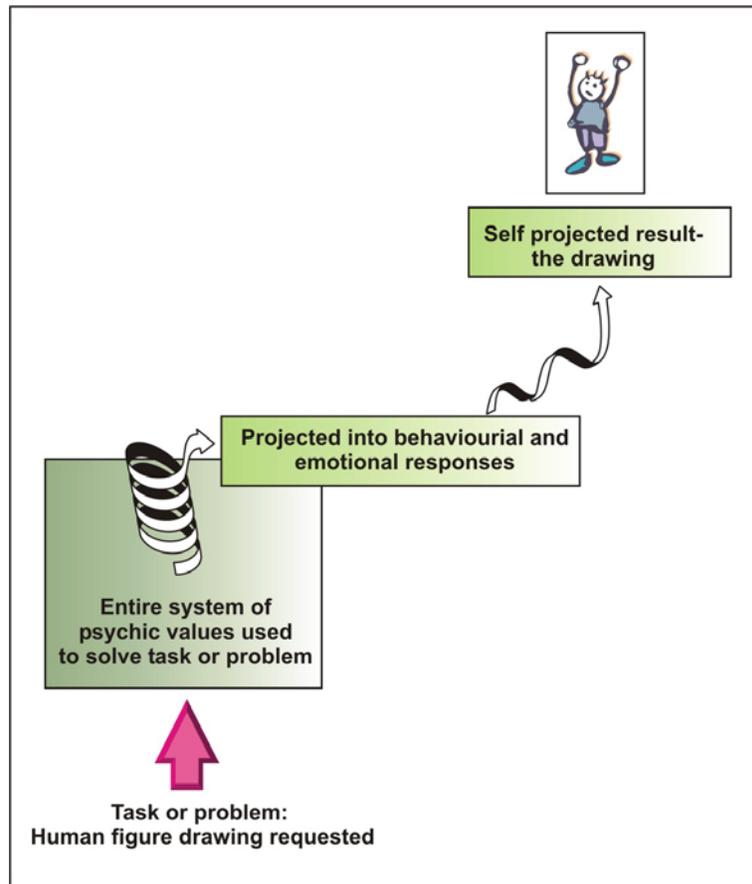


Figure 4.1 The phenomenon of projection: The body as a vehicle for self projection

b) Constancy of projection

With regard to constancy of the projective technique, Machover poses the question the following questions:

- How representative is a single drawing?
- What aspects of the drawing are related to the individual and his/her personality structure?
- The variability within the drawing.
- Aspects subject to conscious control

She answers these aspects by stating:

It has been observed that structural and formal aspects of a drawing such as size and placement are less subject to variability than content such as body details, clothing and accessories (Machover 1978: 6).

Machover (1978: 4-8) states that the following aspects are all features that refer stably to the personality structure:

- Large or small figure
- Placement on the page of the figure
- Line quality (long continuous or jagged lines)
- Aggressive stance of the figure
- Rigid or fluid posture of the figure
- Body proportions, for example, symmetry, incompleteness, erasures, shading

Finally, Machover concludes that sets of drawings gathered over a period of time would check and validate stability of projection.

c) **Mood**

With regard to mood of the figure, Machover poses the question the following questions:

- Does the body image or postural model of the final product accord automatically with the postural and or psychic tensions of the individual?
- Does the figure appear happy, withdrawn, expansive, constrictive, fearful, belligerent, affectionately starved?
- Does it appear vigorous or collapsed?
- Does it appear to be dominated by a specific bodily organ?

Machover specifies that feelings of tones or central trends and dispositions of the final produced human figure drawing, reflect faithfully the individual who is drawing (Machover 1978: 7).

d) Sources of projection

Graphic communications occur regardless of age, skill or culture. Common social meanings are acquired from physical attributes. Thus, certain personality characteristics tend to be associated with specific physical attributes, consider for example the artistic or aesthetic personality type. This personality type engenders themes of idealism, refinement, sensitivity, reduced physical orientation. The realistic and more “*concrete*” or “*functional*” personality type alternatively give rise to tendencies, which display a more practical and directed personality trait. Expressions of love, anger, joy are common social images in terms of physical manifestations and motor tensions (Machover 1978: 7). The researcher is of the opinion that, as Machover suggests, we tend to treat people with certain physical attributes in certain ways. For example, a powerful physique will command submission therefore we ourselves in turn develop certain physical attributes to earn certain social treatment. Because we, as functioning human beings, cannot escape the somatic entrenchment of our innate desires, conflicts, compensations, social attitudes and psychological functioning, we must accept the fact that this somatic entrenchment has considerable bearing on the phenomenon of projection. To take this a step further one must re-consider the fact that the socially common language mentioned above has psychosomatic correlation of body expression, which rises out of the individuals own special experience, which is influenced by emotional nuances that are specific to him or her.

Another source of projection, which one must consider, is the symbolic value projected in the drawings. For example, Machover (1978: 9):

The objects most often treated with symbolic significance in drawings are the cigarette the pipe, the gun, the cane, buttons, pockets, hat, hair, nose and feet.

e) **The basis of motivation in drawings**

It is by no means assumed that when an individual sets out to make a drawing, he/she is at once overtaken by all the conscious and unconscious aspects of his body image Machover (1978: 12).

From the above-mentioned statement, we must consider the fact that the individual undertaking the task of drawing is partially influenced by some subliminal and determining processes but also present there are some deep motivational drives. For example, deep motivation can be seen in the husky alcoholic individual who gives the shrunken figure of a man with feet adrift in space combined with graphic indicators of immaturity, guilt and repressed aggression (Machover 1978: 10). With this example, we see contradicting images illustrating an effort to compensate for defects and weaknesses.

4.4.2 Normality and/or adjustment indicators in Machover's theory of the human figure drawing

As this technique was developed with a clinical context in mind the natural emphasis was placed on indications and suggestions of “*weaknesses*” and conflicts with regard to motivation (behaviour) and adjustment difficulties with the personality. As the projection technique is rich and dynamic, this method can also lend itself to the more positive aspects within a personality and analysis of assets and constructive potentialities as well as the liabilities can be assessed and evaluated. Machover (1978:23) states that evaluations with regard to the degree of normality are made on the basis of interrelationship of personality traits contained in the drawing and that no projective method can be expected to fully differentiate abnormality and normality without some reference to time, place and circumstances which might bear upon the value judgments that are derived from the test. The researcher is in accordance with this statement, as the individual, which is participating in the test, is functioning as part of an environmental system and not in isolation. It is therefore wise to consider any external influences,

which may have an effect on the individual him/herself as well as the interpretation of the drawing. To conclude Machover (1978: 23) states:

Normality depends upon the individual's level of energy, the degree of control, the capacity to integrate experiences and most important the readiness to face his/her problems and defect. Judgements, on the other hand, may be confirmed by competent observers who are acquainted with the specific subject and who logically consider such factors as age, sex, mental level, cultural matrix and the facilitation or stress of the environment.

4.4.3 Method and administration of Machover's human figure drawing test

Using this technique requires an average time of between ten and twenty minutes. The equipment needed is very simple, a pencil and a sheet of A4 paper is the only real requirements for the basic task. The individual who is required to do the drawing is given the paper, pencil and an eraser. He/she is requested to simply "*draw a person*" The following observations are made and noted as inconspicuously as possible:

- Specific/unique identifying data
- Preliminary questions asked by the subject
- Approximate time it takes for the subject to start and to complete the drawing
- Resistance to the task
- Sequence of the body parts as they are drawn
- Spontaneous comments made by the subject
- Note is take of which sex is drawn first

When the drawing is completed, the subject is then given a second blank piece of paper and requested to draw the other sex. That is he/she is asked to "*draw a man*" or "*now draw a woman*", depending on the first figure drawing (Machover 1978: 29).

4.4.4 Interpretation of Machover's human figure drawing test

Associations the subject provides with respect to the drawings are valuable in so far as to gain insight into the subject's personal perceptions and meanings as well as in their life worlds. This angle of approach also provides an informal or indirect structure to the interview. Machover (1978: 31) developed a drawing test association sheet, which proved to be useful for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes and interventions (See appendix 1). Machover's principles of interpretation will be briefly diagrammatically summarized in figure 4.2

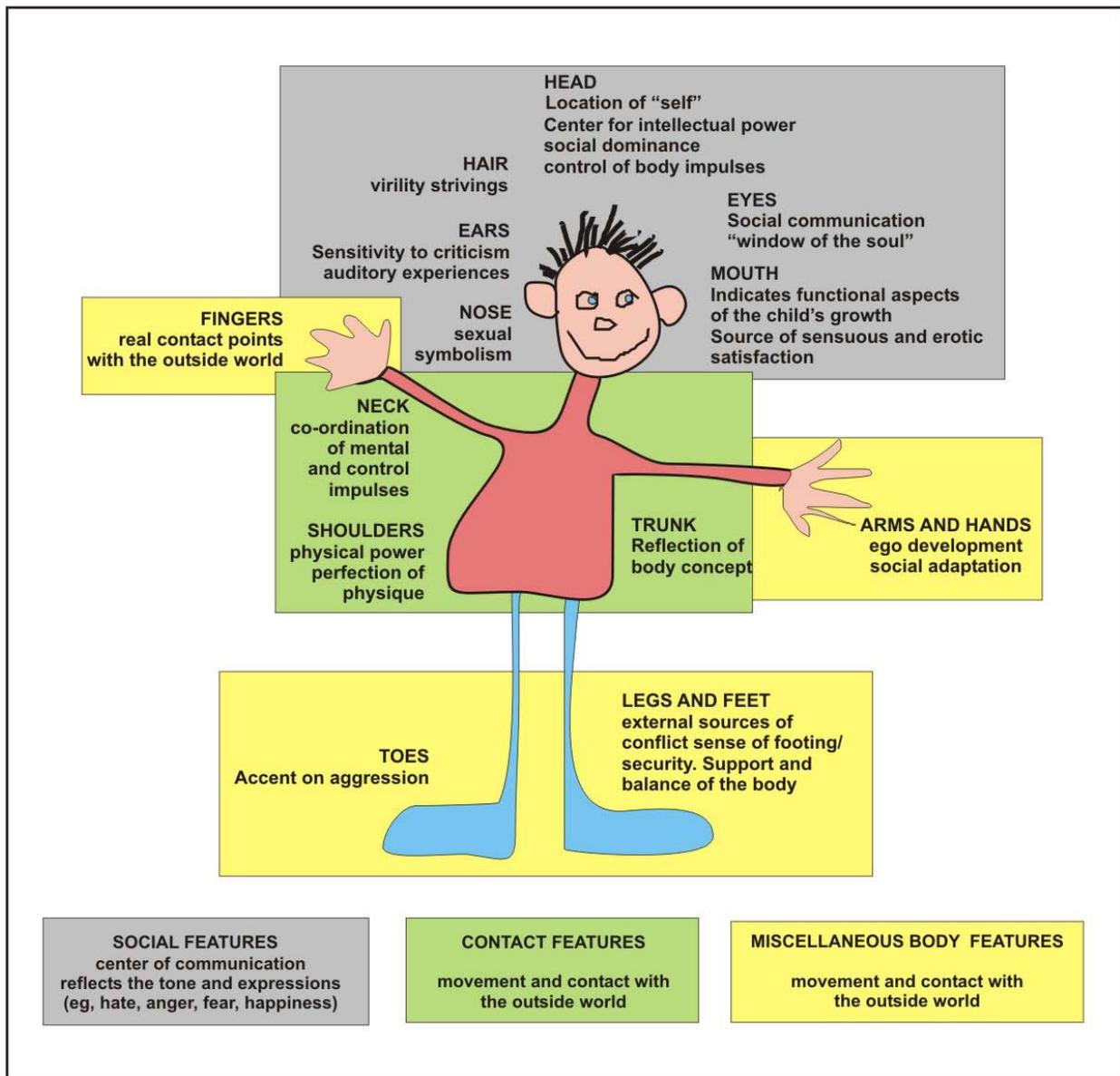


Figure 4.2. Summary of Machover's interpretation of the human figure drawing

Further interpretations include clothing, which can be interpreted as the compromise between modesty and blunt body display (Machover 1978: 75). This suggests that there is a requirement for protection from social and personal external situations. Buttons could suggest egocentric and somatic preoccupation as well as “mother attached” individuals (Machover 1978: 78), pockets, infantile and dependent individuals (Machover 1978: 79) and the tie, a sexual symbol. Shoes and hats suggest regression and impotence, pipe and/or cigarette are interpreted as a sexual symbol (Machover 1978: 82).

4.5 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND, DYNAMICS AND APPLICATION OF THE HUMAN FIGURE DRAWING TECHNIQUE ACCORDING TO E. M. KOPPITZ

Human figure drawings have become one of the most widely used techniques of psychologists working with children. Clinicians who regard this technique as a projective technique useful in analyzing for signs of unconscious needs, conflicts and personality traits and secondly as a developmental test of maturity employ two main approaches. Based on very early research by Goodenough (1926) and Harris (1963), Koppitz states the following:

There may be justification of speaking about a “test” when human figure drawings are used exclusively as a measurement of mental maturity of young children, for such a use involves an objective scoring system and test scores. It is inappropriate, however to call drawings a “test” when they are used as projective instruments in the personality assessment of children.
(Koppitz 1984:1)

Koppitz’s comment is reinforced by the researcher and used of this instrument will be referred to as a technique or method of assessment. To further expound on this idea, the researcher is of the opinion that personality assessment is an area where no “scoring systems” or “test scores” are applicable. This technique provides only themes and subjective qualitative interpretations from which a personality

profile of the person drawing the human figure is built, suggesting certain personality traits of this individual. With Koppitz's "new thoughts" of the Draw-a-Man technique not being considered exclusively a test, the technique of interpretation of the projective qualities evident in drawings, highlighted and released the observers' interpretations from formal structures of scoring and quantification. This marked an evolution in the field of qualitative projection assessment.

The human figure drawing's particular value is seen in its very sensitivity to change within the child and these changes may be both development and emotional, the human figure drawing can be regarded as a portrait of the inner child of the moment. (Koppitz 1968:4).

It is with Koppitz's last statement in mind that the researcher precedes with the study. The human figure drawings used in this study were totally regarded as a "portrait of the inner child of the moment" in an effort to understand and reach out to both child and parent in order to assist in the transition to a new life, after the divorce in the family in a positive and meaningful manner.

4.5.1 General theoretical background

There has never been any doubt in my mind that of all the tests and techniques used by psychologists who work with children there is one that is more meaningful and interesting and more enjoyable than all others and this technique is drawing – just drawing with pencil and paper. Drawing may involve "free drawing" of anything the child want to depict or the copying of designs or the drawing of a specific topic at the request of the examiner or..... the making of a human figure drawing (Koppitz 1968: ix).

Koppitz sites Machover (1949, 1953, 1960) as one of the "foremost exponents" of the projective approach towards human figure drawings. She also highlights the fact that Machover offers no scoring system or controlled research to test her hypotheses, resulting in inconclusive results. Koppitz's also highlights the reason for this as being the difficulty in assessing and comparing the findings of different studies since the variables within those studies are frequently ill – defined and have different

meanings are assigned to the same signs on the actual human figure drawings. Koppitz (1968:2) comments that most investigators of the human figure drawings as a projective test ignore or minimize the developmental aspects of figure drawings, other only consider the developmental items and doubt the projective significance. It appears therefore that a meaningful interpretation of the human figure drawing of children presupposes a through knowledge of both developmental and emotional indicators at each age level and a clear difference between the two. The researcher also feels that this is very true and adds another aspect to this scenario making a triad of development, emotional and situational factors which one must consider when human figure drawings are evaluated.

A final word by Elizabeth Koppitz would be appropriate as she states:

There appears to be a consensus among experts on the human figure drawing that no one-to-one relationship exists between any single sign on the human figure drawing and a definite personality trait or behaviour on the part of the boy or girl making the drawing. The writer (Koppitz) can only underscore what other have emphasized again and again: It is not possible to make a meaningful diagnosis or evaluation of a child's behaviour or difficulties based on any SINGLE sign on the human figure drawing. The total drawing and the combination of various signs and indicators should always be considered and should be analyzed on the basis of the child's age maturation, emotional status, social and cultural background and should be evaluated with any other available test data (Koppitz 1984: 3-4).

4.5.2 Method and administration of Koppitz's human figure drawing technique

In exploring the administration and application of the human figure drawing by Koppitz, the researcher will once again regress to one of her first publications where she delineated her method and instructional procedures.

The human figure drawing techniques requires that the child drew “*a whole person*” in the presence of the examiner. Koppitz highlighted the therapeutic relationship by stressing that the child (subject) was representing a graphic form of communication with the examiner and that the instructions were significant, aimed to eliminate any form of influence exerted on the subject. (Machover told her subjects to draw “a person”). Koppitz asked her subjects to draw one whole person, leaving the decisions as to the age and sex of the figure in the drawing, up to the subject. The hypothesis behind this instruction was that the drawing of one person should be sufficient for most cases as the structure of a child’s drawing is determined by his/her age and level of maturation which the style of the drawing reflects his/her attitudes and those concerns which are most important to him/her at that particular time. Koppitz (1984: 5-6) states:

The non specific instruction to draw “a whole person” seems to lead the child to look into himself and into his won feelings when trying to capture the essence of “a person”. The person a child knows best is himself; his picture of a person becomes therefore a portrait of his inner self, of his attitudes.

As with Machover’s instructions previously mentioned (See 3.4.3) Koppitz also comfortably seats the child at an uncluttered table, presents him/her with a blank sheet of paper (A4), a pencil and an eraser. The following instructions are verbally given:

On this piece of paper, I would like you to draw a WHOLE person. It can be any kind of a person you want to draw, just make sure that it is a whole person and not a stick figure or a cartoon figure (Koppitz 1984: 6).

To clarify the concept of “person” for younger children it was added, “*You may draw a man or a woman or a boy or a girl*”.

There was no time limit imposed and the examiner observed the entire procedure. The following was noted:

- Erasures and changes to the drawing

- Unusual features
- Sequencing in which the figure was drawn
- The child's attitude and spontaneous comments
- Amount of time needed and the amount of paper used
- If a child was dissatisfied with his/her drawing he/she was permitted to start over

4.5.3 Interpretation of Koppitz's human figure drawing technique

Koppitz sited a six-step approach with respect to evaluating the human figure drawing by middle school pupils (Koppitz 1984: 13-27).

I always follow a six steps when interpreting human figure drawings, the student's behaviour and attitudes are observed while he or she produces the drawing; then an overall impression of the human figure drawing is obtained; next the drawing is examined from a developmental point of view, the quality of the human figure drawing is explored; this is followed by an analysis of the content of the drawing; and finally the human figure drawing is examined for neurological impairment (Koppitz 1984: 13).

These aspects will be briefly discussed.

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

- Attitudes and the amount of effort the child puts into the task, reflects motivation and self – control.
- Time needed to complete the drawing shows impulsivity, compulsivity or perfectionism
- Erasures and scribbles difficulty in completing the drawing suggests anxiety or conflict
- Sequencing of body parts. Feet drawn first suggests difficulties in relating to others

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

- “*Grasp the tone and wholeness*” of the message conveyed in the drawing gives insight into a general understanding of the individual’s feelings and responses

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

School beginners draw only a few details on their human figure drawing; the number of details tends to increase when the child gets older. When a child reaches puberty the detail in the human figure drawing tends once again to decrease. 15 expected items that should be present on the human figure drawing of an 6-14 year old, absence of these items could reflect limited mental ability or underlying emotional attitudes, concerns or a developmental lag. The fifteen items are as follows (Koppitz 1984: 16):

- Head
- Eyes
- Nose
- Mouth
- Body
- Arms
- Legs
- Feet
- Arms two dimensional
- Legs two dimensional
- Hair
- Neck
- Arms down
- Arms at shoulder
- Two or more pieces of clothing

Step 4: Emotional indicators

Thirty emotional indicators (EI) were shown to significantly occur more often but not exclusively on human figure drawings of a group of young clinic patients with serious emotional problems (Koppitz 1984:23). It is not possible to identify or to diagnose emotional problems in an individual from the EI's on his or her human figure drawing, one can only suggest tendencies and/ or possible difficulties.

Koppitz groups the emotional indicators in five categories. Table 3 briefly describes the categories.

Emotional Indicator Category	Emotional Indicator evident in the human figure drawing
Impulsivity	Poor integration of body parts
	Gross asymmetry
	Transparencies
	Big Figure
	Omission of neck
Insecurity Feelings of insecurity	Slanting figure
	Tiny head
	Hands cut off
	Monster, grotesque figure
	Omission of arms
	Omission of legs
Anxiety	Omission of feet
	Shading of face
	Shading of body and/or limbs
	Shading of hands and/or neck
	Legs pressed together
	Omission of eyes
Shyness/Timidity	Clouds, rain, flying birds
	Tiny figure
	Short arms
	Arms clinging to body
	Omission of nose
Anger/Aggression	Omission of mouth
	Crossed eyes
	Teeth
	Long arms
	Big hands
	Nude figure/genitals

Table 3. Emotional indicator categories and emotional indicators (Adapted from Koppitz 1984: 179)

Step 5: Content analysis

This is perhaps the most productive step in the interpretation as it depends largely on the identity of the person who is depicted in the drawing and on the person's action or feeling (Koppitz 1984:34). Once again Koppitz reiterates the importance of knowing the "type" of human figure drawing elements that can be expected, that is "*normal*" for specific age groups.

The following are considered:

- Identification of the person in the human figure drawing:
- Age of the person in the human figure drawing
- Evaluation of the subject's self-concept
- Idealized self-image (wishful thinking)
- Sexual concerns

Step 6: Organic signs

Neurological impairment and minimal brain damage is considered in this stage. Koppitz (1984: 59) sites Cohn (1966:20) as researching four abnormal aspects found in the drawings of brain injured patients, these are:

1. Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts.
2. Asymmetry of symbols of body structure
3. Perseveration
4. Simplification

The above-mentioned aspects are reflected in the organic signs Koppitz evaluates with regard to human figure drawings. Table 4 lists the organic signs considered by Koppitz (1984:180).

	Organic Sign
1	Omission of neck
2	Stick arms
3	Arms horizontal or pointing up
4	Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position
5	Hands cut off
6	Stick legs
7	One or no piece of clothing
8	Poor integrated body parts
9	Gross asymmetry
10	Transparencies
11	Slanting figure

Table 4. Organic signs considered in the human figure drawing (Adapted form Koppitz 1984: 180)

4.6 CONCLUSION

A note of warning however, it must always be borne in mind that, one must not mistakenly assume that all human figure drawings are necessarily meaningful and revealing communications, just like verbal utterances, meaning and clinical significance vary and differ greatly. It is imperative that the individual using this technique be thoroughly familiar with human family drawings done by normal healthy children, as this will give the researcher a base line or foundation from which any deviation can be evaluated. Secondly, the examiner must always take into consideration the situational, environmental and societal parameters in which the subject is functioning when the human figure-drawing task is given and evaluated.

With the aspects concerning divorce sited in chapter 2 and the theoretical background concerning the assessment technique, the research will now proceed to delineate the research design and expound on the research process utilized in the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter, the design of the empirical is delineated and explained. The aim of the research outlined in 1.5 in chapter 1, will serve as guidelines for the research process of the study. The research design will make use of qualitative approaches in an effort to establish a profile of the child who is experiencing divorce within his/her family structure, in order to explore the life world of the pre-adolescent child. The minimization of the negative impact of the situation on the entire family is a prime objective of the study enabling the individual to regain control of their families and positively continue in their respective lives.

5.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

Empirical research is the idea that knowledge comes from experience (Johnson & Christensen 2004:12) Learning by observing and experiencing with our senses is one of the main thrusts behind empirical research. This concept is highlighted by Johnson & Christensen (2004:12-13), as they state Empirical research can be verified or refuted by observation, experimentation or experience.

In this research study, the main objective of the empirical study is to examine, analyze and implement the techniques researched in Chapter 4 in order to obtain a functional profile of the child who is going through a family divorce in an effort to assist the pre-adolescent child during divorce. Once again, the problem statement (see Chapter 1.4) is recalled and highlighted.

<p>To establish the <u>life world functioning</u> of the <u>pre-adolescent child</u> after <u>divorce</u> by assessing the <u>emotional indicators</u> of prescribed projection tests.</p>
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5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is seen as an outline, plan or strategy used to seek an answer to the research question of problem statement (Johnson & Christensen 2004:275).

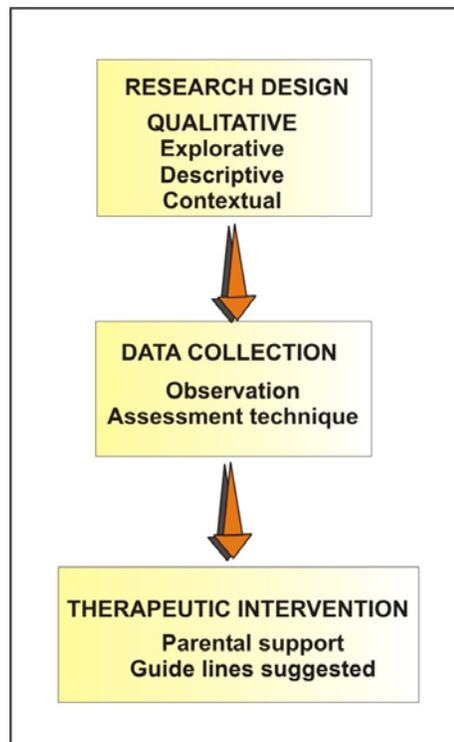


Figure 5.1 Diagrammatic representation of the research design

5.3.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of these surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles and so forth (Berg 2007:8). This design enables the researcher to explore and assess unquantifiable facts or data about actual people. One could thus say that qualitative techniques enable and facilitate a researcher in his/her task of understanding others and exploring the functional structure of individuals. Furthermore the researcher is provided with personal glimpses of people's lives which give different perspectives in understanding the personal meaning people ascribe to their daily lives and in making sense of themselves and others within their life world functioning. Analysis

of the qualitative data enables the researcher to identify and evaluate various social and individual processes, which human beings apply to their daily functioning to create and maintain their social and personal realities and psychological well-being.

The research study therefore followed a qualitative approach as it was thought by the researcher that this approach would optimally support and facilitate the assessment technique. The assessment technique, the human figure drawing, is a projective technique, which is by its very nature a qualitative evaluation of personality. To further reinforce the validity of the choice of qualitative research approach for this study, Crosby, Di Clemens & Salazar give very convincing reasons. They state:

In health promotion qualitative research is warranted as it is naturalistic, the data is descriptive, there is concern with process, it is inductive and meaning is the goal (Crosby, Di Clemente & Salazar 2006: 154).

Therefore this research study adhered to the aspects cited by Crosby et al, and maintained the essence of a qualitative mode of inquiry. To specify these elements is essential:

- Naturalistic approach
- Descriptive data
- Approach is process driven
- Inductive nature
- Meaning is the ultimate goal

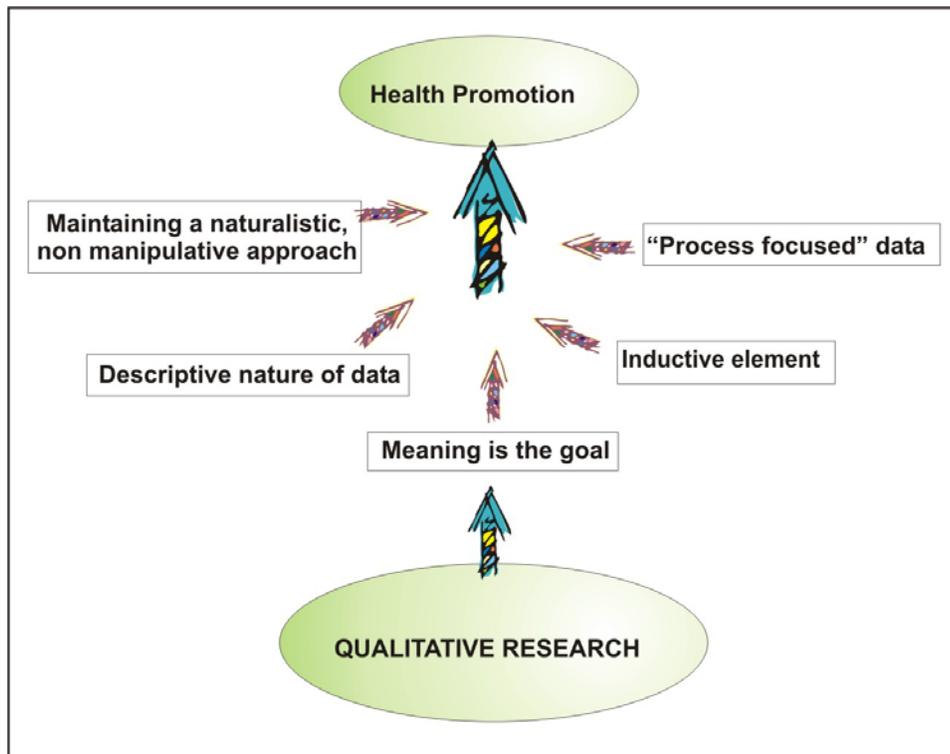


Figure 5.2 The qualitative mode of inquiry

5.4 DATA COLLECTION

During the literature review, three aspects were considered:

- The phenomena of divorce
- The concept of the pre-adolescent child
- The assessment technique: Human figure drawing

The questions guiding the research (see Chapter 1, 1.4.1) were used in delineating the data collection techniques and parameters. These questions will lead the study. The first question sited:

What presenting emotional indicators can be identified in the child's human figure drawing projective test used during the assessment of the child to create a profile of the child's life world functioning?

This question will be answered by returning to the literature study and gathering material sited by Koppitz (See 4.4.3 Method and administration of Koppitz's human figure drawing technique).

Koppitz cited definite parameters and specific criteria (emotional indicators) with which she evaluates the human figure drawings. It is because of this, and the fact that Koppitz qualitatively evaluates the drawings that this technique was adopted.

The second question cited

How are these emotional indicators assessed in order to make informed decisions?

Once again Koppitz, technique is used as she assesses to a very definite and specified six step approach (See Chapter 4, 4.5.3: Interpretation of Koppitz's human figure drawing technique). This approach was followed by the researcher. In essence it is as follows:

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

Step 4: Emotional indicators

Step 5: Content analysis

Step 6: Organic signs

The third question to lead the data collection process was:

How parenting skills can be strengthened in order to regain a stable family situation for optimal family functioning in the newly formed, post divorce family unit?

The resulting qualitative data obtained from the human figure drawing produces a profile of the child, which gives an indication of within the five emotional indicator categories where the child's problems could be identified. A diagnostic assessment was done and an arbitrary score was obtained. The five emotional indicator categories were specified by Koppitz (Koppitz 1984: 179). The scoring system was adapted by the researcher based on Koppitz's emotional indicators she identified as noteworthy when

evaluating the categories. The scoring system is based on a diagnostic qualitative evaluation. The higher the score, the more evidence there is present of emotional trait or characteristic in the drawing and subsequently the higher the specified emotional category is suggested within the life world functioning of the child. (See table 5)

Emotional Indicator Category	Score (Emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawing of the subject)
Impulsivity	/5
Insecurity/Feelings of insecurity	/7
Anxiety	/6
Shyness/Timidity	/5
Anger/Aggression	/5

Table 5. Emotional indicator categories and qualitative diagnostic scoring

5.5 PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES

5.5.1 Interview

Koppitz first step in her assessment plan was initiated during the interviews session. Firstly the child's behaviour was observed, his/her interactions with the parent present, and secondly the parents' behavioural reaction to the situation and the child in question. For purposes of this research this initial step has been minimized, as it was felt that even though situational parameters are necessary, the one basic unifying factor in the study was that of the child experiencing his/her family's divorce. It is with this in mind that the researcher acknowledges this step in the Koppitz's assessment model and minimizes or excludes intense contact with the parent, focusing more on the child, in order to favor a "blind" unbiased evaluation of the final product, the human figure drawing.

5.5.2 Procedures: Method used to apply the human figure drawing technique

The human figure drawing technique of Koppitz was applied as the main guideline in administering this assessment technique. The following general actions were undertaken constantly through out all sessions with all subjects.

- All drawings were made by children in individual sessions, no groups were used.
- The researcher presented the situation in each instance. The instructions that were given to each child were standard (Koppitz 1984: 6). The wording was as follows:

On this piece of paper I would like you to draw a WHOLE person. It can be any kind of a person you want to draw, just make sure that it is a whole person and not a stick figure or a cartoon figure.

Clarifying of the concept of “person” was not necessary, as all subjects were between the ages of 8 and 14 therefore this was not needed.

- A sheet of white A4 paper was placed on the table in front of the child with a grey lead pencil and eraser available.
- The instructions were then given
- No comment or suggestions were made by the researcher in any way, which would have influenced the child.

5.5.3 Procedures: Method used to score the human figure drawing technique

All drawings were collected and the following evaluations were done. These evaluations were in accordance with Koppitz’s six stage evaluation strategy.

- 1) Behaviour Observation: At all times the child’s behaviour and reactions to the requests and the “test” in general were noted.

2) Overall impression of the human figure drawn was gathered by considering a whole or general impression the drawing conveyed. Feelings of happiness, sadness, overt anger, wishes, desires were all considered and aspects of association added by asking questions concerning the general atmosphere of the drawing.

3) Aspects of mental maturity which were evaluated by comparing the 15 expected items that should be present on the human figure drawing of an 6-14 year old. Absence of these features was considered with respect to a limited mental ability (developmental lags) or underlying emotional attitudes/problems. The fifteen items considered are as follows:

Expected item	Yes	No	Expected item	Yes	No
Head			Arms two dimensional		
Nose			Legs two dimensional		
Eyes			Hair		
Mouth			Neck		
Body			Arms down		
Arms			Arms at shoulder		
Legs			Two or more pieces of clothing		
Feet			Total score		

Table 6. The fifteen items considered for qualitative diagnostic scoring for mental maturity

The lower the score (that is more “no” answers) the more likely there is to be problems regarding mental maturity.

4) Emotional indicators were considered from the five categories. For each category there were a certain number of prominent criteria needed to be evident to qualify for that specific or particular indicator to be problematic in the child’s life world (See Table 2. Emotional indicator categories and the emotional indicators). The drawings were evaluated by considering these criteria. The grading of the emotional indicator score was done by dividing the score into three categories of significance, these being:

Insignificant	Low significance	High significance
Scores well below 50%. These scores were usually a 1 or 2 which could be interpreted as existing but not significant enough to be considered as much of an influence.	This would be a noteworthy score ranging from about 45% to 60%. Here scores would be considered as influencing factors and noted.	A high score was considered significant and an influencing factor which was noted and considered a feature which could identify a tendency or trend in a child's drawing which could be used as a diagnostic criteria by the therapist

Table 7. Categories of significance of emotional indicators

5) Content analysis was done by a more directed association technique whereby the child is asked pertinently to:

- Identify the person in the human figure drawing by giving him/her a name
- Reveal the age of the person in the human figure drawing
- Ask what the person is doing in the drawing.
- Ask what the person is thinking in the drawing.
- Ask what the person is feeling in the drawing.

This step expounded on a previous stage, where overall impression of the human figure drawn was gathered.

6) Organic signs: Neurological impairment and minimal brain damage is considered in this stage by checking for

1. Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts.
2. Asymmetry of symbols of body structure
3. Perseveration
4. Simplification

5.5.4 Selection of respondents

Children between the ages of 6 and 12, who had gone through or were going through a divorce situation, were eligible for the study. These individuals were approached and requested to voluntarily participate in the study. The only criteria considered and noted was age, sex and the fact that the child, was experiencing divorce within the family unit.

5.5.5 Ethical considerations

It must state that all the children's parents were informed and permission, in the form of written consent was obtained for psychological evaluation and therapy of the child. The drawings, which were considered, were obtained from school during individual therapy sessions with the child. These drawings were considered with regard to evidence of general themes sited in Koppitz. In no way can these drawings be traced to any particular child as the only identifying aspects are age, first name and sex, this affords complete anonymity to all participants. The background information only serves to provide evidence of the environmental circumstances of the child and confirm the main criteria, that is, that the child is experiencing a divorce within his/her family.

5.6 CONCLUSION

In Chapter 4 the procedures followed in the administration of the assessment medium were explored and discussed. The following chapter will proceed with presenting the data obtained by the researcher from the sample group. This presentation will include the presentation of the data of each of the candidates and a brief explanation of each step of the evaluation as delineated in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER SIX

DATA COLLECTION AND FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, the research design was discussed; this included the qualitative nature of the design, the data collection method and accompanying procedures and techniques. The media used was highlighted and the rationale behind its use, expounded on. The selection of the sample group reflected a general population of children who are experiencing divorce within the family unit.

6.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

To revise the situation surrounding the obtained data the following aspects are noteworthy with regard to the sample group of human figure drawings.

- All drawings were done by children between the ages of 6 and 12 years.
- Participants were from all racial groups.
- Participants were from both sexes.
- Participants were all involved in a family divorce.

6.3 CONTENT ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS

6.3.1 PARTICIPANT: SETH

Name : Seth
Date of birth : 23/06/1999
Age : 8 years
Date of Evaluation : 12/08/2007

Background information:

Seth resides with his mother in a single parent situation. After living together for approximately three years as a family (mother was not officially married to his father) the family unit separated. Presently Seth presents with scholastic problems as well as difficulty with respect to socialization at school.

Aggression and at times a more passive-aggressive behavior, hostility and low self esteem presented in the initial interview.

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

Initially Seth presented as exceptionally keen and co-operative, communicating well and expressing his wishes with ease. He complied with all instructions given but was a little hesitant to make mistakes and made sure of what he was expected to do by repeatedly asking if he was doing the “*right thing*”. When asked about his father Seth tended to become subdued and withdrew, presenting with avoidance behavior: he tried to change the subject. When further exploration of the general family situation was undertaken Seth became hostile and “shut down” refusing to talk. Seth avoided all questions concerning his scholastic activities.

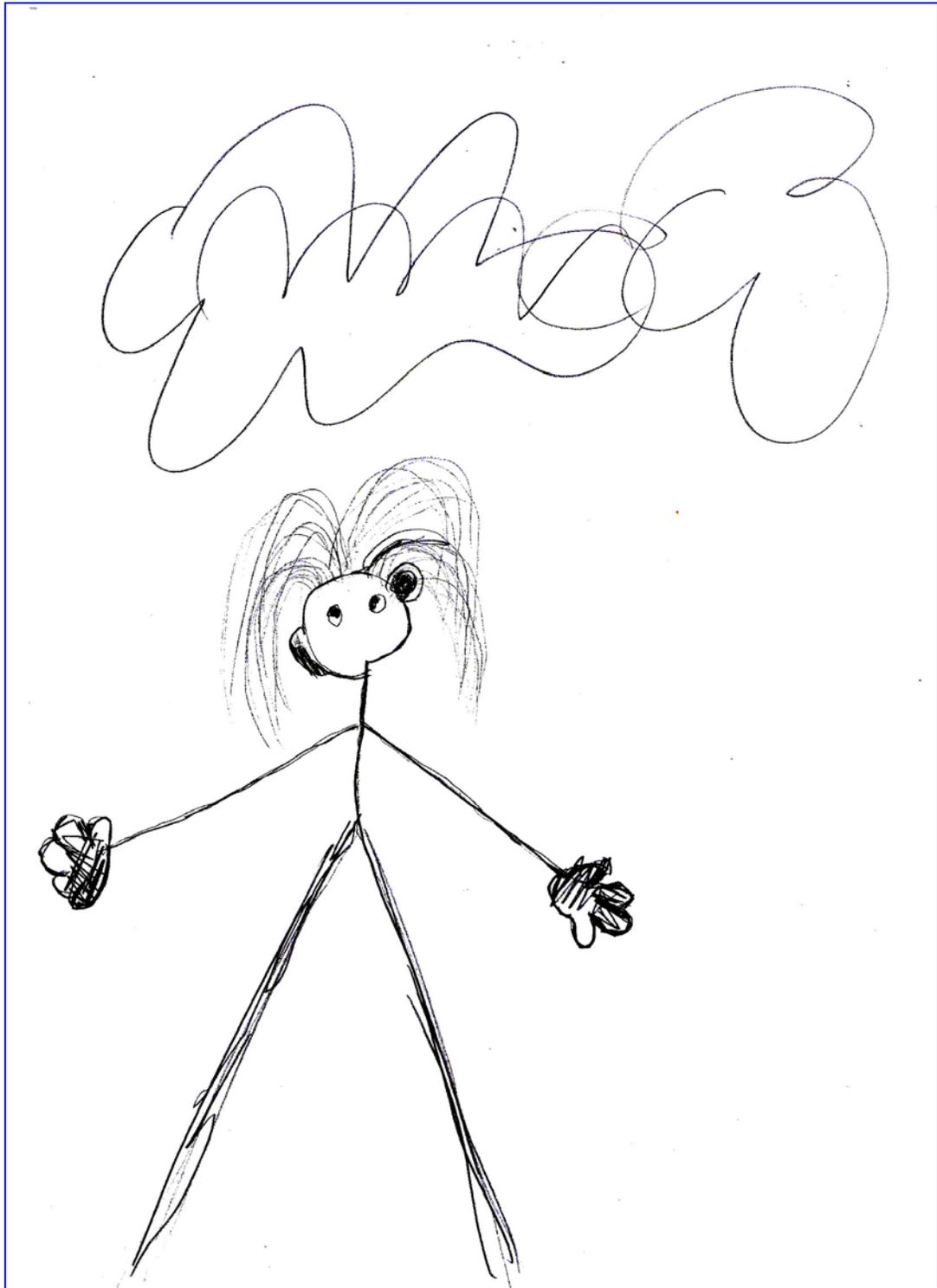


Figure 6.1 Draw a Person: Seth

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

The figure drawing suggested the following themes:

- Sensitivity
- Need of security and nurturance
- Loss of environmental control
- Evasiveness
- Oppositionalism
- Insecurity and inadequacy

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

Expected item	Yes	No	Expected item	Yes	No
Head	✓		Arms two dimensional		✓
Nose		✓	Legs two dimensional		✓
Eyes	✓		Hair	✓	
Mouth		✓	Neck	✓	
Body	✓		Arms down		✓
Arms	✓		Arms at shoulder		✓
Legs	✓		Two or more pieces of clothing		✓
Feet		✓	Total score	7	8

Table 8. The fifteen items considered for qualitative diagnostic scoring for mental maturity for Seth.

As previously mentioned (See Chapter 5: 5.5.3) the lower the score (that is more “no” answers) the more likely there is to be problems regarding mental maturity. Seth’s score presents a slightly higher “no” score suggesting that his mental maturity level could be lower than the age appropriate level. This could also suggest emotional problems.

Step 4: Emotional indicator evaluation

Emotional Indicator Category	Emotional Indicator evident in the human figure drawing	
Impulsivity	Poor integration of body parts	✓
	Gross asymmetry	
	Transparencies	
	Big Figure	✓
	Omission of neck	
Insecurity Feelings of insecurity	Slanting figure	
	Tiny head	✓
	Hands cut off	✓
	Monster, grotesque figure	✓
	Omission of arms	
	Omission of legs	
Anxiety	Omission of feet	✓
	Shading of face	✓ (ears)
	Shading of body and/or limbs	✓
	Shading of hands and/or neck	✓
	Legs pressed together	
	Omission of eyes	
Shyness/Timidity	Clouds, rain, flying birds	✓
	Tiny figure	
	Short arms	
	Arms clinging to body	
	Omission of nose	✓
	Omission of mouth	✓
Anger/Aggression	Crossed eyes	✓
	Teeth	
	Long arms	✓
	Big hands	✓
	Nude figure/genitals	✓

Table 9. Emotional indicators in Seth's drawing

Emotional Indicator Category	Score (Emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawing of the subject)	Comment
Impulsivity	2/5	Low significance
Insecurity/Feelings of insecurity	4/7	High significance
Anxiety	4/6	High significance
Shyness/Timidity	2/5	Low significance
Anger/Aggression	4/5	High significance

Table 10. Synopsis of Seth's emotional indicator score

Step 5: Content analysis

Identification of the person in the human figure drawing:

Seth seems to identify more prominently with the female figure as his first drawing is that of a female. This can be ascribed to the fact that Seth lives with his mother in a female dominated environment.

Age of the person in the human figure drawing:

Seth's figure drawing was aged at eight years reflecting a positive alliance between him and the projected drawing.

Evaluation of the subject's self-concept:

As the mouth of the figure is absent, negative communication or the inability to express himself could be deduced which could be a factor when considering his self-concept. Large ears and the fact that he ears are shaded also suggest sensitivity to criticism, which could be ascribed to his lack of self-confidence.

Idealized self-image (wishful thinking):

Seth's three wishes were as follows:

- To have super powers
- To go around the world
- To go up in space

Seth's wishes suggest that could feel a sense of powerlessness in the presenting situation and that he may have a need to escape and go somewhere else.

Sexual concerns:

Seth drew the female figure first suggesting that he could identify more with the female role model. This also reflects the absence of a male role model in his home environment.

Step 6: Organic signs

	Organic Sign	
1	Omission of neck	
2	Stick arms	✓
3	Arms horizontal or pointing up	✓
4	Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position	
5	Hands cut off	
6	Stick legs	✓
7	One or no piece of clothing	✓
8	Poor integrated body parts	✓
9	Gross asymmetry	
10	Transparencies	
11	Slanting figure	

Table 11. Organic sign check list: Seth

Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts:

There was no gross disproportion of the figure evident. Seth tended to rush the drawing showing rather a low impulse control reaction rather than organic signs of impairment. This could also be interpreted as oppositionalism and evasiveness reflecting his high score of anger and insecurity (See table 7) The only noteworthy omission was the mouth which the researcher interpreted as indicative of a more emotional problem, than an organic impairment.

Asymmetry of symbols of body structure:

None present.

Perseveration:

None present.

Simplification:

Evident but once again it can be ascribed to Seth rushing through the task. This may also be a result of his oppositional behavior and the fact that he did not want to do the drawing.

6.3.2 PARTICIPANT: TRISTAN

Name : Tristan
Date of birth : 15/10/1998
Age : 8 years
Date of Evaluation : 19/10/2006

Background information:

Tristan's parents divorced when he was three years old. The parents remained in a positive relationship with Tristan freely having access to both parents as well as grandparents. Tristan's mother remarried when he was four and a half and a year and a half later, his step brother was born. Tristan presents with serious ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) tendencies and is on medication, which is closely monitored by a pediatrician. In 2006 his biological father suddenly passed away in a motorbike accident.

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

Tristan initially presented as exceptionally quiet and withdrawn. He would not separate easily from his mother. After a while, he did eventually relax and allow his mother to leave the room only if she promised to wait outside in the waiting area, which he personally checked out.

He complied with all requests and was eager to draw once he started. He was initially verbally very guarded when speaking about his family especially his biological father.

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

The figure drawing suggested the following themes:

- Aggression and anger.
- Frustration
- Conflict with an environmental situation

- Insecurity
- Nurturance needs
- Withdrawal
- Contact with outside world on own terms.

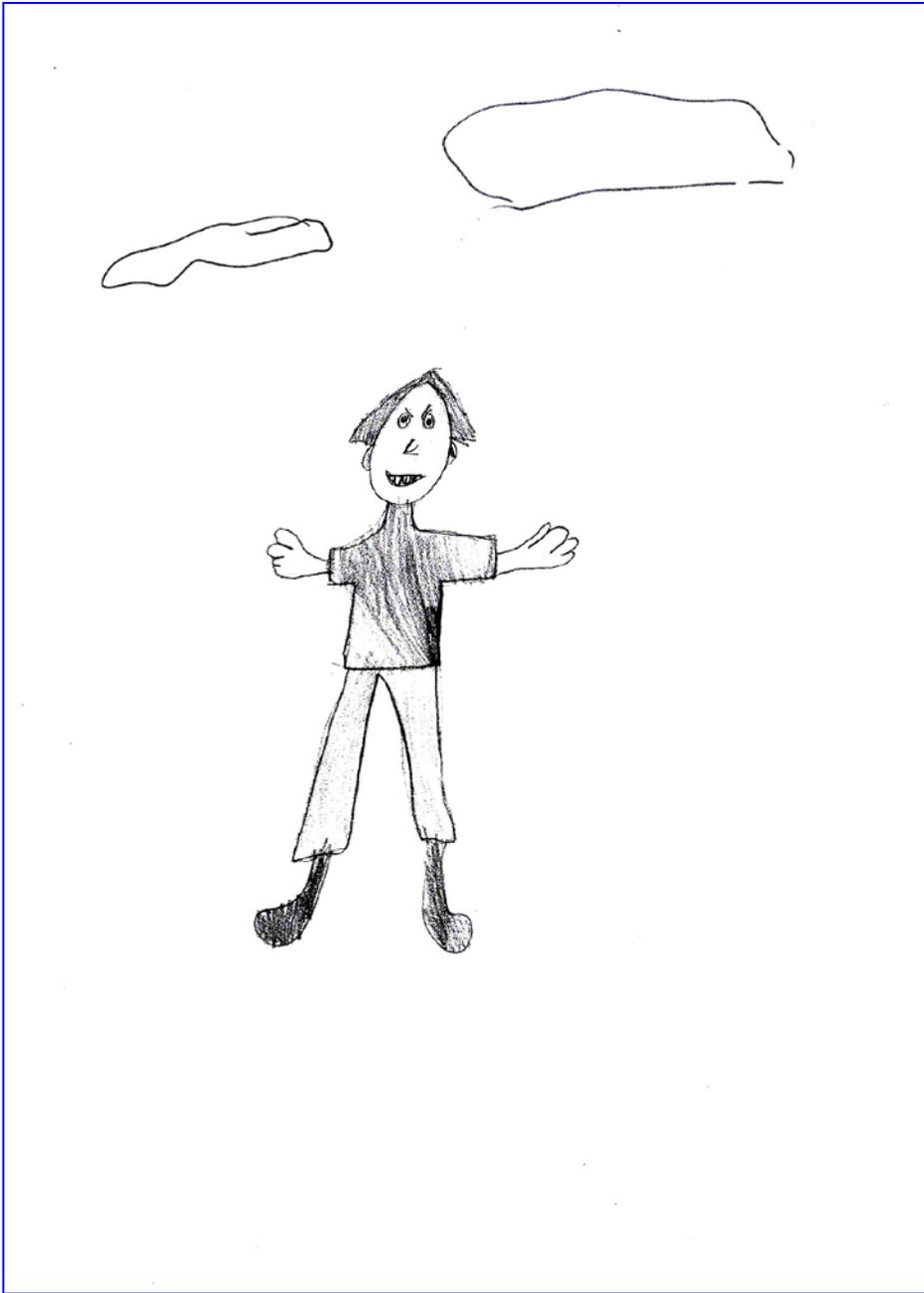


Figure 6.2 Draw a Person: Tristan

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

Expected item	Yes	No	Expected item	Yes	No
Head	✓		Arms two dimensional	✓	
Nose	✓		Legs two dimensional	✓	
Eyes	✓		Hair	✓	
Mouth	✓		Neck	✓	
Body	✓		Arms down		✓
Arms	✓		Arms at shoulder	✓	
Legs	✓		Two or more pieces of clothing	✓	
Feet	✓		Total score	14	1

Table 12. The fifteen items considered for qualitative diagnostic scoring for mental maturity for Tristan

A higher “yes” score suggests a higher mental maturity with respect to Tristan’s mental functioning. This also indicates a higher level of emotional sensitivity that could have a negative effect on Tristan’s behaviour and general functioning as it suggests a higher level of sensitivity and experiential ability.

Step 4: Emotional indicator evaluation

Emotional Indicator Category	Emotional Indicator evident in the human figure drawing	
Impulsivity	Poor integration of body parts	✓
	Gross asymmetry	✓
	Transparencies	
	Big Figure	✓
	Omission of neck	
Insecurity Feelings of insecurity	Slanting figure	
	Tiny head	
	Hands cut off	✓
	Monster, grotesque figure	
	Omission of arms	✓
	Omission of legs	
Anxiety	Omission of feet	
	Shading of face	✓
	Shading of body and/or limbs	✓
	Shading of hands and/or neck	✓
	Legs pressed together	
	Omission of eyes	
	Clouds, rain, flying birds	✓
Shyness/Timidity	Tiny figure	
	Short arms	✓
	Arms clinging to body	
	Omission of nose	
	Omission of mouth	
Anger/Aggression	Crossed eyes	✓
	Teeth	✓
	Long arms	
	Big hands	✓
	Nude figure/genitals	

Table 13. Emotional indicators in Tristan's drawing

Emotional Indicator Category	Score (Emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawing of the subject)	Comment
Impulsivity	3/5	High significance
Insecurity/Feelings of insecurity	2/7	Low significance
Anxiety	4/6	High significance
Shyness/Timidity	1/5	Insignificant
Anger/Aggression	3/5	High significance

Table 14. Synopsis of Tristan's emotional indicator score

Step 5: Content analysis

Identification of the person in the human figure drawing:

Tristan identifies more prominently with the male figure. This can be ascribed to the fact that even though he lives with his mother, she has since remarried and there seems to be a positive constant male role model in his life and also the fact that he had a very close relationship with his father.

Age of the person in the human figure drawing:

Tristan's figure drawing was slightly older than his chronological age. The drawing was aged at 13 years. This seemed to reflect his wishes and desires to be older, in order to participate more fully with his biological father who was extremely physically inclined and loved the outdoor life. Tristan also presented with a need to look after his mother and this could have also triggered his subconscious wish to be older. ("*Little big man syndrome*" wanting to be the man in the house and taking on unrealistic adult roles and responsibilities.)

Evaluation of the subject's self-concept:

Tristan's figure drawing was very prominently placed in the centre of the page and very clearly drawn. This could reflect a positive self esteem and good self concept aspects within his personality. The figure drawn with no real arms; hands with no arms, suggests an inability to cope or control his environment and need for nurturance and security.

Idealized self-image (wishful thinking):

Tristan's three wishes were as follows:

- To have his parents together again.
- That his father was alive.
- To be big enough to ride his father's bike.

Tristan's wishes suggest that a desire to escape his present situation and be "big" as he could think that this is the solution to his present emotional upheaval.

Sexual concerns:

None noted.

Step 6: Organic signs

	Organic Sign	
1	Omission of neck	
2	Stick arms	
3	Arms horizontal or pointing up	
4	Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position	
5	Hands cut off	✓
6	Stick legs	
7	One or no piece of clothing	
8	Poor integrated body parts	✓
9	Gross asymmetry	
10	Transparencies	
11	Slanting figure	

Table 15. Organic sign check list: Tristan

Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts:

There was no gross disproportion of the figure evident. Tristan’s human figure drawing was fairly well proportioned except for the fact that the arms were significantly short and the hands rather large which was interpreted more as emotional indicators rather than any signs of organic impairment.

Asymmetry of symbols of body structure:

None present.

Perseveration:

None present.

Simplification:

None present.

6.3.3 PARTICIPANT: JEAN

Name : Jean
Date of birth : 02/09/1997
Age : 9 years
Date of Evaluation : 07/06/2007

Background information:

Jean is a grade four learner, he is the older of two children and his younger sister is three years old. After a separation of about a year and a half Jean's biological parents divorced when Jean was 2 years old. After the divorce Jean's father passed away. Jean's mother has since remarried. Jean was brought for the evaluation by his mother who was concerned about his behavior at school as he tended to be very timid and withdrawn, and as reported by his mother, his academic work had recently deteriorated and was not in accordance with his potential.

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

Jean is a very quiet and withdrawn child. He passively complied with all requests and did not present with any separation anxiety when his mother withdrew from the room. Generally, he presented with self-confidence in the "one to one" therapeutic situation. Verbally being very strong and having the confidence to enquire and question the situation he presented as fairly self confident and intellectually astute. He had beautiful manners, was an absolute pleasure to work with, and presented with no indication of oppositional or negative behavioral problems, because of this aspect it was considered that during group functioning Jean could withdraw and exhibit tendencies of passivity.

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

The figure drawing suggested the following themes:

- Overt emotionality

- Sensitivity
- Need of security and nurturance
- Loss of environmental control
- Evasiveness
- Oppositionalism
- Insecurity and inadequacy
- Insecurity
- Nurturance needs
- Withdrawal, introversion

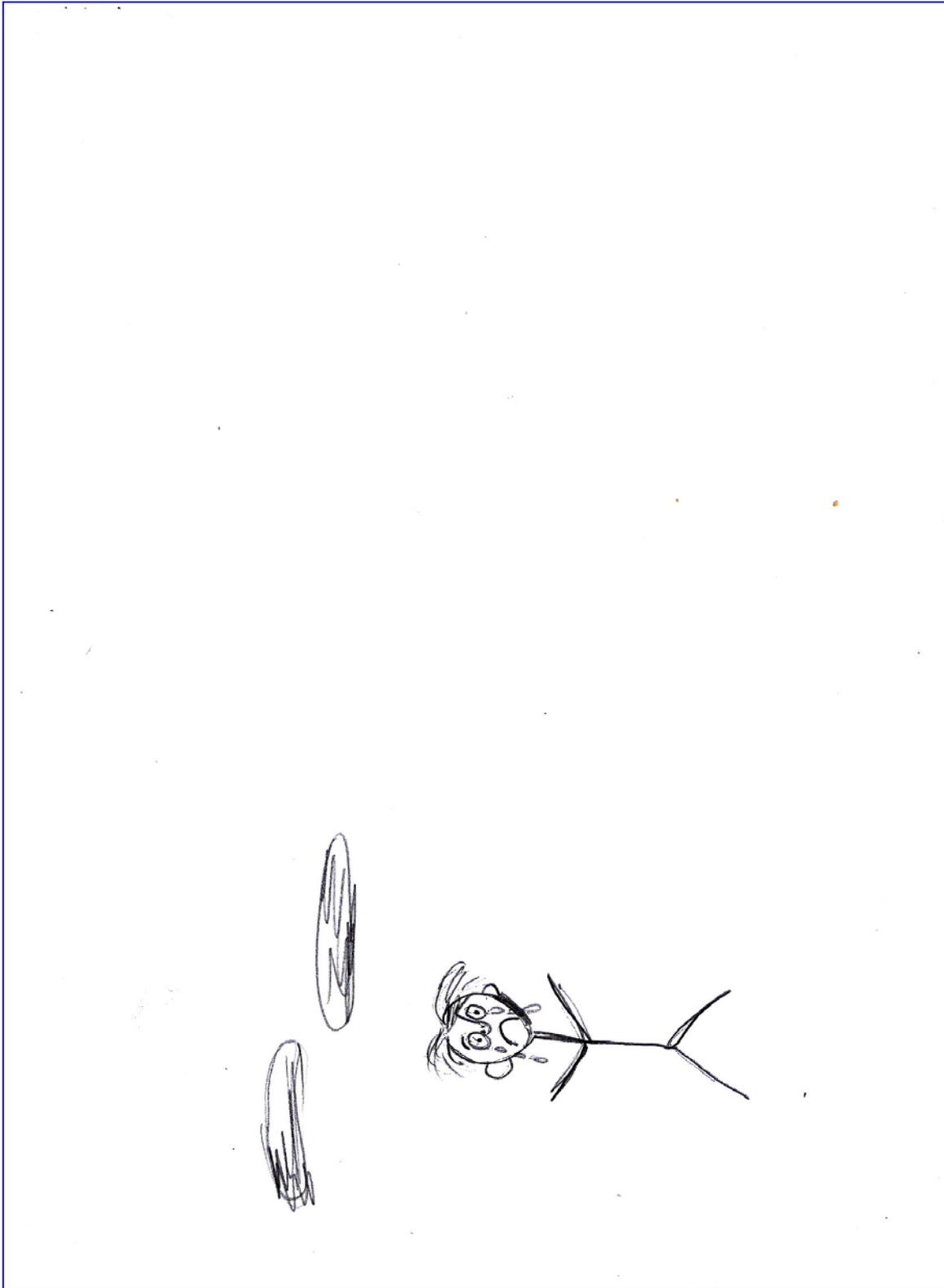


Figure 5.3 Draw a Person: Jean

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

Expected item	Yes	No	Expected item	Yes	No
Head	✓		Arms two dimensional		✓
Nose	✓		Legs two dimensional		✓
Eyes	✓		Hair	✓	
Mouth	✓		Neck	✓	
Body	✓		Arms down	✓	
Arms	✓		Arms at shoulder	✓	
Legs	✓		Two or more pieces of clothing		✓
Feet		✓	Total score	11	4

Table 16. The fifteen items considered for qualitative diagnostic scoring for mental maturity for Jean

The higher “yes” score indicates a high mental maturity level with respect to Jean’s mental functioning. Any aspects of immaturity could be ascribed to emotional immaturity rather than an intellectual disability as Jean did not present with a history of academic or scholastic problems and the main reason for the therapeutic intervention was for his present emotional withdrawal and passivity. The emotional aspects are also reflected in the overt emotional indicators noted in the following step of the evaluation, step four. In this step we note the emotional indicators of a general theme of sadness of the figure and the large ears suggesting sensitivity.

Step 4: Emotional indicators

Emotional Indicator Category	Emotional Indicator evident in the human figure drawing	
Impulsivity	Poor integration of body parts	✓
	Gross asymmetry	
	Transparencies	
	Big Figure	
	Omission of neck	
Insecurity Feelings of insecurity	Slanting figure	✓
	Tiny head	
	Hands cut off	✓
	Monster, grotesque figure	
	Omission of arms (hands)	✓
	Omission of legs	
	Omission of feet	✓
Anxiety	Shading of face	✓
	Shading of body and/or limbs	✓
	Shading of hands and/or neck	✓
	Legs pressed together	
	Omission of eyes	
	Clouds, rain, flying birds	✓
Shyness/Timidity	Tiny figure	
	Short arms	✓
	Arms clinging to body	
	Omission of nose	
	Omission of mouth	
Anger/Aggression	Crossed eyes	
	Teeth	
	Long arms	
	Big hands	
	Nude figure/genitals	

Table 17. Emotional indicators in Jean's drawing

Emotional Indicator Category	Score (Emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawing of the subject)	Comment
Impulsivity	1/5	Insignificant
Insecurity/Feelings of insecurity	4/7	High significance
Anxiety	4/6	High significance
Shyness/Timidity	1/5	Insignificant
Anger/Aggression	0/5	Insignificant

Table 18. Synopsis of Jean's emotional indicator score

Step 5: Content analysis

Identification of the person in the human figure drawing:

Jean identifies with the male figure, as this was his first drawing. The figure was age appropriate, being aged at ten years reflecting a valid projection of himself.

Age of the person in the human figure drawing:

As previously stated Jean's figure drawing was slightly older than his chronological age but the age difference was insignificant. This seems to reflected Jean's present functioning and realistic reflection of the present situation.

Evaluation of the subject's self-concept:

Jean's figure drawing was very prominently placed on the left hand side of the page, it was not very clear with light sketchy lines. This could reflect aspects within his personality or tendencies of negative self-esteem and poor self-concept, introversion and self-orientation. No hands suggest an inability to cope or control his environment, inadequacy and withdrawal. The stick figure also suggests evasiveness, insecurity and self-distrust.

Idealized self-image (wishful thinking):

Jean's three wishes were as follows:

- To have a big motor bike – “*Scrambler*”.
- To have “*super powers*”.
- To have a big car like a Land Rover and help people like the police or firefighters.

Jean's wishes were interpreted as having a desire to control his external world by having “*super powers*” also reflected in the wish to be big enough to “*control*” his world by being able have a car or motor bike which would give him more freedom. His sensitive concerning nature is reflected in his need to help people.

Sexual concerns:

None noted.

Step 6: Organic signs

	Organic Sign	
1	Omission of neck	
2	Stick arms	✓
3	Arms horizontal or pointing up	✓
4	Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position	
5	Hands cut off	
6	Stick legs	✓
7	One or no piece of clothing	✓
8	Poor integrated body parts	
9	Gross asymmetry	
10	Transparencies	
11	Slanting figure	

Table 19. Organic sign check list: Jean

Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts:

There was no gross disproportion of the figure evident. The stick figure was interpreted as more of an avoidance “*tactic*” than signs of organic impairment. The stick figure could also be interpreted as oppositionalism to the therapists “*invasion*” of his life world and evasiveness reflecting his high score of feelings of insecurity and anxiety (See table 15: Synopsis of Jean’s emotional indicator score).

Asymmetry of symbols of body structure:

None present.

Perseveration:

None present.

Simplification:

This aspect was evident but once again it can be ascribed to Jean’s avoidance “*tactic*” interpreted as oppositionalism to the therapists “*invasion*” of his personal functioning.

6.3.4 PARTICIPANT : TREVOR

Name : Trevor
Date of birth : 23/10/1993
Age : 12 years
Date of Evaluation : 23/03/2006

Background information:

Trevor's mother requested an evaluation as she felt that Trevor was not achieving his full potential scholastically and that there seemed to be some emotional problems that he was experiencing with respect to the transition between his parents during visitation periods with his father. Trevor was presenting with overt behavior problems such as defiance and a total lack of commitment to school.

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

Trevor entered the room with a bit of an attitude. He did however show respect for his mother and the therapist but his underlying attitude was one of frustration and irritation at being made to attend the session. After the session, progressed Trevor did become more co-operative and willing to comply with all the requests made. He overtly stated his anger at his father who had moved away and left him as well as the fact that he could only see his father during school holidays. His father's remarriage also seemed problematic and caused resentment in Trevor.

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

The figure drawing suggested the following themes:

- Need for stability and security
- Anxiety and uncertainty
- Aggressiveness/Impulsivity
- Tension
- Guilt

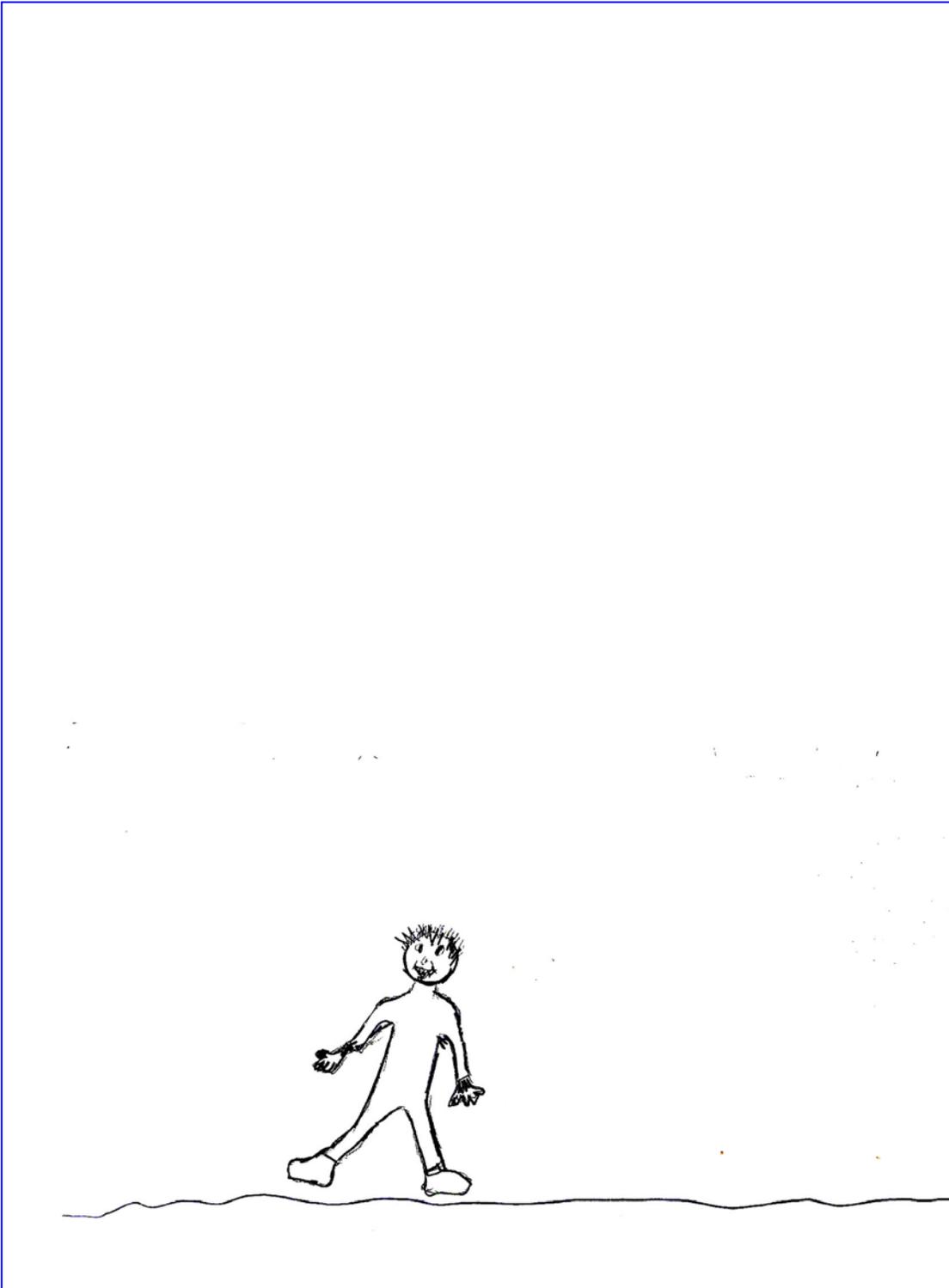


Figure 6.4 Draw a Person: Trevor

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

Expected item	Yes	No	Expected item	Yes	No
Head	✓		Arms two dimensional	✓	
Nose	✓		Legs two dimensional	✓	
Eyes	✓		Hair	✓	
Mouth	✓		Neck	✓	
Body	✓		Arms down	✓	
Arms	✓		Arms at shoulder	✓	
Legs	✓		Two or more pieces of clothing	✓	
Feet	✓		Total score	15	0

Table 20. The fifteen items considered for qualitative diagnostic scoring for mental maturity for Trevor

Trevor shows no overt signs of mental immaturity. The higher “yes” score indicates an age appropriate mental maturity level. Therefore problematic emotional aspects seem more likely. Aspects of immaturity could be ascribed to emotional immaturity coupled with problematic behavioural patterns rather than an intellectual disability, the developmental phase in which Trevor is presently going through was also considered. Signs of ADHD were also evident and were considered.

Step 4: Emotional indicators

Emotional Indicator Category	Emotional Indicator evident in the human figure drawing	
Impulsivity	Poor integration of body parts (Torso)	✓
	Gross asymmetry	
	Transparencies	
	Big Figure	
	Omission of neck	
Insecurity Feelings of insecurity	Slanting figure	✓
	Tiny head	
	Hands cut off	✓
	Monster, grotesque figure	
	Omission of arms	
	Omission of legs	
Anxiety	Omission of feet	
	Shading of face	✓
	Shading of body and/or limbs	✓
	Shading of hands and/or neck	✓
	Legs pressed together	
	Omission of eyes	
Shyness/Timidity	Clouds, rain, flying birds	✓
	Tiny figure	
	Short arms	
	Arms clinging to body	
	Omission of nose	
	Omission of mouth	
Anger/Aggression	Crossed eyes	✓
	Teeth	✓
	Long arms	
	Big hands	✓
	Nude figure/genitals	

Table 21. Emotional indicators in Trevor’s drawing

Emotional Indicator Category	Score (Emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawing of the subject)	Comment
Impulsivity	1/5	Insignificant
Insecurity/Feelings of insecurity	2/7	Low significant
Anxiety	4/6	High significance
Shyness/Timidity	0/5	Insignificant
Anger/Aggression	3/5	High significance

Table 22. Synopsis of Trevor’s emotional indicator score

Step 5: Content analysis

Identification of the person in the human figure drawing:

Trevor identifies prominently with the male figure. This can be ascribed to the fact that even though he lives with his mother, he still has contact with his father and has a positive male role model in his stepfather.

Age of the person in the human figure drawing:

Trevor's figure drawing was the same age as Trevor himself; he aged his drawing at twelve years old. This reflected Trevor's own life world as he described the figure as a child who liked "play stations" and playing with his friends.

Evaluation of the subject's self-concept:

Trevor's figure drawing was very prominently placed in the middle of the page but a definite base line was indicated which suggests insecurity and a need for stability. The sketchy lines of the figure also suggest a lack of self-confidence and also the fact that Trevor did not start immediately on the task but seemed to "hedge" asking questions and "feigning" an attitude during the initial part of the session.

Idealized self-image (wishful thinking):

Trevor's three wishes were as follows:

- To have his parents together again.
- That his father was nearer to him. (His father lives in another town)
- Has a play station.

Tristan's wishes suggest the very natural desire to have his family back together, but he also tends to accept the situation as his last wish is a personal wish, which suggests an acceptance and a personal continuation within the present situation. The wish of his father being nearer is also natural and suggests no overt or negative connotations.

Sexual concerns:

None noted.

Step 6: Organic signs

	Organic Sign	
1	Omission of neck	
2	Stick arms	
3	Arms horizontal or pointing up	
4	Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position	
5	Hands cut off	✓
6	Stick legs	
7	One or no piece of clothing	✓
8	Poor integrated body parts	
9	Gross asymmetry	
10	Transparencies	
11	Slanting figure	✓

Table 23. Organic sign check list: Trevor

Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts:

There was no gross disproportion of the figure evident. Trevor tended to be more anxious and present with aspects of insecurity (See table 19: Synopsis of Trevor's emotional indicator score) which could have influenced his overall performance. It is therefore suggested that minimal to no organic impairment was evident even though he had a score of three on the organic sign check list (See Table 20). There were tendencies that Trevor might be ADHD which were also considered.

Asymmetry of symbols of body structure:

None present.

Perseveration:

None present.

Simplification:

None present.

6.3.5 PARTICIPANT : BENNY

Name : Benny
Date of birth : 25/06/2000
Age : 6 years
Date of Evaluation : 31/07/2006

Background information:

His mother abandoned Benny at the age of 18 months. She left his father and immigrated. His father took total care and responsibility for the child for the next five years. Suddenly the mother re-entered the child life and wanted visitation rights, which was legal, and arrangements had to be made to accommodate the child with in the new relationship structures. Benny still resides with his father and visits his mother every second weekend (if she remembers to pick him up). Benny's father is in a new relationship, which has been stable for the past three years. Benny does not accept this situation and is presently presenting with exceptional behavioral problems.

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

Up front, Benny presents with a very pleasant and pleasing personality. He co-operates and follows all instructions and request. As soon as things do not go his way, he becomes disobedient and totally oppositional by ignoring any verbal communication and or instructions.

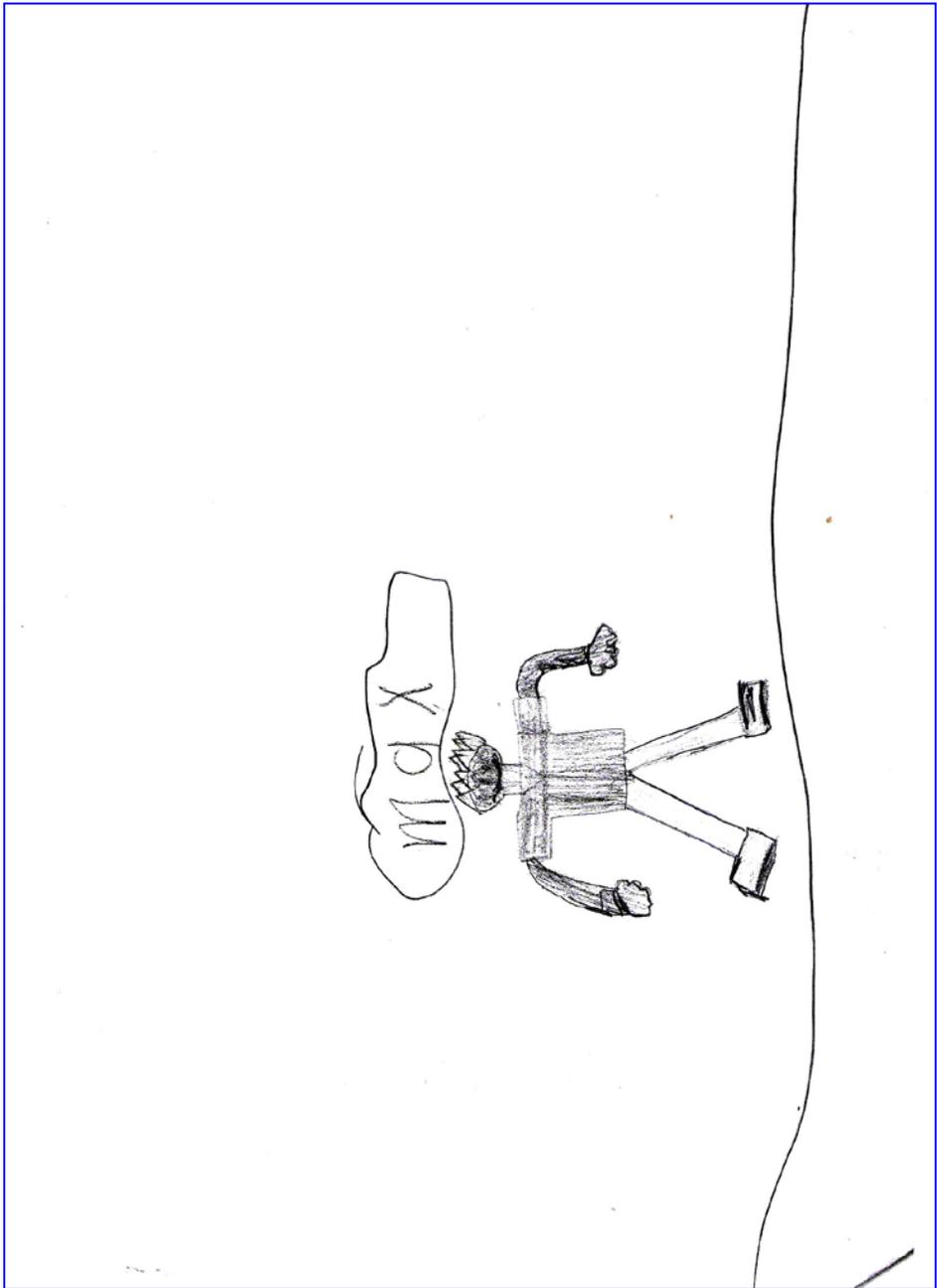


Figure 6.5 Draw a Person: Benny

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

The figure drawing suggested the following themes:

- Aggression
- Anxiety
- Impulsive
- Need for security and stability
- Assaultiveness
- Tension
- Rigid emotional control
- Rebellion

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

Expected item	Yes	No	Expected item	Yes	No
Head	✓		Arms two dimensional	✓	
Nose	✓		Legs two dimensional	✓	
Eyes	✓		Hair	✓	
Mouth	✓		Neck	✓	
Body	✓		Arms down	✓	
Arms	✓		Arms at shoulder	✓	
Legs	✓		Two or more pieces of clothing	✓	
Feet	✓		Total score	15	0

Table The fifteen items considered for qualitative diagnostic scoring for mental maturity for Benny

Step 4: Emotional indicators

Emotional Indicator Category	Emotional Indicator evident in the human figure drawing	
Impulsivity	Poor integration of body parts	✓
	Gross asymmetry	✓
	Transparencies	✓
	Big Figure	
	Omission of neck	
Insecurity Feelings of insecurity	Slanting figure	
	Tiny head	✓
	Hands cut off	✓
	Monster, grotesque figure	✓
	Omission of arms	
	Omission of legs	
	Omission of feet	
Anxiety	Shading of face	✓
	Shading of body and/or limbs	✓
	Shading of hands and/or neck	✓
	Legs pressed together	✓
	Omission of eyes	
	Clouds, rain, flying birds	✓
Shyness/Timidity	Tiny figure	
	Short arms	
	Arms clinging to body	
	Omission of nose	
	Omission of mouth	
Anger/Aggression	Crossed eyes	✓
	Teeth	✓
	Long arms	✓
	Big hands	✓
	Nude figure/genitals	

Table 25. Emotional indicators in Benny’s drawing

Emotional Indicator Category	Score (Emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawing of the subject)	Comment
Impulsivity	3/5	High significance
Insecurity/Feelings of insecurity	3/7	Low significance
Anxiety	5/6	High significance
Shyness/Timidity	0/5	Insignificant
Anger/Aggression	4/5	High significance

Table 26. Synopsis of Benny’s emotional indicator score

Step 5: Content analysis

Identification of the person in the human figure drawing:

Benny identifies very prominently with the male figure. This could be ascribed to the fact that his father brought him up from such an early age and he had no real mother figure attachment.

Age of the person in the human figure drawing:

Benny's figure drawing is almost twice as old as his actual chronological age. The drawing was aged at 10 years. This seemed to reflect a wish to be older and may be more in control of the present situation.

Evaluation of the subject's self-concept:

Benny's figure drawing was very prominently placed in the centre of the page and very clearly drawn. He adds lots of colour and the general theme of the drawing is one of defiance and "*pseudo*" strength. When noting his present problems and behavior one must consider this "*pseudo*" strength as a "*front*" or "*mask*" for his impulsivity, anxiety and high levels of anger and aggression (See table 23: Synopsis of Benny's emotional indicator score). This suggests problems with self-concept and self-esteem.

Idealized self-image (wishful thinking):

Benny's three wishes were as follows:

- To stay with his granny and mother.
- To have enough money to stay with his granny and mother
- To have his mother stay with them

Benny's wishes overtly suggest his wish to stay with his mother and leave the present situation.

Sexual concerns:

None noted.

Step 6: Organic signs

	Organic Sign	
1	Omission of neck	
2	Stick arms	
3	Arms horizontal or pointing up	
4	Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position	
5	Hands cut off	✓
6	Stick legs	
7	One or no piece of clothing	
8	Poor integrated body parts	
9	Gross asymmetry	
10	Transparencies	
11	Slanting figure	

Table 27. Organic sign check list: Benny

Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts:

No gross disproportion of the figure was evident and no organic signs of impairment were suggested. The only noteworthy indicators, which were considered, were the extended arms, which suggest lack of control in the environmental situation in which Benny finds himself.

Asymmetry of symbols of body structure:

None present.

Perseveration:

None present.

Simplification:

None present.

6.3.6 PARTICIPANT : CONRAD

Name : Conrad
Date of birth : 03/11/1999
Age : 7 years
Date of Evaluation : 12/10/2006

Background information:

Conrad was brought for therapy due to continual conflict with his teacher. He is the middle child in a conjoined family, his own sister is older (10 years) and he has a young stepsister (five years child). Conrad's mother describes the divorce as "messy". After the parents divorced, Conrad's father went to work overseas reducing the contact time with the children considerable. Presently the children still see the father but due to the nature of his work circumstances it is very erratic and sometimes only for very short periods. Conrad is presently in grade one.

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

Conrad entered the therapy room very quietly but soon seemed to "thaw" out and became very verbal. He willingly complied with all requests. Conrad very clearly verbalized his desire to see more of his father and overtly said that it makes him cross to "Always be left behind".

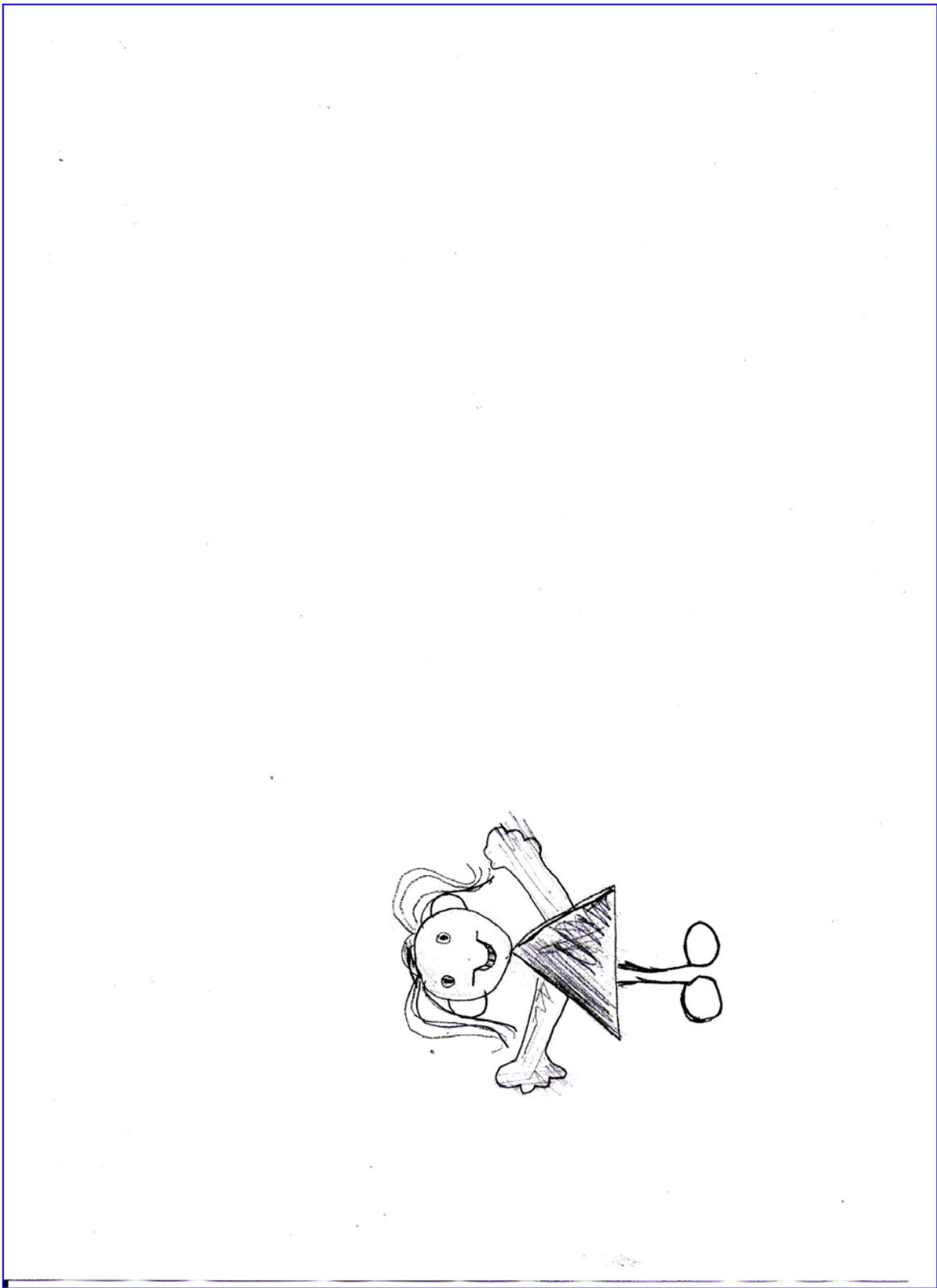


Figure 6.6 Draw a Person: Conrad

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

The figure drawing suggested the following themes:

- Strong attachment to the female figure
- Immaturity
- Aggression
- Dependency and desire for nurturance and affection
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Insecure

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

Expected item	Yes	No	Expected item	Yes	No
Head	✓		Arms two dimensional	✓	
Nose		✓	Legs two dimensional		✓
Eyes	✓		Hair	✓	
Mouth	✓		Neck	✓	
Body	✓		Arms down		✓
Arms	✓		Arms at shoulder	✓	
Legs	✓		Two or more pieces of clothing		✓
Feet	✓		Total score	11	4

Table 28. The fifteen items considered for qualitative diagnostic scoring for mental maturity for Conrad

Conrad shows no overt signs of mental immaturity. His higher “yes” score indicates an age appropriate mental maturity level. The “no” scores suggest more emotional problems than intellectual impairment (mental maturity). For example, withdrawal (omission of nose) and emotional immaturity (legs one dimensional) suggest this.

Step 4: Emotional indicators

Emotional Indicator Category	Emotional Indicator evident in the human figure drawing	
Impulsivity	Poor integration of body parts (Simple torso)	✓
	Gross asymmetry	
	Transparencies"	
	Big Figure	
	Omission of neck	✓
Insecurity Feelings of insecurity	Slanting figure	
	Tiny head	
	Hands cut off	✓
	Monster, grotesque figure	
	Omission of arms	
	Omission of legs	
Anxiety	Shading of face	✓
	Shading of body and/or limbs	✓
	Shading of hands and/or neck	✓
	Legs pressed together	✓
	Omission of eyes	
	Clouds, rain, flying birds	
Shyness/Timidity	Tiny figure	
	Short arms	✓
	Arms clinging to body	
	Omission of nose	✓
	Omission of mouth	
Anger/Aggression	Crossed eyes	
	Teeth	✓
	Long arms	
	Big hands	✓
	Nude figure/genitals	

Table 29. Emotional indicators in Conrad's drawing

Emotional Indicator Category	Score (Emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawing of the subject)	Comment
Impulsivity	2/5	Low significance
Insecurity/Feelings of insecurity	1/7	Insignificant
Anxiety	4/6	High significance
Shyness/Timidity	2/5	Low significance
Anger/Aggression	2/5	Low significance

Table 30. Synopsis of Conrad's emotional indicator score

Step 5: Content analysis

Identification of the person in the human figure drawing:

Conrad identifies more prominently with the female figure. This could be ascribed to the fact that he lives with his mother and his mother plays a very prominent role in his life. Presently he has also just started school (grade 1) and is feeling vulnerable and uncertain and needs his mother's reassurance

Age of the person in the human figure drawing:

Conrad's figure drawing was slightly younger than his chronological age. The drawing was aged at 5 years. This seemed to reflect a wish or desire to be younger and regress to a more or "safer" age where he was not subjected to the "pressures" of school.

Evaluation of the subject's self-concept:

Conrad's figure drawing was placed in the centre of the page but was faintly drawn with very simple basic shapes. This could reflect an inhibited self-esteem and poor self-concept. This indicates uncertainty reflecting a lack of confidence and poor self-esteem.

Idealized self-image (wishful thinking):

Conrad's three wishes were as follows:

- Wants to see his father more often.
- Wants to play rugby. If he is good enough.
- Wants to be (run) faster than his friend "JD".

Conrad's wishes suggest (and which he verbalized) the desire to see his father more often. He presents with no negative feelings towards his present family situation and seems content with his school environment as he shows positive tendencies towards his future aspirations about rugby and his friends. His lack of self confidence is reflected in his comment about being good enough to play rugby.

Sexual concerns:

None noted.

Step 6: Organic signs

	Organic Sign	
1	Omission of neck	✓
2	Stick arms	
3	Arms horizontal or pointing up	✓
4	Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position	✓
5	Hands cut off	
6	Stick legs	✓
7	One or no piece of clothing	✓
8	Poor integrated body parts	✓
9	Gross asymmetry	
10	Transparencies	
11	Slanting figure	

Table 31. Organic sign check list: Conrad

Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts:

There was no gross disproportion of the figure evident but the general figure is a little naive. It is felt that this does not reflect organic signs of impairment but rather a regression due to the present situation Conrad finds himself in.

Asymmetry of symbols of body structure:

None present.

Perseveration:

None present.

Simplification:

Evident, but once again it can be ascribed to regression.

6.3.7 PARTICIPANT : CHERRIE

Name : Cherrie
Date of birth : 17/02/1996
Age : 12 years
Date of Evaluation : 26/04/2007

Background information:

Cherrie was brought for therapy due to continual conflict with her family and especially her step sister. Her academic progress also seems to be presenting problems. She is the oldest child in a conjoined family; her step sister is younger (9 years old). After her parents divorced Cherrie has had no contact with her father.

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

Cherrie entered the therapy room confident but reserved. She soon started to interact and verbalized her thoughts easily. She willingly complied with all requests.



Figure 6.7 Draw a Person: Cherrie

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

The figure drawing suggested the following themes:

- Dependency
- Frustration with feelings of anger
- Aggression
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Immaturity
- Tension

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

Expected item	Yes	No	Expected item	Yes	No
Head	✓		Arms two dimensional	✓	
Nose	✓		Legs two dimensional	✓	
Eyes	✓		Hair	✓	
Mouth	✓		Neck		✓
Body	✓		Arms down		✓
Arms	✓		Arms at shoulder	✓	
Legs	✓		Two or more pieces of clothing	✓	
Feet	✓		Total score	13	2

Table 32. The fifteen items considered for qualitative diagnostic scoring for mental maturity for Cherrie

Cherrie shows no overt signs of a lack of mental immaturity. Her higher “yes” score indicates an age appropriate mental maturity level. The two “no” scores are not significant.

Step 4: Emotional indicators

Emotional Indicator Category	Emotional Indicator evident in the human figure drawing	
Impulsivity	Poor integration of body parts (Simple torso)	
	Gross asymmetry	
	Transparencies”	✓
	Big Figure	✓
	Omission of neck	✓
Insecurity Feelings of insecurity	Slanting figure	
	Tiny head	
	Hands cut off	✓
	Monster, grotesque figure	
	Omission of arms	
	Omission of legs	
	Omission of feet	
Anxiety	Shading of face	✓
	Shading of body and/or limbs	✓
	Shading of hands and/or neck	✓
	Legs pressed together	✓
	Omission of eyes	
	Clouds, rain, flying birds	
Shyness/Timidity	Tiny figure	
	Short arms	
	Arms clinging to body	✓
	Omission of nose	
	Omission of mouth	
Anger/Aggression	Crossed eyes	
	Teeth	✓
	Long arms	
	Big hands (emphasised)	✓
	Nude figure/genitals	

Table 33. Emotional indicators in Cherrie’s drawing

Emotional Indicator Category	Score (Emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawing of the subject)	Comment
Impulsivity	3/5	High significance
Insecurity/Feelings of insecurity	1/7	Insignificant
Anxiety	4/6	High significance
Shyness/Timidity	1/5	Insignificant
Anger/Aggression	2/5	Low significance

Table 34. Synopsis of Cherrie’s emotional indicator score

Step 5: Content analysis

Identification of the person in the human figure drawing:

Cherrie identifies with the female figure as this was the first figure drawn. The figure was age appropriate. Cherrie aged the figure at twelve years old, reflecting a good correlation with her projected self.

Age of the person in the human figure drawing:

Cherrie aged the figure at twelve years old, reflecting a good correlation with her projected self.

Evaluation of the subject's self-concept:

Cherrie's figure drawing was clearly placed to the left of the page suggesting a feeling of inadequacy and aggressiveness. This is also reflected in the overcompensation of the size of the figure almost giving a feeling of "pseudo" self-confidence.

Idealized self-image (wishful thinking):

Cherrie's three wishes were as follows:

- That her family does not fight.
- That she and her sister not do naughty things.
- Does her schoolwork "*well*".

Cherrie's wishes suggest her desire to have a more integrated family. Which includes the reconnection with her biological father, as this was verbalized. Lack of confidence in her ability at school.

Sexual concerns:

None noted.

Step 6: Organic signs

	Organic Sign	
1	Omission of neck	✓
2	Stick arms	
3	Arms horizontal or pointing up	
4	Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position	
5	Hands cut off	✓
6	Stick legs	
7	One or no piece of clothing	
8	Poor integrated body parts	✓
9	Gross asymmetry	
10	Transparencies	
11	Slanting figure	

Table 35. Organic sign check list: Cherrie

Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts:

There was no overt gross disproportion of the figure but slight compacting of the torso suggesting a “pseudo” positive self-confidence. It is felt that this does not reflect organic signs of impairment but rather insecurity due to a lack of positive self-esteem.

Asymmetry of symbols of body structure:

No overt asymmetry present but as mentioned earlier a compacted torso suggests tension.

Perseveration:

None present.

Simplification:

None evident.

6.3.8 PARTICIPANT : BIANCA

Name : Bianca
Date of birth : 14/08/2000
Age : 7 years
Date of Evaluation : 26/01/2007

Background information:

Bianca parents were divorced in 2001, she was one year old. Her mother got custody of the child and the father has full visitation rights. Bianca was brought to therapy due to problems she experienced with the transition between her mother and father. Bianca started refusing to go to her father and this is causing extreme interpersonal problems for the family and negatively influencing Bianca.

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

Bianca was extremely oppositional and very definitely voiced her wishes. She did not want to go to her father saying she did not like it there and that her father did not want her as he had not time for her.

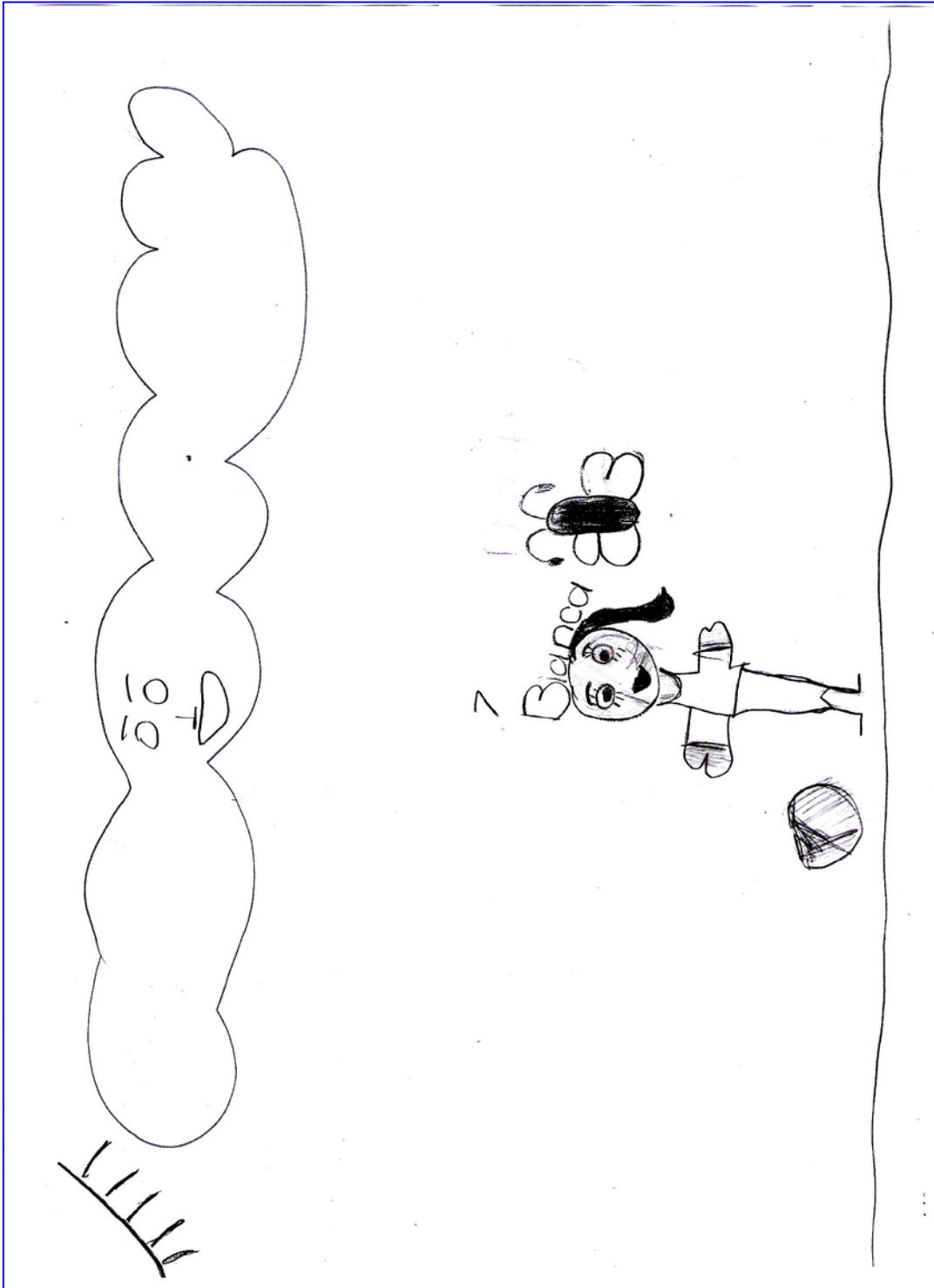


Figure 6.8 Draw a Person: Bianca

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

The figure drawing suggested the following themes:

- Egocentric
- Aggression
- Dependency and desire for nurturance and affection
- Security needs not fulfilled
- Experiencing conflict in the environment

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

Expected item	Yes	No	Expected item	Yes	No
Head	✓		Arms two dimensional	✓	
Nose		✓	Legs two dimensional		✓
Eyes	✓		Hair	✓	
Mouth	✓		Neck	✓	
Body	✓		Arms down		✓
Arms	✓		Arms at shoulder	✓	
Legs	✓		Two or more pieces of clothing	✓	
Feet	✓		Total score	12	3

Table 36. The fifteen items considered for qualitative diagnostic scoring for mental maturity for Bianca

Bianca shows no overt signs of mental immaturity. Her higher “yes” score indicates an age appropriate mental maturity level. The “no” scores are minimal, suggesting no mental maturity problems.

Step 4: Emotional indicators

Emotional Indicator Category	Emotional Indicator evident in the human figure drawing	
Impulsivity	Poor integration of body parts (Simple torso)	✓
	Gross asymmetry	✓
	Transparencies”	
	Big Figure	
	Omission of neck	
Insecurity Feelings of insecurity	Slanting figure	
	Tiny head	
	Hands cut off	✓
	Monster, grotesque figure	
	Omission of arms	
	Omission of legs	
Anxiety	Omission of feet	
	Shading of face	✓
	Shading of body and/or limbs	✓
	Shading of hands and/or neck	✓
	Legs pressed together	✓
	Omission of eyes	
Shyness/Timidity	Clouds, rain, flying birds	✓
	Tiny figure	
	Short arms	✓
	Arms clinging to body	
	Omission of nose	✓
Anger/Aggression	Omission of mouth	
	Crossed eyes	✓
	Teeth (emphasised mouth)	✓
	Long arms	
	Big hands (And shaded)	✓
	Nude figure/genitals	

Table 37. Emotional indicators in Bianca’s drawing

Emotional Indicator Category	Score (Emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawing of the subject)	Comment
Impulsivity	2/5	Low significance
Insecurity/Feelings of insecurity	1/7	Insignificant
Anxiety	4/6	High significance
Shyness/Timidity	2/5	Low significance
Anger/Aggression	3/5	High significance

Table 38. Synopsis of Bianca’s emotional indicator score

Step 5: Content analysis

Identification of the person in the human figure drawing:

Bianca identifies with the female figure. The emphasis on the hair and the elaborate butterfly suggests egocentrism. This could be ascribed to the fact that she lives with her mother and is an only child.

Bianca's mother plays a very prominent role in her life.

Age of the person in the human figure drawing:

Bianca's figure drawing was the same as her chronological age. The drawing was aged at 7 years, suggesting a true reflection of her projected self.

Evaluation of the subject's self-concept:

The figure drawing was placed in the centre of the page reflecting confidence and good self-esteem.

However, a base line was drawn in, suggesting the need for stability and security.

Idealized self-image (wishful thinking):

Bianca's three wishes were as follows:

- Wants more dolls.
- Wants a bicycle.
- Wants flowers.

These wishes present as a generalized theme and the researcher felt that they were not significant enough to attach any overt meaning or interpretation.

Sexual concerns:

None noted.

Step 6: Organic signs

	Organic Sign	
1	Omission of neck	
2	Stick arms	
3	Arms horizontal or pointing up	✓
4	Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position	
5	Hands cut off	✓
6	Stick legs	✓
7	One or no piece of clothing	
8	Poor integrated body parts	
9	Gross asymmetry	
10	Transparencies	
11	Slanting figure	

Table 39. Organic sign check list: Bianca

Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts:

There was no gross disproportion of the figure evident. It is felt that the drawing does not reflect organic signs of impairment.

Asymmetry of symbols of body structure:

None present.

Perseveration:

None present.

Simplification:

None present.

6.3.9 PARTICIPANT : CHANEL

Name : Chanel
Date of birth : 03/08/1999
Age : 7 years
Date of Evaluation : 15/05/2006

Background information:

After Chanel's parents divorced Chanel was moved between parents until her father legally fought for custody and obtained full custody. She is the youngest of three children her older two brothers are 9 and 11 years respectively. Presently the children still see their mother but due to the nature of her work it is rather erratic and sometimes rather irregular.

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

Chanel was extremely withdrawn in the session and would not leave her father. After some encouragement she willingly complied with all requests. Chanel was very verbal about her family especially her grandparents but overtly excluded her mother.



Figure 6.9 Draw a Person: Chanel

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

The figure drawing suggested the following themes:

- Strong need of nurturance from female figure
- Immaturity
- Aggression
- Dependency and desire for nurturance and affection
- Instability
- Insecure

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

Expected item	Yes	No	Expected item	Yes	No
Head	✓		Arms two dimensional	✓	
Nose	✓		Legs two dimensional		✓
Eyes	✓		Hair	✓	
Mouth	✓		Neck	✓	
Body	✓		Arms down		✓
Arms	✓		Arms at shoulder	✓	
Legs	✓		Two or more pieces of clothing	✓	
Feet	✓		Total score	13	2

Table 40. Qualitative diagnostic scoring for mental maturity for Chanel

Chanel presents with the required aspects for mental maturity suggesting more emotional problems than intellectual impairment (mental maturity).

Step 4: Emotional indicators

Emotional Indicator Category	Emotional Indicator evident in the human figure drawing	
Impulsivity	Poor integration of body parts (Simple torso)	
	Gross asymmetry	
	Transparencies”	
	Big Figure	
	Omission of neck	
Insecurity Feelings of insecurity	Slanting figure	✓
	Tiny head	
	Hands cut off	✓
	Monster, grotesque figure	
	Omission of arms	
	Omission of legs	
Anxiety	Shading of face (Hair covering)	✓
	Shading of body and/or limbs	✓
	Shading of hands and/or neck	✓
	Legs pressed together	✓
	Omission of eyes	
	Clouds, rain, flying birds	
Shyness/Timidity	Tiny figure	
	Short arms	
	Arms clinging to body	
	Omission of nose	
	Omission of mouth	
Anger/Aggression	Crossed eyes	
	Teeth (moth emphasised)	✓
	Long arms	✓
	Big hands	✓
	Nude figure/genitals	

Table 41. Emotional indicators in Chanel’s drawing

Emotional Indicator Category	Score (Emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawing of the subject)	Comment
Impulsivity	0/5	Insignificant
Insecurity/Feelings of insecurity	2/7	Low significance
Anxiety	4/6	High significance
Shyness/Timidity	0/5	Insignificant
Anger/Aggression	3/5	High significance

Table 42. Synopsis of Chanel’s emotional indicator score

Step 5: Content analysis

Identification of the person in the human figure drawing:

Chanel identifies with the female figure.

Age of the person in the human figure drawing:

Chanel's figure drawing was the same as her chronological age. The drawing was aged at 6 years.

Evaluation of the subject's self-concept:

Chanel's figure drawing was placed in the centre of the page but the unbalanced stance suggests tension and emotional disequilibrium. This indicates uncertainty reflecting a lack of confidence and poor self-esteem.

Idealized self-image (wishful thinking):

Chanel's three wishes were as follows:

- Wants a horse.
- Wants a camel.
- Wants a Pander Bear

Chanel's wishes seem to quite ordinary but the desire for nurturance is suggested by her comments concerning the wishes. She overtly gave the reason for wanting these animals, "*I want to look after them*". She presents with no overt negative feelings towards her present family situation.

Sexual concerns:

None noted.

Step 6: Organic signs

	Organic Sign	
1	Omission of neck	
2	Stick arms	
3	Arms horizontal or pointing up	✓
4	Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position	
5	Hands cut off	✓
6	Stick legs	✓
7	One or no piece of clothing	✓
8	Poor integrated body parts	
9	Gross asymmetry	
10	Transparencies	
11	Slanting figure	✓

Table 43. Organic sign check list: Chanel

Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts:

There was no gross disproportion of the figure. The general figure is a little naïve reflecting her chronological age. It is felt that this does not reflect organic signs of impairment.

Asymmetry of symbols of body structure:

None present.

Perseveration:

None present.

Simplification:

Evident, but once again it can be ascribed to her age.

6.3.10 PARTICIPANT : GABBY

Name : Gabby
Date of birth : 10/04/2000
Age : 6 years
Date of Evaluation : 18/10/2006

Background information:

Gabby was brought for an evaluation due to scholastic problems and emotional outbursts with her teachers and peers. She is the younger of two girls, her older sister is 9 years old. Gabby's mother has not remarried since the divorce three years ago. The girls stay with their mother who still has a positive relationship with the biological father and there are no presenting problems with visitation or inter parental relationship. Gabby suffers from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, she is on medication.

Step 1: Behaviour Observation

Gabby was extremely confident when entering the therapy room. She was talkative and verbalized her thoughts wishes and desires. She requested cool drink and told her mother that she could go and wait outside.



Figure 6.10 Draw a Person: Gabby

Step 2: Overall impression of the human figure drawn

The figure drawing suggested the following themes:

- Regression
- Immaturity
- Aggression
- Dependency and desire for nurturance and affection
- Insecure
- Social eagerness

Step 3: Aspects of mental maturity

Expected item	Yes	No	Expected item	Yes	No
Head	✓		Arms two dimensional		✓
Nose		✓	Legs two dimensional		✓
Eyes	✓		Hair	✓	
Mouth	✓		Neck		✓
Body	✓		Arms down	✓	
Arms	✓		Arms at shoulder	✓	
Legs		✓	Two or more pieces of clothing		✓
Feet		✓	Total score	8	7

Table 44. The fifteen items considered for qualitative diagnostic scoring for mental maturity for Gabby

Gabby shows overt signs of mental immaturity. Her scores indicates a lower level of an age appropriate mental maturity.

Step 4: Emotional indicators

Emotional Indicator Category	Emotional Indicator evident in the human figure drawing	
Impulsivity	Poor integration of body parts (Simple torso)	✓
	Gross asymmetry	✓
	Transparencies”	
	Big Figure	
	Omission of neck	✓
Insecurity Feelings of insecurity	Slanting figure	✓
	Tiny head	✓
	Hands cut off	✓
	Monster, grotesque figure	
	Omission of arms	
	Omission of legs	✓
	Omission of feet	✓
Anxiety	Shading of face	✓
	Shading of body and/or limbs	✓
	Shading of hands and/or neck	
	Legs pressed together	
	Omission of eyes	
	Clouds, rain, flying birds	
Shyness/Timidity	Tiny figure	
	Short arms	✓
	Arms clinging to body	
	Omission of nose	
	Omission of mouth	
Anger/Aggression	Crossed eyes	✓
	Teeth (exaggerated mouth)	✓
	Long arms	
	Big hands	✓
	Nude figure/genitals	

Table 45. Emotional indicators in Gabby’s drawing

Emotional Indicator Category	Score (Emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawing of the subject)	Comment
Impulsivity	3/5	High significance
Insecurity/Feelings of insecurity	5/7	High significance
Anxiety	2/6	Low significance
Shyness/Timidity	1/5	Insignificant
Anger/Aggression	3/5	High significance

Table 46. Synopsis of Gabby’s emotional indicator score

Step 5: Content analysis

Identification of the person in the human figure drawing:

Gabby identifies more prominently with the female figure. This could be ascribed to the fact that she lives with her mother and her mother plays a very prominent role in her life. Presently she has also just started school (grade 1) and is feeling vulnerable and uncertain and needs her mother's reassurance. Gabby asked to draw herself in her school uniform, reinforcing her self-projection.

Age of the person in the human figure drawing:

Gabby's figure drawing was the same as her chronological age. The drawing was aged at seven years. This seemed to reflect once again her-self projection.

Evaluation of the subject's self-concept:

Gabby's figure drawing was placed in the centre of the page and very clearly drawn. She was not concerned about verbalizing who the figure was as she asked to draw herself in her school uniform. Her whole attitude reflected a positive self confidence and high self esteem.

Idealized self-image (wishful thinking):

Gabby's three wishes were as follows:

- To become a doctor.
- To have a "Bratz" doll.
- For her step mother to have a baby boy.

Gabby's wishes suggest (and which she clearly verbalized) was the desire to see her father and step mother happy with a family, a personal wish for a toy (which is natural and in keeping with the present social trends) and a positively directed future career wish.

Sexual concerns:

None noted.

Step 6: Organic signs

	Organic Sign	
1	Omission of neck	✓
2	Stick arms	✓
3	Arms horizontal or pointing up	✓
4	Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position	✓
5	Hands cut off	✓
6	Stick legs	
7	One or no piece of clothing	✓
8	Poor integrated body parts	✓
9	Gross asymmetry	
10	Transparencies	
11	Slanting figure	✓

Table 47. Organic sign check list: Gabby

Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts:

There was obvious disproportion of the figure evident. The general figure is very naïve, consisting of basic forms. It is felt that this could reflect organic signs of impairment as well as considering the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, which Gabby presents with.

Asymmetry of symbols of body structure:

Present.

Perseveration:

None present.

Simplification:

Evident, but once again it can be ascribed to regression.

6.4 CONCLUSION

There are certain areas which were significant when one considers the data results of this sample group within this research. This data obtained will enable the researcher to explore and analyse the emotional indicators evident in the human figure drawings of the children who were involved in a divorce situation, this will be attempted in the following chapter. In highlighting the most apparent emotional indicators of a child's experience of divorce within the family unit will facilitate a wider global application of more focused therapy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND INTREPRETATION OF RESULTS

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Whoever acquires knowledge and does not practice it resembles him who ploughs his land and leaves it unsown. (Gulistan SA 'DI)

In Chapter six, the ten candidates of the sample group were all evaluated according to the research design and data was obtained from these evaluations. The analysis of this data will now be reviewed in order to understand the life world functioning of the pre-adolescent child who has or is encountering a divorce within his/her family.

7.2 ASPECTS OF MENTAL MATURITY

The aspects of mental maturity are arranged as listed by Koppitz (1984: 16) see Chapter 5 step 3. These aspects are the fifteen expected items that should be present on the human figure drawing of an 6-14 year old, absence of these items could reflect:

- Limited mental ability.
- An underlying emotional attitude.
- Developmental lag.

Age is an aspect that must be taken into consideration. This aspect was considered during the mental maturity interpretation.

Child from sample group →	Seth	Tristan	Jean	Trevor	Benny	Conrad	Cherrie	Bianca	Chanel	Gabby
Expected item ↓										
Head	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nose	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
Eyes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mouth	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Body	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arms	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Legs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Feet	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Arms two dimensional	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Legs two dimensional	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Hair	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Neck	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Arms down	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Arms at shoulder	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Two or more pieces of clothing	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗

Table 48. Frequency and significance of mental maturity

It must be remembered that the lower “yes” score (that is more “no” answers) the more likely there is to be problems regarding mental maturity. When evaluating the sample group the following can be noted.

Child from sample group →	Seth	Tristan	Jean	Trevor	Benny	Conrad	Cherrie	Bianca	Chanel	Gabby
Yes Score	7	14	11	15	15	11	13	12	13	8
No Score	8	1	4	0	0	4	2	3	2	7

Table 49. Synopsis of frequency and significance of mental maturity of the sample group

All members of the sample group were within the parameters of the age appropriate mental maturity level. Gabby and Seth were the only two candidates who tested a little lower in mental maturity even

when their age was taken into consideration. Both these children were also suspected of attention deficit hyperactive disorder which could have negatively impacted on these results. Generally, the mental maturity level of the sample group could not be considered as having a significant impact on the emotional indicators which was measured during the study of children going through a divorce situation within the family unit.

7.3 EMOTIONAL INDICATORS

Results of the emotional indicators are indicated in Table 3. The emotional indicators are arranged in order of frequency or significance. Anxiety presented as being the highest rated indicator and shyness/timidity presented as the least significant.

Emotional Indicator →	Anxiety	Anger/ aggression	Insecurity	Impulsivity	Shyness/ Timidity
Child from sample group ↓					
Seth	4/6	4/5	4/7	2/5	2/5
Tristan	4/6	3/5	2/7	3/5	1/5
Jean	4/6	0/5	4/7	1/5	1/5
Trevor	4/6	3/5	2/7	1/5	0/5
Benny	5/6	4/5	3/7	3/5	0/5
Conrad	4/6	2/5	1/7	2/5	2/5
Cherrie	4/6	2/5	1/7	3/5	1/5
Bianca	4/6	3/5	1/7	2/5	2/5
Chanel	4/6	3/5	2/7	0/5	0/5
Gabby	2/6	3/5	5/7	3/5	1/5

Table 50. Frequency and significance of the emotional indicators

When evaluating the sample group the following can be noted.

- Anxiety: Eight of the candidates of the sample group presented with an above average score for the emotional indicator of anxiety (66.6%). One presented with an even higher score of 83%. Gabby was the only one of the sample group who presented with a low score (33%). This emotional indicator was considered one of the most common and significant of all the indicators.

- Anger/aggression: The majority of the group scored above average on this emotional indicator.
 - Five members got a score of 60%.
 - Two members got a score of 80%.
 - Two members got a 40% score.
 - Only one members showed no over anger traits.

This emotional indicator ranked second in importance with regard to manifestation within a child's coping repertoire.

- Insecurity: The majority of the sample group (seven members) scored a below average score, between 14% and 42%. Two members scores were recorded as a little above average (57%), Only one child scored an above average score of 71%. It seemed that the child experienced a more intense "inner" turmoil of basic emotions such as anger and anxiety and that most of the parents supported the children "environmentally" by providing for them "physically" reducing the feelings of emotional insecurity.
- Impulsivity: The following scores were noted:
 - Four children scored 60%.
 - Three children scored 40%.
 - Two children scored 20%
 - One child had a zero score.

The researcher considered this aspect to be less significant as only four candidates of the sample group had slightly above average scores, with no extremely high intensity scores as recorded with the insecurity trait. The child with the zero score was the candidate that was experiencing ADHD symptoms.

- Shyness/Timidity: This emotional indicator was not considered significant as the following scores reaffirm this statement:
 - Three children achieved a score of 40%

- Four children achieved a score of 20%
- Three children presented with a zero score.

This aspect was therefore considered the least significant and was not intensely focussed on in the guidelines.

7.4 ORGANIC SIGNS

Organic signs are signs of neurological impairment and/or minimal brain damage. These aspects were evaluated and considered by checking for:

1. Distortions and gross disproportions of the face, torso and extremities and a disarrangement of body parts.
2. Asymmetry of symbols of body structure.
3. Perseveration.
4. Simplification.

Child from sample group →	Seth	Tristan	Jean	Trevor	Benny	Conrad	Cherrie	Bianca	Chanel	Gabby
Organic sign ↓										
Omission of neck						✓	✓			✓
Stick arms	✓		✓							✓
Arms horizontal or pointing up	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
Arms incorrectly attached /wrong position						✓				✓
Hands cut off		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Stick legs	✓		✓			✓		✓	✓	
One or no piece of clothing	✓			✓		✓			✓	✓
Poor integrated body parts	✓	✓				✓	✓			✓
Gross asymmetry										
Transparencies										
Slanting figure				✓					✓	✓

Table 51. Frequency and significance of organic signs

When considering Table 4, it is evident that there was no significant organic impairment with any of the candidates. Gabby did score above average and this was noted but due to her ADHD condition it could not be established with certainty that organic impairment was evident.

7.5 CONCLUSION

The research finding highlighted the fact that mental maturity did not play a significant role in the sample group's emotional responses. Therefore, if one concentrates on the emotional indicators we see that anxiety played the highest role during the divorce process within the child's life-world. Anger/aggression played the second largest role with insecurity and impulsivity playing a lesser role. With this knowledge, we can be forewarned, and take action to compensate for any possible negative reactions the child may present with. In Chapter 8, further recommendations and possible limitations of the study will be discussed.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Not every end is the goal. The end of a melody is not its goal, and yet if a melody has not reached its end, it has not reached its goal. (Nietzsche 286:1970)

It is not in the ending of this research where the value lies but in the process of discovery that one experiences during the encounters with the pre-adolescent child and their life world functioning. With this in mind, further recommendations and contributions are proposed.

As already mentioned in the study, even an amiable divorce presents with negative effects on all those involved, especially the children. We cannot escape the fact that divorce is traumatic; it has a negative emotional, financial and functional spiraling effect on all involved. Divorce rates in South Africa are high, which emphasizes even more, the fact that assistance is essential to those going through this traumatic issue. To empower all those involved would be to empower future generations. Therefore to establish the life world functioning of the pre-adolescent child after a divorce and to establish his/her emotional functioning would be greatly significant in assisting him/her to assimilate the trauma of divorce into his/her life.

In the literature study it was found that even though the phenomena of divorce was high in South Africa, little research was done to support parents or children through this traumatic period. Parents were expected to cope, especially the non-custodial parent, who lost his/her entire functional family. The custodial parent is also put through stress as he/she is expected to take on the role of both parents, as he/she has to run the newly formed household alone without the support he/she had when the family was intact.

The pre-adolescent phase of development of children is an exceptionally fragile stage, and as even less research was done in this area. To further complicate the issue, the pre-adolescent phase of child development is not succinctly described or delineated. This compounded the fact that these children were “lost” in the broader more prominent developmental phases. It was felt that with the research done in this study further techniques could be developed to assist children, especially those in this age group.

Another aspect that is a source of concern is that the literature concerning the projection tests used, that is the *draw-a- person* test, is very old and no relevant South African research has been done. These tests were used as a beginning or base line to further more South African specific research. With these aspects in mind, a commentary on the initial problem statement is undertaken.

8.2 COMMENTARY ON THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Considering the present situation in South Africa and the support available to those involved in the issues of divorce, the main themes of the research were threefold. Firstly, to obtain insight into the life world functioning of the pre-adolescent South African child, secondly, to explore the emotional dimensions of his/her life world functioning and thirdly, to assess the situation the child finds him/herself in. Therefore the problem statement, which was developed, was as follows:

To establish the life world functioning of the pre-adolescent child after divorce by assessing the emotional indicators of prescribed projection tests.

This statement encompassed the essence of the study and endeavored to cover the main themes initially deemed necessary to positively add to aspects of research concerning divorce and the pre-adolescent child in South Africa.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- The study could be extended to other cultural groups.
- The study could also be extended to families where bereavement was experienced as divorce and death both have significant feelings of loss for the child.
- Guidelines could be developed to incorporate and to assist parents, educators and professionals in supporting these children.
- Pertinent South African projection tests could be developed.
- Divorce statistics from other cultures could also be considered.
- The impact of the trauma of divorce could be explored with respect to both parents relationship with the children.

8.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Because the study entails a dissertation of limited scope the following limitations are present

- Bigger number of respondents and a more representative sample could have lead to more in depth findings.
- More in depth interviews with the parents could have lead to a better understanding of the environmental factors influencing the child's emotional status.
- It is not possible to generalize these research findings to the greater population as all the candidates originated from a Eurocentric (white) background. Cultural diversity could impact on the results.
- Cultural aspects must be investigated more in depth.

8.5 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher is of the contention that the following contributions through the research done for this study:

- Insight and understanding into the life world of the pre-adolescent schoolchild's emotional state during divorce.
- The research focuses on pertinent emotional areas that a child experiences during a divorce, which can narrow down therapy for the child experiencing divorce within the family unit.
- Facilitating recovery for the parents, child and family during and after the divorce as pertinent areas of support are highlighted.
- This study can serve as a basis for further development of exclusive South African projection tests.
- The research can be used to develop practical guidelines for parents to promote coping strategies for both custodial and non-custodial parents.
- The study can positively impact and guide divorce therapy, which is given to children before, during and after divorce.

8.6 CONCLUSION

There's a kind of release

And a kind of torment in every goodbye for every man. (C. Day Lewis 288: 1970)

To conclude, divorce is a common day occurrence and there are no guarantees that anything lasts -not even the vows of marriage. Under these uncertain circumstances one must live one's life day by day making the best of every situation. If one is confronted with the unfortunate dilemma of divorce, we have no choice but to make the best of it by starting to protect, support and understand our children. In doing this we positively assist future generations.

Having emotional insight into the child's perspective and emotional functioning during this traumatic time, can and will be of paramount importance in limiting the emotional damage that divorce can cause in the lives of our children. To be able to identify the main emotional indicators, namely, anxiety, anger and aggression, insecurity, impulsivity and shyness or timidity, within a child's functioning facilitates understanding, insight and knowledge to enable parents and helpers (professional or lay) to assist themselves, where possible and know when to seek professional help.

A Child's life is like a blank piece of paper..... Each person he or she meets leaves a mark. Helping the child experience these marks, equips them to face, cope and deal with their eventual book of life..... It is really never to early to start. (Mande 09)

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ASSOCIATIONS
TABLE 1
MACHOVER FIGURE DRAWING TEST – ASSOCIATIONS

NameAge.....Date.....No.....M-F

Problem..... Diagnosis.....

(Make a drawing of a Person) Remarks and Procedure.....

.....

.....

Associations

(Doing)..... (Age)..... (Married).....

(Children)..... (Live with) (More attached to)

(Brothers or sisters)..... (Kind of work)

(Schooling) (Ambition)

(Smart) (Strong) (Healthy).....

(Good looking) (Best part) (Worst part).....

(Nervous type) (What's on his mind)

(Fears) (Sad or happy)

(What gets him angry) (Wish for most)

(Good points) (Bad points)

(Mostly by himself or with people)

(People say) (Self-conscious – stare at him)

(Trust people) (Afraid of them)

(Get along with wife or parents) (Separated)

(Run around) (Wife (or husband) run around)

(Sex with wife) (First sexual exp)

(Steady girl) (Expect to marry)

(Type of girl go out with)

(Sex with boys) (Ever approached)

(How often masturbate) (What think of)

(Whom does he remind you of)

(Like to be like him)

Patient's self appraisal

(Worst part of body) (Best part)

(What's good about you) (Bad about you)

Taken from: Karen Machover: Personality Projection in the drawing of the human figure: A method of personality investigation. (1978: 31)