

CONTENTS

SECTION	PAGE
Dedications	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Summary	vii
Abstract	viii

Chapter One – Introductions

1.0	Introduction	1
1.1	Rationale and Justification	1
1.2	What Inspired Me	4
1.3	Research Paradigm	6
1.4	My Commitment in This Study	8
1.5	Research Curiosity	9
1.6	Purpose of The Study	9
1.7	Study Objectives	10
1.8	The Research Participants	10
1.9	Pastoral Care	12
1.10	Ethics	14
1.11	Walking the Research Journey	15
1.12	Limitations and Delimitations of the Study	21
1.13	Summary	22

Chapter Two – Literature Delimitations/Deconstruction

2.0	Introduction	23
2.1	Working Definitions	24
2.2	Touring The World with Secondary Traumatisation	26
2.3	National Problem Saturated Story	31
2.4	Summary	32

Chapter Three – Effects of Secondary Witnessing

3.0	Introduction	34
	Effects Discourse 1	34
	Effects Discourse 2	37
	Effects Discourse 3	40
	Effects Discourse 4	43
	Effects Discourse 5	46
	Effects Discourse 6	48
	Effects Discourse 7	51
3.1	Summary	52

Chapter Four Coping with Secondary Traumatisation

4.0	Introduction	54
	Coping Discourse 1	54
	Coping Discourse 2	57
	Coping Discourse 3	59
	Coping Discourse 4	61
	Coping Discourse 5	66

	Coping Discourse 6	69
4.1	Summary	70
Chapter Five – Reflections		
5.1	Introduction	72
5.2	Participant in Participatory Action Research	72
5.3	Community of Witnesses	74
5.4	Unanswered Questions	75
5.5	Spirituality	76
5.6	Selecting a Witnessing Focus	78
5.7	The Power of Externalising Conversations	80
5.8	Reflections of Counsellors	81
5.9	Taking it Back	83
	Bibliography	85
	Appendix A	95
	Appendix B	97

DEDICATIONS

To all the people of the world who perished due to organised political violence throughout history.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to the following people for enabling the completion of this study:

The study participants and the clients who consulted with them, for educating me through inviting me on their life journey. All Mopane Trust staff and CONNECT staff for encouraging and supporting me throughout. Ennet Matanda for the typing.

My committed supervisor Professor Dirk Kotzé and my MTH colleagues for their emotional support, Clara Makosa, Chamunorwa Chiromo, Gertrude Mutasa, Tarisai Zata and Felix Muchumba.

My beloved wife Irene Tsitsi and the children for being so patient and considerate during this trying time.

SUMMARY

Counsellors who engage in pastoral counselling with survivors of organised political violence suffer secondary traumatisation, which can easily stop them from doing the work. There is need to develop contextual ways of coping with the pressures of witnessing to traumatic experiences. This participatory action study enabled the counsellors to shift from numbness to being coping counsellors.

ABSTRACT

This study acknowledges the fact that compassionate witnesses working with traumatised clients suffer from secondary traumatisation. Weingarten (2000, 2001, 2003) and Figley (1995) are some of the authors on this subject.

The study is based within the Zimbabwean context, which is going through a period of transition involving political and economic factors. Survivors of political violence seek assistance from counselling agencies like CONNECT and Mopane Trust. Mopane Trust chose to specialise in this work through counselling and research. This study explores how Mopane Trust trauma counsellors cope with secondary trauma.

Research Curiosity

I wondered how counsellors caring with survivors and perpetrators of political violence would:

1. Narrate their experiences as the counsellors to survivors of organised political violence.
2. Explore ways of coping with these experiences.
3. With the purpose of developing Mopane Trust trauma training and therapy.

Purpose of the study

The study wanted counsellors to understand how empathic witnessing evoked secondary trauma, and to come up with contextual ways of coping with secondary trauma.

Methods used

This was participatory action research with three trauma counsellors engaged in pastoral counselling as the main focus of the study. Six of their team members were secondary participants. Debriefing sessions were held with the participants. These were the sessions, which were analysed.

Main Study Findings

a) Effects of doing the work

The study established that the trauma counsellors were affected by doing the work. Main themes raised were that:

1. The work was exhausting and unbearable.
2. Good counselling skills were required for the work.
3. Counsellors experienced emotions like fear and shock.
4. The counselling was for male counsellors, not empathetic female counsellors.
5. Counsellors social life is affected, by doing the work.
6. Engaging in trauma counselling strengthens carer's spirituality.
7. Perpetrators of violence need help and not blame.

b) The participants came up with the following as their major themes in coping with secondary traumatising.

8. Counselling plays a role in breaking the cycle of violence.
9. Sharing with team helps counsellors cope.
10. Small steps of resistance.
11. Safety is paramount.
12. Follow up sessions.

Recommendations

- The study suggested that Mopane Trust should adopt participatory ethics as a major paradigm in its search for knowledge.
- That spirituality be centralised in counselling and training.
- Counsellors make use of externalisation in conversations with clients.

That an organisation to cater for empowerment issues like income generating projects and processing of birth certificates and school certificates be created to augment efforts of existing organisations.